

## Fostering Literacy through the Transmission of Chinese Dongbei Dagū Vocal Songs in Xiuyan County, Liaoning Province

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### ABSTRACT

Chinese Dongbei Dagū vocal songs, a traditional genre hailing from Northeast China's Dongbei region, possess a rich history spanning over two centuries, distinguished by their unique combination of rhythmic speech-like delivery and melodic elements. The objective of this study is to investigate the fostering of literacy through the transmission of Chinese Dongbei Dagū vocal songs in Xiuyan County, Liaoning Province. The research utilized questionnaires and interviews with six key informants as research tools, including two academic experts, three singers of Dongbei Dagū, and one musical accompanist, who played a pivotal role in providing invaluable insights into various facets of Dongbei Dagū, ranging from its historical significance to the methods employed for its traditional and modern transmission. Qualitative data analysis revealed the existence of two primary modes of transmission: the time-honored apprentice style and the familial family-style methods within traditional settings. Moreover, it uncovered contemporary transmission modes that ingeniously adapt to folk activities, tea houses, theaters, and specialized training workshops. The research findings underscore the paramount importance of cultural databases, governmental support, educational initiatives, innovation, audience expansion, and early education in the continuous preservation and promotion of Dongbei Dagū. Ultimately, this study not only enhances our comprehension of intangible cultural heritage but also offers a pragmatic blueprint for sustaining traditional art forms within the context of contemporary society.

**Key words:** Dongbei Dagū, Cultural Literacy, Transmission, Musicology, Chinese Vocal Songs, Liaoning Province

### INTRODUCTION

Chinese Dongbei Dagū Vocal Songs, steeped in a history spanning over two centuries, stand as a cherished embodiment of traditional vocal folk music originating in Northeast China (Ewertowski, 2020). Through extended periods of evolution and development, this art form has cultivated distinct musical characteristics and profound cultural values. It holds a prominent and indispensable position within the realm of traditional Chinese music (Chen, 2002; Tien, 2015; Smith, 2021). However, the looming specter of extinction now threatens this illustrious heritage due to a multitude of complex factors. This article serves as a dedicated exploration into the realm of Chinese Dongbei Dagū vocal songs, using them as a focal point for contemplation. It seeks to shine a light on the prevailing state of transmission and to present constructive suggestions for the preservation and transmission of Chinese Dongbei Dagū Vocal Songs in this new era, thus ensuring the enduring legacy of this traditional art form (Han, 2013; Zhou & Chuangprakhon, 2023; Wu, & Boonsrianun, 2023).

Dongbei Dagū finds its primary popularity in northeastern China, encompassing regions such as Liaoning, Jilin,

Heilongjiang, Hebei, Beijing, Tianjin, and beyond. It represents vocal music artistry that emerged from the creative spirit of folk artists in Northeast China (Cui & Chen, 2023; Yao et al., 2023). This art form, deeply rooted in local folk music, artfully incorporates elements from the musical heritage of Hebei. Dongbei Dagū traces its origins to the middle and late Qing Dynasty and subsequently flourished, with Shenyang in Liaoning Province at its epicenter, earning it the moniker "Fengtian Dagū." Following the liberation of Northeast China, it assumed the collective identity of "Dongbei Dagū" (Zhao, 2015; Chiu, 2020). Having thrived for more than two centuries, Dongbei Dagū has won the hearts of the masses with its lyrical narratives of history, tributes to heroes, advocacy for justice, portrayals of local customs, depictions of benevolence and morality, and the transmission of profound humanistic knowledge. It serves as an indispensable "encyclopedia" that vividly captures the essence of life in Northeast China (Wan, 2021; Wu, & Bhengsri, 2023; Li, 2023).

Chinese Dongbei Dagū vocal songs carry profound significance within the Xiuyan community. Originating within the tapestry of folk culture, it blossomed amidst folk activities

and has been perpetuated through the Xiuyan Manchu people. This art form symbolizes a vibrant folk entertainment system characterized by robust vitality and imbued with distinct national and local characteristics.

Nonetheless, the vitality of Chinese Dongbei Dagū vocal songs has gradually dwindled over time. While some artists have resumed their craft, the establishment of training programs has aimed to cultivate a new generation of talents. Regrettably, the 1990s ushered in a period of decline. The surge of modernization, the rapid development of vocal music technology, the influence of Western culture, and the co-existence of multiple cultures facilitated by television, the internet, and mobile phones have dramatically transformed the cultural landscape. Consequently, many young individuals are now unfamiliar with Dongbei Dagū, posing a formidable challenge to its continued development as a folk-art form. Moreover, the passing of eminent veteran artists, coupled with factors such as dwindling audiences, meager performance income, a dearth of the audience, and the lack of successors, has pushed Xiuyan Dongbei Dagū to the precipice of extinction (Chingchih, 2010; Ren, 2023).

As a quintessential representative of Northern Chinese folk music, Dongbei Dagū has meticulously honed its unique and enduring artistic characteristics over centuries. These characteristics are especially pronounced in the varied musical compositions found across different regions of the Northeast Drum. In recent years, researchers have embarked on preliminary investigations encompassing lyrics, musical attributes, transmission, and preservation. An extensive body of oral and written historical materials amassed through fieldwork, interviews, data analysis, and other research endeavors serves as support for this study. The goal is to distill the essence and regulations governing Dongbei Dagū art. This effort aims to enable a wider audience to appreciate and perpetuate the rich cultural heritage of traditional Chinese music (Rees, 2010; Jin, 2011; Sun & Karin, 2022).

The primary objective of this study is to investigate fostering cultural literacy through the transmission of Chinese Dongbei Dagū vocal songs in Xiuyan County, Liaoning Province. By delving into this topic, we aim to offer insights that will enable enthusiasts to gain a profound understanding of Dongbei Dagū and, in turn, foster a greater awareness of its artistic and social value. Ultimately, this endeavor seeks to catalyze the continued transmission and preservation of Chinese Dongbei Dagū vocal songs for generations to come.

### Research Question

- What are the key strategies and practices for fostering literacy through the transmission of Chinese Dongbei Dagū vocal songs in Xiuyan County, Liaoning Province?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Xiuyan County, Liaoning Province, China, Society and Culture

1. Cultural Significance of Chinese Dongbei Dagū Vocal Songs: Chinese Dongbei Dagū vocal songs have a rich

history dating back over two centuries. These traditional folk songs, originating in Northeast China, hold a significant cultural and musical position within traditional Chinese music. They have evolved over time to encompass unique musical characteristics and cultural values, serving as an essential part of the cultural heritage of Northeast China. Despite their historical importance, these vocal songs now face the imminent threat of extinction due to a combination of contemporary factors (Yin et al., 2013).

2. Transmission of Traditional Cultural Heritage: The transmission of traditional cultural heritage, such as Dongbei Dagū, plays a pivotal role in its preservation. Past studies have highlighted the importance of passing down cultural traditions from one generation to another. Traditional art forms like Dongbei Dagū rely on oral tradition and direct mentorship. This requires a continuous process of fostering talent and knowledge transfer to ensure the survival of the art form. Contemporary challenges, such as the impact of modernization, technological advancements, and changing cultural landscapes, have disrupted traditional transmission methods, making it crucial to explore new approaches to ensure the continued survival of Dongbei Dagū (Guocheng et al., 2023; Yao et al., 2023).
3. Fostering cultural literacy: Fostering cultural literacy through traditional art forms like Dongbei Dagū is essential to ensuring the broader community's engagement and understanding of their cultural heritage. This includes both indigenous populations like the Xiuyan Manchu people and those outside the region. Cultural literacy implies not only the ability to appreciate and understand the art form but also to connect it to the broader cultural context, history, and values. A focus on fostering cultural literacy through the transmission of Dongbei Dagū is central to this research, as it aims to bridge the gap between generations and cultures (Tang & Sornyai, 2023).
4. The role of music in cultural literacy: Music, as an art form, has the unique ability to convey cultural messages, stories, and emotions. It has been used throughout history to educate, inspire, and foster cultural bonds. Dongbei Dagū, with its lyrical narratives and historical themes, is more than just music; it serves as an encyclopedia of the life, history, and values of the people in Northeast China. Exploring how this art form contributes to cultural literacy can provide insights into its preservation and transmission (Meihuan, 2023).
5. Challenges in the Preservation and Transmission: Modernization, the advent of high technology in music development, Western cultural influences, and the co-existence of multiple media platforms have altered the landscape upon which Dongbei Dagū depends. These external influences have resulted in a decline in interest among younger generations and a shift in career choices for artists. Additionally, the passing away of experienced artists and the lack of successors further jeopardize the survival of Dongbei Dagū. Understanding

these challenges is crucial in devising strategies to foster cultural literacy and facilitate the transmission of this traditional art form (Howard, 2016).

6. Local and regional characteristics: Chinese Dongbei Dagu vocal songs are deeply rooted in the local culture of Xiuyan County. They have distinct national and local characteristics, making them a unique form of mass entertainment folk art. The study of these characteristics is vital to understanding their role in fostering cultural literacy and the challenges faced in their transmission within the local context (Lau, 2015).

In summary, this literature review provides an overview of the cultural significance of Dongbei Dagu, its transmission challenges, and the importance of fostering cultural literacy. It highlights the need to explore how this traditional art form can continue to thrive and be appreciated in the contemporary world, with a specific focus on its role in Xiuyan County, Liaoning Province.

### Research Theory

1. Musicology is a crucial theoretical framework for understanding the role of Chinese Dongbei Dagu vocal songs in Xiuyan County, Liaoning Province. It provides a historical perspective on the art form's development, cultural significance, structural analysis, and sociological impact. It helps trace the origins, evolution, and adaptation of Dongbei Dagu, revealing its cultural significance, themes, narratives, and symbols. Musicology also helps understand the unique structural elements of Dongbei Dagu and its sociological impact on local communities (Hooper, 2016).
2. The transmission and preservation theory of Dongbei Dagu vocal songs is a crucial approach to preserving and transmitting this art form. It emphasizes interpersonal transmission, oral tradition, documentation, and archiving. The theory also highlights the importance of cultural revitalization strategies and the need for active engagement among communities in Xiuyan County. The preservation and transmission of Dongbei Dagu contribute to fostering cultural literacy, ensuring the art form's continued relevance and participation among younger generations (Cohen, 2009).

By integrating musicology and transmission and preservation theory. These theoretical frameworks provide a robust foundation for understanding the cultural, musical, and sociological dimensions of this traditional art form and its role in preserving and transmitting cultural knowledge and heritage.

### METHOD

#### Research Site

The selection of Xiuyan County as the research site for investigating the fostering of cultural literacy through the preservation and transmission of Chinese Dongbei Dagu vocal songs is rooted in its historical significance and cultural

vibrancy. The interdisciplinary lenses of musicology, transmission theory, and preservation theory have a significant influence on this decision

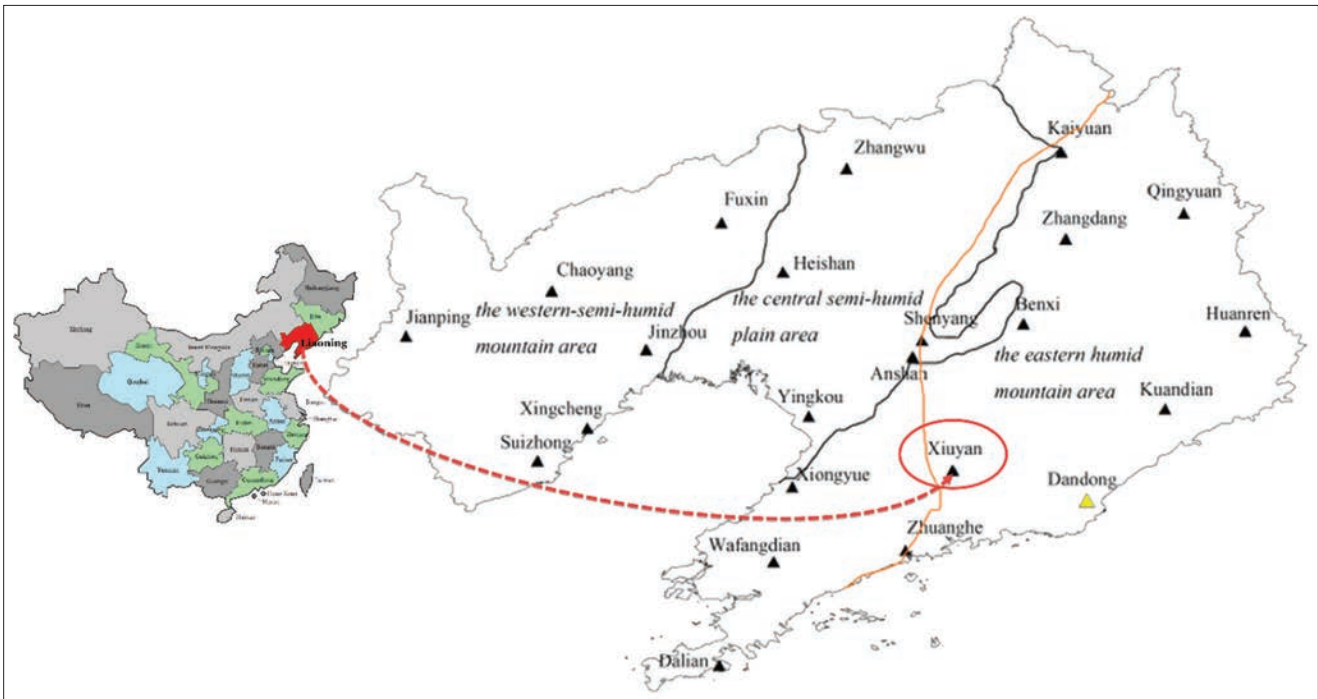
1. Historical Significance: Xiuyan County, situated within the Liaoning Province of China, boasts a remarkable history intertwined with the evolution of Dongbei Dagu vocal songs. These songs, with origins dating back over two hundred years, have not only survived but thrived within this region. Xiuyan County holds a unique position as a guardian of this musical tradition, making it an ideal focal point for research.
2. Cultural Heritage Hub: Xiuyan County has, for centuries, nurtured and preserved its cultural heritage with dedication. The Dongbei Dagu vocal songs are deeply embedded in the local identity and have played a pivotal role in shaping the cultural literacy of its inhabitants. This county is a living testament to the enduring power of cultural transmission.
3. Geographic Influence: The geographic diversity of Xiuyan County, marked by mountains, hills, plains, and waterways, has significantly influenced the cultural practices and traditions of its people. The musicality of Dongbei Dagu songs has been molded by their natural surroundings, lending a distinctive local flavor to this art form.
4. Local Expertise: Within Xiuyan County resides a community of Dongbei Dagu artists and practitioners whose families have passed down this tradition through generations. Their expertise, honed over years of practice, is invaluable for understanding the nuances of preservation and transmission.

Xiuyan County's rich history intertwines with the development and preservation of Dongbei Dagu vocal songs, as illustrated on the map of Xiuyan County, Liaoning Province, as shown in Figure 1. Over centuries, this region has been a cradle for this art form, fostering its growth, nurturing its practitioners, and ensuring its survival against external pressures and changing cultural landscapes. The historical trajectory of Dongbei Dagu in Xiuyan County reflects the core principles of transmission and preservation theory. It exemplifies how cultural practices, especially in the realm of music and art, are passed down from one generation to another, safeguarding not only the art itself but also the cultural literacy it imparts.

As the research delves into the fostering of cultural literacy through Dongbei Dagu, it will draw upon the rich historical tapestry of Xiuyan County to unearth the secrets of this musical tradition's resilience. Together, musicology and transmission and preservation theory will give us the tools we need to investigate how the lyrics and melodies of Dongbei Dagu songs contain cultural literacy and how this literacy has been passed down through generations in Xiuyan County.

#### Key Informants

The selection of key informants was carried out with specific criteria as shown in Table 1:



**Figure 1.** Map of research site in Xiuyan, Liaoning Province  
 Source: Chinafolio (n.d.), Feng et al. (2019)

**Table 1.** Key informants and their qualification

Category	Criteria for Selection
Academic Experts (two)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Published multiple works and papers on Dongbei Dagū</li> <li>2. Deep understanding of the transmission and preservation of Dongbei Dagū</li> <li>3. Capable of singing Dongbei Dagū</li> <li>4. Actively engaged in composition, singing, or performance of Dongbei Dagū for at least 20 years</li> </ol>
Singers of Dongbei Dagū (three)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Substantial knowledge about the culture and development of Dongbei Dagū</li> <li>2. Proficient in singing Dongbei Dagū and actively participating in various performances</li> <li>3. Made outstanding contributions to the dissemination and development of Dongbei Dagū.</li> </ol>
Musical Accompanist (one)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Significant history of engagement in the accompaniment of Dongbei Dagū performances</li> <li>2. Diligent, innovative in research, and actively involved in regional performances.</li> </ol>

**Research Tools**

The research utilized two primary tools: an Interview Form and an Observation Form, which played essential roles in gathering data and insights for the study, as shown in Table 2.

**Data Analysis**

The data analysis in this study will mainly rely on qualitative analysis approaches to delve into the rich narratives and insights gleaned from interviews and observations. Qualitative data, comprising transcripts of key informant interviews and extensive notes from participant observations. Use the open form to identify major themes, repeating patterns, and complicated cultural contexts related to the development, transmission, and cultural literacy of Dongbei Dagū vocal songs in Xiuyan County. This qualitative analysis allows for a deep exploration of the cultural meanings embedded within the music, lyrics, and practices associated with Dongbei Dagū, shedding light on the intricate ways in which this vocal tradition contributes to the cultural literacy of the local

community and has been preserved and transmitted across generations.

**RESULTS**

**Traditional Mode of Dongbei Dagū Transmission**

The study delved into the traditional modes of Dongbei Dagū transmission by conducting interviews with three inheritors from Xiuyan County: Yu Xiaoxia, He Chonghua, and Sun Jinzhou. These interviews shed light on the historical methods of transmitting Dongbei Dagū songs, showcasing the following two primary approaches:

1. **Apprentice-style Transmission** Apprentice-style transmission was a prevalent method, characterized by formal apprenticeship ceremonies that symbolized the establishment of the teacher-disciple relationship. Early transmissions involved strict procedures, including bowing ceremonies, written notices, and contracts. Apprentices committed to serving their master’s for three years, with some masters providing room and



**Table 2.** Research tools

	Interview Form	Observation Form
Purpose	To collect qualitative data through structured interviews	To record detailed observations during participant observation
Creation Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop research questions and topics</li> <li>2. Organize questions logically</li> <li>3. Include open-ended and closed-ended questions</li> <li>4. Add prompts and follow-up questions</li> <li>5. Ensure clarity and relevance</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Outline aspects and variables to observe</li> <li>2. Include date, time, location, and event description</li> <li>3. List specific behaviors, interactions, or elements</li> <li>4. Create a rating or coding system if applicable</li> <li>5. Provide space for qualitative notes</li> </ol>
Use in Research	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Follow the interview structure</li> <li>2. Record participant responses</li> <li>3. Use follow-up questions for deeper insights</li> <li>4. Keep the interview conversational</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Take to events or performances</li> <li>2. Document observations in real-time</li> <li>3. Record quantitative and qualitative data</li> <li>4. Capture nuances and cultural elements</li> <li>5. Be unobtrusive and respectful</li> <li>6. Review and analyze data after observation</li> </ol>

board while others required apprentices to cover their living expenses. Over time, this formality relaxed, and verbal agreements, gift exchanges, or banquets with fellow teachers became common. These changes allowed artists to learn from multiple masters, contributing to the evolution of Dongbei Dagū.

2. Family-style Transmission Family-style transmission involved learning Dongbei Dagū from family members, eliminating the need for formal apprenticeships or recommendations. Growing up in an artistic family environment, children naturally develop artistic sensibilities. Family-style transmission often came with unique, family-specific repertoires, maintaining an element of privacy and exclusivity. For example, Fu Lifei, born into a family of Dongbei Dagū artists, learned the art from her father and occasionally participated in performances and competitions, showcasing her family's unique repertoire, like the song "Cao Jia Jiang," which only she could perform locally.

These traditional transmission methods highlighted the cultural significance of Dongbei Dagū and the diverse ways it was passed down through generations.

### Modern Transmission Modes of Dongbei Dagū

In the evolving landscape of the Dongbei Dagū performance market, heightened competition among artists and evolving audience expectations have necessitated new transmission methods. While some performers still adhere to traditional teaching styles, insisting on replicating what their masters taught them, the changing times demand innovative approaches to maintain cultural relevance. Recognizing these shifts, the cultural department of Xiuyan County, along with some artists, embarked on a journey to explore and practice modern methods of transmitting Dongbei Dagū (Feng Zhilian, 2022, interviewed).

1. Transmission of Dongbei Dagū in Folk Activities: Xiuyan County's rich cultural heritage is steeped in agricultural traditions, and its folk customs reflect this unique history. Housewarming parties and birthday celebrations in the region often feature Dongbei Dagū performances. Local residents regularly invite Dongbei

Dagū artists to their homes to entertain guests, fostering a sense of community and cultural bonding. While many Dongbei Dagū performers now hold regular jobs, they participate in these folk activities during their leisure time, adapting their songs to suit various occasions and even improvising lyrics when needed. This active involvement in local folk events has contributed significantly to the continued dissemination of Dongbei Dagū within Xiuyan County.

2. Transmission of Dongbei Dagū in Tea Houses: Historically, tea houses played a pivotal role in the propagation of Dongbei Dagū. In 1978, the Xiuyan County Cultural Center established a Dongbei Dagū hall, providing a platform for numerous talented Dongbei Dagū artists to perform. In 2006, Yu Xiaoxia, a renowned Dongbei Dagū artist from Xiuyan, founded the "Citizen Quyi Tea House," where enthusiasts congregated to sing and exchange ideas about Dongbei Dagū. These simple yet welcoming tea houses featured artists performing on modest stages, often singing beloved traditional songs that resonated with audiences. The advent of tea houses revitalized the transmission of Dongbei Dagū, meeting the cultural needs of the community and enhancing its cultural vibrancy, as shown in Figure 2.
3. Transmission of Dongbei Dagū on the Theater: Stage In recent years, the Xiuyan County government has increased its focus on promoting Dongbei Dagū through various activities, competitions, and festivals. Performers like Yu Xiaoxia showcased Dongbei Dagū at events such as the "Anshan Winter Agricultural Expo," receiving acclaim from the audience. Notably, the "Xiuyan Dongbei Dagū Artisan Skills Competition" held in May 2020 and events like the "Non-Material Cultural Arts Week" in August 2021 further emphasized the significance of Dongbei Dagū on the theatrical stage. These venues demanded higher standards in song selection, costumes, and performance styles. Performing on professional theatrical stages showcased the artists' talents and instilled a sense of pride, contributing positively to the transmission of Dongbei Dagū.
4. Transmission of Dongbei Dagū in Training Workshops: Starting in 1980, the Xiuyan County Cultural



**Figure 2.** Singing of Dongbei Dagū in the tea house  
Source: Yang Li, from fieldwork in May 202

Center initiated the “Dongbei Dagū Youth Training Workshop” to provide professional training to artists. Esteemed artists were hired to offer free training to enthusiastic students, promoting knowledge exchange and skill enhancement. The subsequent years witnessed the continuation of these workshops, with the Xiuyan County Cultural Center organizing them annually. During field research in July 2022, the researcher attended the “Dongbei Dagū Music Teacher Training Workshop,” where over 20 music teachers from the county participated. Wang Fuling, a fifth-generation descendant of Xiuyan Dongbei Dagū, was the program’s leader, and it lasted for ten days. Students not only acquired fundamental performance skills but also learned the core tunes and singing techniques of Xiuyan Dongbei Dagū. The workshop culminated in a spirited final performance, during which students displayed their acquired skills and expressed their commitment to preserving and passing on Dongbei Dagū’s rich cultural heritage.

### Fostering Cultural Literacy and Heritage

The Dongbei Dagū, a venerable genre of folk art in Xiuyan County, boasts a rich history and a distinguished legacy. Its distinct music and vocal style bear the hallmark of unique artistic depth and local character. This art form holds immeasurable historical, cultural, and humanistic significance, representing a precious intangible cultural heritage. Dongbei Dagū epitomizes this status as it thrives in a non-material form, deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, transmitted across generations through human-centric skills, experiences, and spirit. Protective measures include keeping things safe, but what’s really needed is an in-depth, theory-based study of what’s going on in Dongbei Dagū right now so that effective plans can be made for its preservation and passing on, which will help keep this amazing traditional culture alive.

1. Dongbei Dagū, a cultural heritage of China, is at risk of disappearing, necessitating preservation efforts.

The Xiuyan County Cultural Center should create a database for intangible materials, including audio and video recordings, to safeguard historical artifacts. The preservation department should gain insights into the current state of Dongbei Dagū, capture relevant footage, and commission researchers for future generations. The government should support Dongbei Dagū through policy and financial subsidies, and the Dongbei Dagū community should continually enhance their skills and cultural literacy.

2. Dongbei Dagū, a traditional Chinese art form, relies on the dedication of its inheritors to maintain its cultural heritage. The absence of dedicated successors could jeopardize its continuity. Government initiatives should focus on these individuals and provide increased training opportunities. The transmission of Dongbei Dagū is enriched by professional artists and celebrated figures like Liu Lanfang, who has championed the art form. Schools must collaborate and offer relevant courses, focusing on traditional knowledge and a comprehensive education in music, history, culture, and related fields
3. Dongbei Dagū, a traditional Northeastern music form, has evolved from rural to urban settings and is now a popular musical form. Its viability depends on its ability to adapt to modern culture and gain acceptance from audiences. The fifth-generation inheritor, He Conghua, emphasizes the need for professional composers and lyricists to create contemporary compositions that harmonize with contemporary sensibilities. Dongbei Dagū’s unique singing style and melodies resonate with Northeastern culture, and its transmission in Xiuyan requires a holistic understanding of its essence, melodies, vocal styles, and inherent nature. To maintain its cultural relevance, Dongbei Dagū must continually innovate and reform, incorporating contemporary performance styles and societal aesthetics. This approach effectively reflects the contemporary social landscape and engenders widespread acceptance and appreciation of Dongbei Dagū.
4. Dongbei Dagū music requires a receptive audience to promote its development. Expanding the transmission of Dongbei Dagū through media and the internet can enhance its visibility. Combining traditional and emerging communication channels can also increase its impact. Cultivating a Dongbei Dagū audience from an early age is crucial, as it is an integral part of Dongbei folk culture and a vital part of regional customs. Implementing a transmission strategy that promotes folk customs and culture will foster a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of Dongbei Dagū.

The research conducted on the preservation and transmission of Chinese Dongbei Dagū vocal songs in Xiuyan County, Liaoning Province, uncovers essential insights into the fostering of cultural literacy within this traditional art form. Dongbei Dagū, an integral part of Xiuyan’s cultural heritage, holds historical, cultural, and humanistic significance. This study investigates various aspects of preserving

**Table 3.** A succinct overview of the related key research findings

Aspect	Key Findings
1. Establishment of a Dongbei Dagū Database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Importance of preserving textual and audiovisual materials</li> <li>- Need for a dedicated database at Xiuyan County Cultural Center</li> <li>- Recorded materials effectively preserve historical artifacts</li> </ul>
2. Training of Dongbei Dagū Inheritors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Critical role of training inheritors for preservation</li> <li>- Government support and training opportunities are essential</li> <li>- Schools contribute to educating new performers</li> </ul>
3. Innovation and Development of Dongbei Dagū	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Necessity for Dongbei Dagū to innovate and adapt to modern culture</li> <li>- Collaboration with contemporary composers and lyricists is vital</li> <li>- Continuous reform and adaptation are needed</li> </ul>
4. Increasing Publicity and Expanding the Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wider audience acceptance and appreciation are essential</li> <li>- Media and the internet serve as potent tools for dissemination</li> <li>- Early education cultivates a future audience</li> </ul>
5. Utilizing University Platforms for Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Universities play a significant role in preserving Dongbei Dagū</li> <li>- Research and educational efforts in universities are beneficial</li> <li>- Universities serve as a resource for transmission</li> </ul>
6. Government Involvement in Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government policies and funding support are crucial for preservation</li> <li>- Legal frameworks and regulations are needed</li> <li>- Public input and involvement in preservation efforts are vital</li> </ul>

and transmitting Dongbei Dagū, including the establishment of databases, training of inheritors, innovation, expanding the audience, leveraging university platforms, and government involvement, as shown in Table 3.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The objective of this study is to find out what the key strategies and practices are for fostering literacy through the transmission of Chinese Dongbei Dagū vocal songs in Xiuyan County, Liaoning Province, which helps people learn to read and write. It uses ideas from musicology and transmission and preservation theory. These theoretical foundations guided the exploration of Dongbei Dagū’s historical significance, transmission methods, and role in promoting cultural literacy. The research sought to unravel how this traditional art form maintains its cultural relevance in a contemporary context.

The research findings consistently align with these theoretical principles. The apprentice-style and family-style modes of Dongbei Dagū transmission serve as examples of the crucial roles that interpersonal transmission and direct mentorship play in preserving this art form. These findings resonate with transmission and preservation theory, which emphasizes the significance of preserving traditional knowledge through human-centric skills and experiences (Cohen, 2009).

In contrast, the research also reveals modern transmission modes that adapt to evolving societal dynamics. Dongbei Dagū’s integration into folk activities, tea houses, theaters, and training workshops demonstrates its resilience in meeting evolving audience expectations and addressing competition among artists. These contemporary transmission methods align perfectly with the need for innovation and cultural adaptation, as proposed in the theoretical framework.

The implications of this research extend beyond the scope of preserving and transmitting Dongbei Dagū within Xiuyan County. They resonate with broader discussions on the preservation of intangible cultural heritage and the promotion of cultural literacy worldwide.

Firstly, the establishment of a Dongbei Dagū database emerges as a pivotal step in preserving historical artifacts, aligning with global efforts to document and archive intangible cultural heritage to ensure its continuity (Sun & Karin, 2022). Moreover, the government’s role in providing support and financial subsidies, as suggested in the research, can serve as a model for other regions grappling with the preservation of traditional art forms (Ren, 2023).

Secondly, the emphasis on training Dongbei Dagū inheritors echoes discussions on the importance of mentorship and education in preserving cultural traditions (Tang & Sornyai, 2023). Schools and universities emerge as critical players in educating future performers and ensuring the continuity of intangible cultural heritage (Wu & Bhengsri, 2023).

Thirdly, the call for innovation and adaptation within Dongbei Dagū resonates with discussions on the need for traditional art forms to remain relevant in contemporary society (Howard, 2016). Dongbei Dagū’s evolution from rural to urban settings mirrors the broader transition of traditional art forms in response to societal changes (Lau, 2015).

Lastly, expanding the audience and leveraging modern communication channels, as advocated in this research, offer a blueprint for revitalizing traditional art forms and enhancing cultural literacy (Zhou & Chuangprakhon, 2023). Engaging younger generations through early education is paramount to ensuring the transmission of cultural knowledge and appreciation (Wu & Boonsrianun, 2023).

In conclusion, this research provides invaluable insights into the preservation and transmission of Chinese Dongbei Dagū vocal songs in Xiuyan County, Liaoning Province,



China. The study's alignment with musicology and transmission and preservation theory facilitated the uncovering of historical significance, transmission methods, and the role of cultural literacy within this traditional art form. These findings underscore the importance of both continuity and adaptation in preserving intangible cultural heritage. Furthermore, the implications of this research extend to broader discussions on preserving and promoting cultural literacy within traditional art forms.

Efforts to establish databases, support inheritors, encourage innovation, expand audiences, and engage educational institutions can serve as a roadmap for the preservation of intangible cultural heritage on a global scale. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how traditional art forms can thrive in contemporary society, safeguarding the rich tapestry of cultural heritage for generations to come.

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