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## Editors:

Ungul Laptaned  
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# IJMBE International Journal of Management, Business, and Economics

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## Welcome Address from Editors

It is appropriate to celebrate the continuity of an exciting and esteemed journal. The IJMBE will serve and provide a forum for exchange of ideas among business executives and academicians concerned with Management, Business, and Economics issues. With the rapid evolution of corporate business from international to global in recent years, general business has been one of the areas of greatest added complexity and concern for corporate managers. The IJMBE will be an academic journal combining academic inquiry and informed business practices. It will publish empirical, analytical, review, and survey articles, as well as case studies related to all areas of Management, Business, and Economics. A sentiment often expressed by practitioners is that academic research in general may not be addressing the most relevant questions in the real world.

It is fair to say that the IJMBE will publish high-quality applied-research papers. Nevertheless, studies that test important theoretical works and shed additional light on the issue with some business implications will also be solicited. Each submitted paper has been reviewed by several members of the IJMBE international editorial board and external referees. On the basis, we would like to thank all of them for their support with review process of submitted papers.

We cordially invite papers with theoretical research/conceptual work or applied research/applications on topics related to research, practice, and teaching in all subject areas of Management, Business, and Economics, or related subjects. We welcome paper submissions on the basis that the material has not been published elsewhere. The ultimate goal is to develop a journal that will appeal to both management and business practitioners. We expect the IJMBE to be an outstanding international forum for the exchange of ideas and results, and provide a baseline of further progress in the aforementioned areas.



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## Foreword

Welcome to the special issue of International Journal of Management, Business, and Economics (IJMBE), the Editors received a number of papers from different countries such as China and Thailand. The received papers encompassed many areas of marketing, banking, economics, insurance and risk management, industrial and operation management, strategic management, and international and global business management. After the review process, a total of eleven manuscripts were selected for publication.

The first article is authored by *Bowen Dou and Erming Xu*, and named as *"How Social Networks Shape Individual Donation Behavior: Evidence from Generation Z"*. This study investigates how social networks influence Generation Z's donation behavior, focusing on three core dimensions: reciprocity, social network size, and interaction frequency.

The second paper is examined by *Jing Duan and Zeyuan Yu*. Their paper is entitled *"Research on the Current Status and Characteristics of Music Intangible Cultural Heritage Resources in Chongqing"*. This study analyzes music-related intangible cultural heritage in Chongqing. It explores their cultural roots and regional traits to guide preservation and inheritance efforts.

The third article is conducted by *Jing Dong and Jiangting Chu*, and is entitled *"From the Perspective of Classroom Teaching Customs, the Process of Institutional Generation: Taking the Music Department of C University as an Example"*. This study focuses on the classroom teaching customs and their formation mechanisms in the music department of C University. It reveals the complex interactive relationship between institutionalized environment and classroom teaching customs.

The fourth article is conducted by *Li Siyu and Sirawit Sirirak*, and is entitled *"Factors Influencing Chinese Tourists' Decision to Use Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. in Phuket"*. This study assesses the perceptions regarding service quality, service marketing mix factors, and their decision to use Thai tour operators. This study may serve as a guideline for improving the service standards in line with evolving tourism trends.

Article number five is entitled *"Reconstruction of Applied Curriculum System for Music Majors in Local Chinese Universities"*, and is examined by *Qiyue Xie and Liguang Li*. This article focuses on the reconstruction of the applied curriculum system for music majors in local universities in China, and explores in depth the problems existing in the current curriculum system.

The sixth article is conducted by *Shengping Liu*, and is entitled “*Research on the Influencing Factors of Social Responsibility Awareness among College Students in Western China*” This article adopts a research method that combines theory and empirical evidence to analyze the sense of responsibility and its influencing factors among college students in the western region.

In the seventh article, entitled “*A Qualitative Research on the College Landscape Education Incorporating Local Cultural Elements - Taking H University as an Example*” conducted by *Siyi Wu*. The study uses the landscape construction of H University as a case study to explore the issue of cultivating students through the embedding of local cultural elements in university landscapes.

The eight article is authored by *Sunisa Kongkumkaew* and *Sirawit Sirirak*, and named as “*Service Marketing Mix and Brand Value Influencing Consumers’ Purchasing Decision of Used Car in Phuket*”. This study investigates personal factors and consumer behaviors related to purchasing used cars in Phuket province. It also examines how marketing mix, brand value, and decision-making factors influence and relate to consumer purchase decisions.

For the ninth, the article entitled “*Research on Financial Risk Early Warning of Yunnan Aluminum Industry*” is examined by *Tong Xu* and *Zhaomei Chi*. This study focuses on the financial risk management of Yunnan Aluminum, aiming to identify the financial risks faced by the company and propose prevention strategies by building a financial risk early warning model.

Last but not the least, the article entitled “*A Study on the Impact and Mechanism of Tourism Destination Image Contrast on Tourists’ Travel Intentions, based on the Mediating Role of Psychological Perception*” is examined by *Yurong Li*. This study introduces the concept of “image disparity” to investigate the impact of climate and cultural image disparities on tourists’ travel intentions and their underlying mechanisms.

It is hoped that you will enjoy reading these articles and that they will generate responses and discussions that will help advance our knowledge of the field of Management, Business, and Economics. The Editors and the Editorial Board of the IJMBE would like to welcome your future submissions to make this journal your forum for sharing ideas and research work with all interested parties.

**Editor-In-Chief**

Ungul Laptaned

**Associate Editor**

Konrad Gunesch

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# **How Social Networks Shape Individual Donation Behavior: Evidence from Generation Z**

by

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### Abstract

With the rapid development of digital technology and social media, Generation Z has emerged as a pivotal demographic in the landscape of individual charitable donations, particularly in online contexts. This study investigates how social networks influence Generation Z's donation behavior, focusing on three core dimensions: reciprocity, social network size, and interaction frequency. Drawing on social network theory and self-determination theory, a quantitative approach was employed, collecting data through a structured questionnaire distributed among 223 Generation Z respondents. The analysis reveals that all three social network factors positively and significantly affect donation behavior within this cohort. Reciprocity fosters a sense of mutual responsibility and trust, encouraging repeated charitable actions. A larger social network expands exposure to donation opportunities and social encouragement, while frequent interactions enhance information exchange and emotional engagement, further motivating giving. These findings enrich the understanding of social network dynamics in philanthropy and highlight the distinct characteristics of Generation Z as digital natives with unique social and value systems. The study also acknowledges potential challenges, such as donation driven by peer pressure rather than intrinsic motivation, which may impact the sustainability of giving behaviors. Based on the results, recommendations are proposed for individuals to deepen social connections and foster genuine charitable values, for charitable organizations to tailor engagement strategies that leverage social media and peer influence, and for policymakers to strengthen legal frameworks and promote philanthropic culture from early education onward. By addressing these factors, stakeholders can effectively mobilize Generation Z's philanthropic potential, contributing to the sustainable development of individual giving and the broader charitable sector. This research broadens the application of social network theory in the field of philanthropy and offers practical insights for enhancing online donation participation among young donors.

**Keywords:** Generation Z, Social Networks, Donation Behavior, Reciprocity, Online Philanthropy

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background and Importance of the Problem

With the development of social and economic levels and the improvement of residents' living standards, an increasing number of people are focusing on public welfare and charity activities. Individual donation behavior has become a new social trend. Studies indicate that in 2020, Chinese charitable organizations raised more than 8.2 billion RMB through online fundraising, representing a year-on-year increase of 52%. Meanwhile, over 10 billion individuals participated and engaged in online donation activities, demonstrating a notable growth trend in individual donations. In recent years, the government has continuously improved and refined tax deduction policies to provide strong policy support for the development of individual philanthropy. Concurrent with societal progress, Generation Z (born between 1995 and 2009) has emerged as the largest demographic group, surpassing Millennials. As the first generation to live simultaneously in both virtual and real worlds, Gen Z is heavily influenced by digital information technology, instant messaging devices, smartphones, and other technological innovations. This has resulted in distinctive social networks and value systems, with their behaviors and decision-making often being highly susceptible to social influences. Reports indicate that Generation Z demonstrates higher interest and activity in online philanthropy, walking-based donation schemes, charitable dissemination, and micro-donation scenarios. As a result, Generation Z has become the main force behind online charitable activities. However, current research on the influence of social networks on Generation Z's online individual donation behavior remains limited.

This study aims to explore the influence of social networks on the donation behavior of Generation Z, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of this demographic's individual donation patterns from a social network perspective. The findings will assist charitable organizations and fundraising platforms in developing more effective strategies and suggestions to encourage Generation Z's donations, promoting the sustainable development of individual giving and philanthropy. By examining the impact of social networks on Generation Z's individual donation behavior, this research can help charitable organizations formulate, adjust, and innovate their marketing strategies more promptly and effectively. Leveraging social networks can attract more Generation Z respondents, expand donor outreach, and increase participation, thereby optimizing fundraising methods. This study focuses on the mechanisms through which social networks influence Generation Z's donation behaviors, further expanding the scope of social network theory and providing new perspectives and empirical evidence for related research fields. Applying social network theory to the domain of Generation Z's individual donations not only broadens its application but also offers new directions for understanding this group's charitable behaviors.

### 1.2 Research Question

What is the influence of social networks, particularly reciprocity, network size, and interaction frequency, on the online individual donation behavior of Generation Z?

### 1.3 Research Objectives

1) To examine the relationship between reciprocity within social networks, the size of social networks, and interaction frequency and individual donation behavior.

2) To explore the influence of social networks on Generation Z's charitable donation behavior, aiming to understand the characteristics of Generation Z's donation patterns and to expand

research perspectives on individual donation behavior.

3) To enrich the boundaries of social network theory and broaden its application in the marketing strategies of charitable organizations.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Related Concepts and Theories**

Research on social networks has a profound historical foundation. Mitchell (1969) emphasized a relational perspective, defining social networks as social structures formed through communication and contact among individuals. These structures create a complex web of interpersonal relationships that encompass various types of social connections.

Mark (1970) introduced the concept of relationship strength and classified interpersonal relationships into two categories: strong ties and weak ties. Granovetter's (1973) Weak Ties Theory further developed this idea by proposing that the strength of a social relationship is composed of several factors: interaction frequency, emotional intensity, closeness, and reciprocal exchange. Based on these attributes, social ties can be categorized into strong and weak connections, each playing distinct roles in information flow and behavior influence.

Yanjie (2004) asserted that strong ties are typically associated with frequent communication and high reciprocity. Individuals embedded in strong tie networks are more likely to share resources and trust, which can significantly affect their participation in collective actions such as charitable donations. Additionally, the size of the social network is a significant element of social network theory. Larger networks tend to connect individuals across more diverse social circles, professions, and status groups, which increases exposure to various social activities, including philanthropic involvement.

These theoretical foundations form the basis for selecting three key social network variables in this study: reciprocity, interaction frequency, and social network size.

### **2.2 Literature Surveys**

Numerous scholars have explored individual donation behavior from different perspectives. Sarah (2015) identified the social proof phenomenon in marathon-related online donations, demonstrating that people often mimic others' giving behaviors. Similarly, Harbaugh (1998) argued that non-altruistic motivations, such as enhancing social reputation, play a role in driving charitable actions. Regarding Generation Z, Konstantinou and Kate (2022) found that peer influence plays a critical role in their donation behavior. Peer information and social media recommendations are viewed as credible and persuasive, directly influencing donation decisions. This aligns with the broader understanding of social media's role in shaping Generation Z's charitable expressions and habits.

In terms of peer networks, Xu (2018) found that adolescents are positively influenced by their peer groups to engage in charitable activities. However, he also noted potential downsides, such as comparative psychology and obligatory giving, which may lead to irregular or unethical donation behavior. Family social networks also play an important role. Research by Yongjiao et al. (2019) showed that parental involvement in charitable acts positively influences their children's behavior,

and such influences can extend into adulthood.

Studies on Generation Z emphasize their unique characteristics. This generation is more inclined to engage with charities that offer direct, transparent communication, and social media platforms are integral to their interaction with charitable causes. Xu (2018) further confirmed that while peer influence can encourage participation, it can also spread misconceptions that negatively impact donation behaviors. In domestic research, Generation Z was first defined in the context of “The Survival Status of the Latest Population, Generation Z.” The Institute for Innovative Development at Beijing Normal University found that internet access has lowered entry barriers to philanthropy, encouraging participation among younger demographics. Male Gen Z participants preferred donation dissemination, monetary giving, and fitness-related charity (e.g., walking-based programs), while females favored volunteering and charitable purchasing.

Despite these findings, most existing research focuses on Millennials or general student populations, offering limited insights into Generation Z specifically. Furthermore, donation-related studies often emphasize broad, composite factors and fail to focus deeply on the role of social networks in shaping behavior.

### 2.3 Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in social network theory and focuses on the following key variables:

#### 1) Independent Variables

- Reciprocity – The mutual exchange of support, help, or resources within the social network.
- Interaction Frequency – The regularity and intensity of communication between individuals in the network.
- Social Network Size – The number of meaningful social connections or contacts an individual maintains.

#### 2) Dependent Variable:

- Generation Z’s Online Individual Donation Behavior – The frequency, willingness, and participation of Gen Z individuals in online charitable donations.

### 2.4 Research Hypothesis

Based on the conceptual framework and literature analysis, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Reciprocity within social networks positively influences Generation Z’s online individual donation behavior.

H2: Interaction frequency within social networks positively influences Generation Z’s online individual donation behavior.

H3: The size of an individual’s social network positively correlates with their online donation behavior.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study adopted an empirical quantitative research design to investigate the relationship between social network characteristics and Generation Z's charitable donation behavior. The research was grounded in social network theory and developed through a comprehensive review of academic literature related to individual donation behavior, Generation Z, and social networking influences. Theoretical foundations and relevant concepts were identified, forming the basis for constructing a research model and developing hypotheses. The study aimed to analyze how the dimensions of reciprocity, interaction frequency, and network size influence the online donation behaviors of Generation Z.

#### **3.2 Population and Sample**

The study targeted individuals from Generation Z, defined as those born between 1995 and 2009. To gather representative data, a random sampling technique was employed. The initial sampling goal was to collect 300 responses from this demographic through an online survey. After data screening and cleaning, 223 valid questionnaires were retained for analysis, resulting in an effective response rate of 74.33%. The sample included a diverse group of Generation Z participants from various backgrounds to ensure the generalizability of findings across different segments of this age group.

#### **3.3 Research Instruments**

Data were collected using a structured, closed-ended questionnaire designed specifically for this study. The questionnaire was divided into three main sections. The first section collected demographic and control variables such as age, gender, and educational background. The second section focused on charitable donation behavior, including the frequency, motivation, and channels through which participants donated. The third section measured three independent variables, reciprocity, interaction frequency, and social network size, based on social network theory. All items were measured using a Likert scale to allow for standardized quantitative analysis.

#### **3.4 Data Collection**

The questionnaire was distributed online through social media platforms and messaging apps to reach a broad cross-section of Generation Z. Online distribution allowed for convenient and anonymous participation while minimizing geographical limitations. Respondents were selected through random sampling, and participation was voluntary. Of the 300 distributed questionnaires, 223 valid responses were collected after eliminating incomplete or invalid submissions. The high response rate (74.33%) indicated strong engagement from the target group, supporting the reliability of the data set for subsequent analysis.

#### **3.5 Statistics Used for Data Analysis**

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 27.0 statistical software. Several statistical techniques were employed to ensure the robustness of the findings. Reliability testing was performed to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. Validity tests ensured the accuracy and relevance of the measurement instruments. To examine the relationships between variables, correlation analysis was conducted, followed by linear regression analysis to test the hypotheses and

determine the strength and direction of the impact of social network dimensions on donation behavior. These methods allowed the study to empirically validate the proposed model and draw meaningful conclusions.

## 4. Data Analysis and Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

Reciprocity manifests as a sense of mutual responsibility, wherein individuals tend to reciprocate those who have previously helped them to sustain ongoing exchanges. This principle of reciprocity triggers a subtle psychological mechanism: after receiving assistance, individuals often develop an expectation of giving back. Even among strangers on the internet, this "reciprocal gratitude" mentality persists. Individuals with a strong awareness of reciprocity are more likely to proactively assist others, thereby maintaining a positive cycle of reciprocal interactions. When members of a group collectively hold this mutually beneficial consciousness, each person believes that their contributions will eventually be rewarded, which further encourages reciprocal aid. In the context of social network donation scenarios, even a modest contribution can provide psychological reassurance that one may receive help from others in the future. Based on this understanding, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: There is a positive and significant correlation between the level of reciprocity in social networks and individual donation behaviors among Generation Z.

Social network size generally refers to the number of direct social relationships an individual maintains within their social network, in other words, the total number of people with whom one can directly interact or contact. It is an important dimension of an individual's social capital, reflecting the breadth of their social circle. Network size is defined as "the total number of stable interactional relationships maintained by an individual within a specific period," and holds significance in sociological quantitative research. In donation contexts, different sizes of social networks can have markedly different impacts on individual donation behaviors. Consequently, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: There is a positive and significant relationship between social network size and individual donation behavior among Generation Z.

Social network interaction frequency refers to how often individuals engage in social interactions within their social networks, typically measured by the number of interactions over a unit of time (e.g., weekly or monthly). This concept is a key variable in social network analysis, used to evaluate the strength and stability of social relationships, as well as their influence on information dissemination, resource acquisition, and other social behaviors. Bian Yanjie (2004), in analyzing Chinese social networks, pointed out that interaction frequency is one of the critical dimensions of relationship strength, together with emotional intensity and reciprocity, forming the standard for strong ties. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: There is a positive and significant correlation between social network interaction frequency and individual donation behaviors among Generation Z.

## 4.2 Data Analysis of the Quantitative Data

### 4.2.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were conducted on the sample. As shown in Table 1, regarding control variables, among the 223 valid questionnaires, gender distribution was relatively balanced, with 118 females accounting for 52.91% and 105 males accounting for 47.09%. In terms of age distribution, 77 participants were aged 18 or below, 65 were aged 19-23 (inclusive), and 81 were aged 24 or above. The occupational composition indicated that students constituted the majority, while non-students made up a smaller proportion. Regarding educational attainment, undergraduates represented the largest group with 87 individuals, accounting for 39.01%, while those with a master's degree or higher were the fewest, numbering only 9 and constituting 4.04%. In terms of monthly income, those earning over 5,001 RMB were the largest group with 75 individuals, making up 33.63%; conversely, the smallest group comprised individuals earning between 2,001 and 5,000 RMB, totaling 13 and accounting for 5.83%. Regarding religious beliefs, the highest number of respondents reported no religious affiliation (176 participants), followed by Buddhists, with 15 individuals.

**Table 1** Demographic Variables

Control Variable	Classification	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	105	47.09%
	Female	118	52.91%
Age	18 and Below	77	34.53%
	19-23	65	29.15%
	24 and Above	81	36.32%
Identification	Students	142	63.68%
	Employed	81	36.32%
Education	High School Education or Below	77	34.53%
	College	50	22.42%
	Bachelor	87	39.01%
	Master and Above	9	4.04%
Monthly Income	500 RMB and Below	68	30.49%
	501-1000 RMB	20	8.97%
	1001-2000 RMB	47	21.08%
	2001-5000 RMB	13	5.83%
	5001RMB and Above	75	33.63%
Religious	Buddhism	15	6.72%
	Taoism	4	1.80%
	Christianity	18	8.07%
	Islam	2	0.90%
	None	176	78.92%
	Others	8	3.59%



#### 4.2.2 Regression Analysis

This study further examines the relationship between social networks and individual donation behavior through linear regression analysis; detailed results are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2** Regression Analysis Result

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Significance	Collinearity Statistics	
	$\beta$	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
Contral Variable	1.120	0.275		4.079	<0.001**		
Reciprocity of Social Networks	0.297	0.070	0.278	4.259	<0.001**	0.813	1.230
Scale of Social Networks	0.199	0.067	0.195	2.982	0.003**	0.808	1.237
Frequency of Social Network Interactions	0.172	0.064	0.174	2.680	0.008**	0.821	1.219

According to Table 2, the  $\beta$  values of the independent variables, reciprocity level of social networks, scale of social networks, and frequency of social network interactions, are all positive, indicating that these factors positively influence the dependent variable, individual donation behavior. The significance levels for reciprocity level of social networks, social network scale, and interaction frequency are <0.001, 0.003, and 0.008, respectively; all are less than 0.05, suggesting that these three variables have a significant impact on individual donation behavior. The VIF values for reciprocity level of social networks, social network scale, and interaction frequency are 1.230, 1.237, and 1.219, respectively, all below 10, indicating that there is no multicollinearity among the three independent variables.

The empirical analysis supports hypotheses H1, H2, and H3, with all three hypotheses being validated. Specifically, there is a significant positive relationship between reciprocity level of social networks and Generation Z's donation behavior, a significant positive relationship between social network scale and Generation Z's donation behavior, and a significant positive relationship between interaction frequency within social networks and Generation Z's donation behavior.

#### 4.3 Summary of the Results

The analysis of the quantitative data confirms that social network factors significantly influence the donation behaviors of Generation Z individuals. The findings empirically support all three proposed hypotheses. First, a positive and significant correlation exists between the level of reciprocity within social networks and individual donation behavior, indicating that Generation Z members who experience or value mutual exchange are more likely to engage in charitable giving. Second, the size of social networks also shows a positive and significant relationship with donation behavior, suggesting that having a broader social circle increases the likelihood of participating in donation activities. Third, the frequency of interactions within social networks is positively and significantly associated with donation behavior, highlighting that more frequent social engagement



encourages charitable participation. Together, these results emphasize the critical role that social network dynamic (reciprocity, scale, and interaction frequency) play in motivating Generation Z to contribute to philanthropic causes. The lack of multicollinearity among the variables further strengthens the robustness of these conclusions, confirming that each social network dimension independently contributes to the explanation of donation behavior.

## **5. Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendation**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

This study focused on Generation Z as the research subject and examined the influence of social networks on their individual charitable donation behavior. By reviewing domestic and international literature and applying both social network theory and self-determination theory, the study proposed three core hypotheses related to reciprocity, interaction frequency, and social network size. A questionnaire was developed based on validated scales from existing research, and data were collected and analyzed using SPSS 27.0. Through reliability and validity testing, correlation analysis, and regression analysis, the study arrived at three key conclusions. First, there is a positive and significant correlation between the level of reciprocity in social networks and the donation behavior of Generation Z individuals. Second, the size of a social network is positively associated with their donation behavior. Third, the frequency of interaction within social networks also has a significant positive impact on their willingness to donate.

The findings contribute to expanding the application of social network theory and offer new insights into individual donation behavior, particularly among Generation Z. Social networks, whether composed of strong or weak ties, often involve reciprocal behaviors rooted in trust, emotional connection, and shared experiences. These relationships significantly influence Generation Z's charitable decisions, as peer influence is especially strong within this demographic. However, some peer-driven donation behavior may be motivated by comparison or social pressure rather than genuine altruism, which could result in unstable or unsustainable donation patterns. Although Generation Z is highly active on social media and exposed to a vast amount of donation-related information, much of their interaction is fragmented, and meaningful discussion on donation topics remains limited. Furthermore, despite having large and diverse social networks, many of the weak ties within these networks lack influence, which may reduce the effectiveness of donation information dissemination. Thus, while social networks have a strong overall impact on donation behavior, this influence is complex and mediated by various factors such as network structure, relationship quality, and communication style.

### **5.2 Discussion**

In the context of contemporary society, individual donations have become an essential element of China's social development and a key component in building a harmonious society. The improvement in material living standards has provided a favorable foundation for the expansion of philanthropic efforts. Generation Z, as a digital-native cohort, has emerged as a powerful force in online donations, supported by the accessibility and convenience of internet-based fundraising platforms. Understanding the unique behavioral patterns of Generation Z is therefore crucial to broadening the donor base and driving the sustainable development of charitable activities.

From the individual perspective, expanding one's social network is essential for promoting donation behavior. Participation in student associations, community groups, and interest-based clubs

enhances the heterogeneity and connectivity of social networks, while strong interpersonal ties foster trust and emotional engagement, which are conducive to promoting charitable giving. Additionally, increasing the frequency of social interactions and engaging more actively with charitable content helps reinforce awareness and willingness to donate. Educating individuals on the meaning and reciprocity behind charitable giving can also encourage them to initiate and support donation activities more confidently.

Charitable organizations play a critical role in fostering this engagement. They must deepen their understanding of Generation Z's values, social habits, and communication preferences. Tools such as surveys and interviews can help identify key networks and influencers within this demographic. Moreover, developing tailored engagement strategies, such as leveraging social media, hosting interactive offline events, or encouraging peer-to-peer sharing, can enhance trust and continuity in donor relationships. By integrating reciprocal mechanisms and maintaining high-frequency communication, charitable organizations can effectively mobilize Generation Z participants and strengthen their connection to philanthropic causes.

From a societal standpoint, China's philanthropic ecosystem is still evolving, and a strong culture of active individual giving is yet to be fully established. Society at large, including schools, media, and local communities, must work collaboratively to create an environment that fosters empathy, reciprocity, and participation in charitable acts. The diversity of Generation Z's interests requires varied donation formats, allowing individuals with different financial capacities and personal values to contribute meaningfully. At the same time, the legal framework surrounding philanthropy must be continuously updated to ensure transparency and accountability, especially in the context of online donations where concerns over fraud and data privacy are prevalent.

### 5.3 Recommendation

Based on the research findings and discussions, several recommendations are proposed to enhance Generation Z's engagement in individual charitable donations and to support the sustainable development of the philanthropic sector.

For individuals, particularly members of Generation Z, it is recommended to actively expand their social networks through participation in clubs, communities, campus associations, and interest-based groups. This expansion can increase exposure to charitable opportunities and foster greater involvement. Strengthening strong-tie relationships within these networks is essential, as they promote deeper emotional connections, trust, and identification with philanthropic causes. Individuals should also seek to increase the frequency of interactions within their networks, especially with peers and charitable organizations, to stay informed and inspired. Furthermore, Generation Z individuals are encouraged to develop a more thorough understanding of charitable projects, recognize the importance of reciprocity in donation behavior, and foster long-term charitable values. They should aim to donate out of genuine commitment rather than being influenced by comparison or peer pressure, thereby making their giving more meaningful and sustainable.

For charitable organizations, it is crucial to conduct targeted research on Generation Z's behaviors, values, and peer influence patterns using tools such as surveys and interviews. This helps in identifying closely connected social network clusters and enables the design of tailored reciprocal communication strategies. Increasing the frequency of interaction with Gen Z donors is key, organizations should maintain regular contact through platforms like social media, WeChat groups, and engaging offline events. Personalized campaigns that involve both Generation Z and their

immediate social circles can significantly strengthen participation and donor loyalty. Additionally, maintaining transparency in charitable operations and simplifying donation procedures will help build credibility and trust among young donors who value clarity and authenticity in the causes they support.

From the perspective of society and government, efforts should be made to cultivate philanthropic values from an early age through education, media campaigns, and community outreach. Establishing collaborative mechanisms that involve schools, non-profit organizations, tech enterprises, and community groups can foster a supportive and dynamic donation ecosystem. Given the diversity within Generation Z, it is important to offer varied and inclusive donation formats that cater to different financial capacities and lifestyle preferences. Furthermore, legal protections must be strengthened to address challenges associated with online donations. This includes refining the Charity Law, ensuring stricter regulation of data privacy, monitoring fund usage, and holding platforms accountable. These legal improvements are vital in restoring and enhancing Generation Z's trust in donation platforms.

By implementing these recommendations, individuals, organizations, and policymakers can more effectively engage Generation Z in meaningful, sustained, and self-motivated philanthropic activities. These efforts will contribute significantly to the long-term growth and resilience of the charitable sector.

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# **Research on the Current Status and Characteristics of Music Intangible Culture Heritage Resources in Chongqing**

by

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### Abstract

Chongqing, a historically and culturally significant municipality in southwestern China, possesses an abundant and diverse collection of music-related intangible cultural heritage (ICH). These cultural assets are deeply rooted in the Ba Yu and Xiajiang traditions and encompass a wide range of genres including labor chants (haozi), folk songs, ritual music, and instrumental ensembles. Shaped by the region's mountainous terrain, multi-ethnic settlements, and rich historical evolution, these music traditions reflect the unique cultural identity of Chongqing. This study systematically analyzes the status, distribution, and thematic characteristics of music ICH across the city's 38 districts and counties. Based on data from national and municipal heritage lists, the findings reveal a total of 100 recognized music ICH items, predominantly concentrated in the northeastern and southeastern regions, areas with strong ethnic diversity and limited urban development. Despite significant progress in documentation and policy support, the study identifies critical challenges to the sustainability of music ICH in Chongqing. These include an aging generation of cultural inheritors, declining transmission environments, weak public awareness, and regional imbalances in heritage distribution. The research argues that protecting musical ICH requires an ecological approach, one that integrates heritage into local education systems, community life, and broader cultural ecosystems. To address these issues, the study proposes several practical strategies: incorporating ICH content into township primary school curricula, training teachers in heritage pedagogy, promoting community involvement through festivals and outreach, and reinforcing government support through targeted funding and legislation. Interdisciplinary research and long-term case studies are also recommended to track the educational and cultural impacts of heritage integration. This research contributes both theoretical insights and actionable recommendations for safeguarding music ICH in rapidly modernizing societies. It offers a replicable model for balancing cultural preservation with development, aiming to maintain the vibrancy and relevance of traditional music within contemporary life.

**Keywords:** Chongqing, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Traditional Music, Cultural Sustainability, Regional Distribution

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background and Importance of the Problem

Chongqing, located in southwestern China, is a culturally rich city with a long history and diverse ethnic composition. It holds a wealth of intangible cultural heritage, particularly in the field of music. These music-related intangible cultural heritage resources are not only a reflection of Chongqing's cultural diversity but also an essential part of the Bayu and Xiajiang cultures. Bayu culture, characterized by elements such as witchcraft, martial arts, dance, and trade, has provided fertile ground for the emergence of traditional music. Xiajiang culture, on the other hand, has enriched the forms and meanings of musical expression in the region. Furthermore, Chongqing's distinctive geographic environment and multi-ethnic settlements give rise to music heritage with strong regional features in both content and form.

In recent years, the local government has made notable progress in preserving and promoting this heritage. According to the Chongqing Municipal Commission of Culture and Tourism Development, the city currently has 53 national-level and 707 municipal-level intangible cultural heritage projects, among which 100 are music-related. These projects span vocal, instrumental, and integrated genres, showcasing Chongqing's musical richness and cultural uniqueness.

However, despite these achievements, Chongqing's musical heritage faces growing challenges in the context of modernization and urbanization. Issues such as the aging of cultural inheritors, shifts in ecological and cultural environments, and a general lack of public awareness have contributed to the decline, and in some cases, endangerment, of these traditions. Furthermore, there is a noticeable imbalance in the distribution of these heritage projects across the region: the northeastern and southeastern parts of Chongqing are more resource-rich due to ethnic and geographic factors, while the main urban areas and western regions have fewer such resources.

Against this backdrop, studying the current situation and characteristics of music-related intangible cultural heritage in Chongqing holds both theoretical and practical significance. It is critical to understand the cultural foundations and regional differences of these traditions to develop effective protection and inheritance strategies that can ensure their sustainability in a rapidly changing world.

### 1.2 Research Question

Based on an in-depth exploration of the status quo and features of Chongqing's music-related intangible cultural heritage, this study aims to address the following key research questions:

- 1) What is the cultural background of Chongqing's music intangible cultural heritage?
- 2) What are the current situation and distribution characteristics of music intangible cultural heritage resources in Chongqing?
- 3) How are the musical genres and humanistic themes of Chongqing's intangible cultural heritage reflected?

These questions are designed to guide a comprehensive investigation into the essence, condition, and preservation challenges of Chongqing's musical heritage in the modern context.



### 1.3 Research Objective

The main objective of this research is to systematically analyze Chongqing's music-related intangible cultural heritage. Specifically, the study aims to:

- 1) Reveal the cultural roots and regional characteristics of these heritage resources.
- 2) Examine the current state of their preservation and inheritance.
- 3) Identify the challenges they face in the context of modernization.
- 4) Propose feasible and effective strategies for their sustainable protection and transmission.

Ultimately, the research seeks to provide both theoretical insight and practical recommendations for safeguarding Chongqing's rich musical traditions and to serve as a valuable reference for future academic studies and policy-making in related fields.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Related Concepts and Theories

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), as defined by UNESCO, refers to traditions or living expressions passed down from generation to generation, including oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature, and traditional craftsmanship. In the context of music, intangible cultural heritage encompasses vocal and instrumental music, dance-music integration, and the cultural meanings embedded within these expressions.

The theoretical foundation for this study is based on several key perspectives:

- 1) Cultural Ecology Theory: Emphasizes the interaction between cultural systems and their surrounding environments. In the case of Chongqing, its unique geography and multi-ethnic composition have shaped its musical traditions.
- 2) Heritage Value Theory: Suggests that the value of intangible cultural heritage lies not only in its historical and artistic merit but also in its social function and identity-building roles.
- 3) Oral Transmission Theory: Focuses on how traditional music is passed down through non-written means, often within families or communities, making it susceptible to loss if not actively preserved.

Understanding these theories is essential for analyzing the formation, distribution, and inheritance of music-related intangible cultural heritage in Chongqing.

## 2.2 Literature Surveys

### 2.2.1 Cultural Foundations and Historical Origins

Chongqing's musical heritage is deeply rooted in the historical and cultural traditions of Bayu and Xiajiang cultures. Bayu culture, with its focus on witchcraft, martial arts, and trade, created a fertile environment for music to develop. Chuanping (2023) in *An Overview of Bayu Culture* noted the cultural synthesis of Bayu with Shu and Chu cultures, which influenced Chongqing's musical style and spiritual connotations. Meanwhile, Xiajiang culture enriched musical expression with its geographical and ethnic diversity, particularly among ethnic minorities in remote areas.

### 2.2.2 Resource Status and Distribution Characteristics

Research indicates that Chongqing hosts 100 music-related ICH projects at both national and municipal levels (Chongqing Municipal Commission of Culture, "14th Five-Year Plan"). However, there exists a significant regional imbalance: the northeastern and southeastern regions have denser concentrations due to rich ethnic traditions and isolated geographic conditions, whereas urban and western areas have fewer music ICH projects. Music genres include vocal music, instrumental music, and mixed forms, with standout styles such as folk songs, trumpet music, wind and percussion, and drum music.

### 2.2.3 Music Genres and Humanistic Themes

Chongqing's music ICH shows strong genre diversity and cultural depth. Ying (2024) examined the Shuyang Song, a folk genre in the Sichuan-Chongqing-Guizhou region, highlighting its ethnological and historical value. Additionally, Chuanjiang opera, rooted in river labor culture, exemplifies how geography shapes musical expression. Humanistic themes in this musical heritage, such as filial piety, community rituals, and seasonal festivals, reveal the close ties between music and social life in Chongqing.

### 2.2.4 Protection and Inheritance

With modernization, the sustainability of Chongqing's musical ICH is under threat. Xiaorui (2022), in her study on cultural and tourism integration, emphasized the dual-edged nature of tourism: while offering economic and promotional opportunities, it may dilute or distort cultural authenticity. Other scholars have advocated for integrating musical ICH into the education system and raising public awareness, while also ensuring the cultural ecology remains intact during transmission.

## 2.3 Conceptual Framework

Based on the reviewed literature and theoretical models, the following conceptual framework guides this study:

- 1) Cultural Roots: Bayu and Xiajiang cultures as the foundation for music ICH in Chongqing.
- 2) Distribution Characteristics: Influenced by geography, ethnicity, and urbanization.
- 3) Genre and Theme Diversity: Reflecting social customs, labor, religion, and nature.
- 4) Challenges: Aging inheritors, ecological changes, low awareness.

5) Protection Mechanisms: Cultural policy, education, community-based transmission, and tourism strategies.

This framework provides a comprehensive lens for understanding the status, challenges, and strategic approaches to preserving Chongqing's music-related intangible cultural heritage.

## **2.4 Research Hypotheses**

Based on the above review and conceptual framework, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: The formation and diversity of Chongqing's music intangible cultural heritage are significantly influenced by its geographical and ethnic composition.

H2: There is a positive correlation between community involvement and the effective inheritance of music-related ICH in Chongqing.

H3: Integration of music ICH into education and tourism contributes to its preservation, provided the cultural integrity is maintained.

H4: Regions with richer ethnic diversity and lower levels of urban development in Chongqing possess a higher concentration of traditional music ICH resources.

## **3. Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study employs a qualitative research design, aiming to investigate the current status, cultural background, distribution patterns, and inheritance of music-related intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in Chongqing. By integrating literature research, case study analysis, and cultural ecology methods, the study builds a comprehensive understanding of how Chongqing's music ICH reflects regional identity and cultural continuity. The research focuses on interpreting and contextualizing data rather than testing numerical hypotheses, which is more suitable for capturing the complexity and cultural depth of intangible heritage practices.

### **3.2 Population and Sample**

The research population includes all recognized music-related intangible cultural heritage projects in Chongqing at the national, provincial, and municipal levels. Due to the broad scope of heritage projects, the study adopts purposive sampling to select representative cases that best illustrate the diversity, regional characteristics, and cultural significance of Chongqing's music ICH. Selected examples include Chuanjiang Haozi (boatmen's labor chants), Youyang Ancient Songs (ritual and sacrificial music), and Zhonghe Diaozhu (mountain folk songs with religious elements). These cases were chosen for their distinctive artistic forms, strong cultural roots, and relevance to the study's objectives, offering insights into the varying functions and transmission methods of musical heritage across different regions of Chongqing.

### **3.3 Research Instruments**

To conduct this research, a variety of qualitative instruments were employed. Document analysis forms were used to extract and categorize relevant information from policy documents, academic literature, and historical chronicles. A case study protocol was designed to guide the detailed analysis of each selected ICH project, focusing on aspects such as musical structure, lyrical themes, performance context, and inheritance pathways. In addition, cultural ecology mapping tools were applied to explore how environmental, ethnic, and social factors influence the formation and survival of music ICH in specific regions. These instruments enabled a systematic and comparative analysis of diverse sources and cases.

### **3.4 Data Collection**

Data were collected through three primary channels. First, extensive literature review was conducted to gather historical, theoretical, and policy-related information from academic publications, cultural research reports, and official documents like the “14th Five-Year Plan for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Chongqing.” Second, detailed case analysis was carried out by examining specific music heritage items. This included studying available recordings, lyrics, performance descriptions, and relevant academic interpretations of Chuanjiang Haozi, Youyang Ancient Songs, and Zhonghe Diaozhu. Third, data were analyzed using a cultural ecology perspective, focusing on how music ICH relates to environmental conditions, social customs, religious practices, and community life. This holistic approach helped uncover the cultural systems that support or hinder the survival of musical heritage in different ecological contexts.

### **3.5 Statistics Used for Data Analysis**

Although this study is primarily qualitative, basic statistical methods were used to support descriptive analysis. Data on the number, classification, and regional distribution of music ICH projects were summarized using frequency counts and categorical breakdowns. For example, the study documented how musical ICH resources are unevenly distributed, with more projects concentrated in Chongqing’s northeastern and southeastern regions due to their richer ethnic diversity and less urbanized environments. In addition, comparative analysis was applied to assess the commonalities and differences among the selected case studies. Content analysis techniques were used to interpret textual and documentary data, allowing the identification of key themes, cultural patterns, and recurring challenges related to music ICH protection and inheritance.

## **4. Data Analysis and Findings**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of the research on the current status and characteristics of music intangible cultural heritage resources in Chongqing, with particular attention to their integration into township primary education. The analysis is based on a comprehensive collection of quantitative data obtained from official government documents, heritage lists, and regional statistics, as well as a detailed categorization of the types and distributions of intangible music heritage across various districts and counties. The objective of this section is twofold. First, it seeks to explore the cultural, geographical, and historical contexts that underpin the development and distribution of music intangible cultural heritage in Chongqing. This includes an examination of key cultural zones such as Ba Yu culture and Xiajiang culture, which have significantly shaped the

formation of Chongqing's regional identity and musical heritage. Second, it provides an in-depth statistical overview of both national and municipal-level intangible heritage projects, particularly in the field of traditional music, highlighting their spatial and categorical distribution across Chongqing's 38 districts and counties. The analysis further identifies the musical genres, thematic content, and functional roles of various music forms, emphasizing the strong ecological and sociocultural dependence of these traditions. By categorizing music heritage into vocal, instrumental, and hybrid forms, and linking them to both natural landscapes and traditional customs such as red-white events and religious rites, the study offers a multi-layered understanding of how local traditions are preserved, transformed, and potentially integrated into educational settings. Through this empirical exploration, the chapter provides crucial insights into how heritage policies, ecological environments, and ethnic diversity influence the vitality and transmission of intangible musical culture. The findings aim to support the development of culturally responsive curricula and educational strategies that are grounded in the living traditions of Chongqing's communities.

## 4.2 Data Analysis of the Qualitative Data

Analysis of the Current Status and Characteristics of Music Intangible Cultural Heritage Resources in Chongqing

### 4.2.1 Overview of Chongqing's Culture

According to the theory of cultural analysis, when analyzing the phenomenon of integrating intangible cultural heritage of music into township primary schools, we should not only focus on the description of current cultural phenomena, but also pay close attention to the historical process of cultural development. Intangible cultural heritage is not an isolated and static concept, but rather a cultural form that is constantly in a state of dynamic change, consisting of many interrelated factors that form an interactive system around a specific thing. Its existence and development cannot exist independently without a specific social and cultural environment, but are closely connected and mutually influenced by these environmental factors. In addition, intangible cultural heritage has distinct dynamic and rheological characteristics, and in its constantly changing process, it has the inherent driving force to promote its own evolution and the vitality to sustain its development. Based on this, in order to achieve scientific protection and effective inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, we should not only focus on the culture itself, but also comprehensively consider it from the perspective of the overall cultural ecology in which it is located.

As mentioned earlier, intangible cultural heritage is an extremely complex and vast system that includes multiple subsystems, and there are intricate interrelationships between each subsystem. The long-term historical accumulation of a region has laid a profound cultural foundation for its intangible cultural heritage, becoming an important support for the inheritance and development of intangible cultural heritage. The long history and rich cultural heritage provide the soil for the emergence and development of intangible cultural heritage projects. The specific historical background, natural environment, and social customs constitute the unique environment for the growth of intangible cultural heritage, and these environmental factors have a profound impact on the expression and connotation of intangible cultural heritage. A good local cultural ecological environment is conducive to communication and interaction between different cultures. This interaction not only enriches the connotation of intangible cultural heritage, but also helps to form a more open and inclusive cultural atmosphere.

### Ba Yu Culture

Ba Yu culture is the sum of material and spiritual cultures created by the Ba Yu land (now Chongqing area) from ancient times to the present, and is one of the most distinctive regional cultures in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River. Ba Yu culture is rooted in excellent geographical location and natural conditions, and was once an important area for early human activities. It originated from the Ba culture created by the Ba people who were skilled in witchcraft, martial arts, dance, and industry and trade. At the same time, it intersects and integrates with neighboring Shu and Chu cultures, reflecting the cohesion of culture and the development of civilization. It nourishes and shapes the cultural identity of Chongqing people in the long river of history and plays a very important role in the Yangtze River cultural chain.

The sound of 'Ba' in the river is distant, and the gorge reflects the meaning of 'Yu'. Chongqing was formerly known as "Ba" and abbreviated as "Yu". The name "Ba" is mainly due to the participation of Ba people in the war against Zhou by King Wu of the late Shang Dynasty. Based on their military achievements, they were enfeoffed and established the Ba Kingdom in the early Western Zhou Dynasty. Although their capital has been relocated several times, most of it is located in present-day Chongqing. After Qin conquered Ba, Ba Commandery was established in the former territory of Ba State. It is called "Yu" due to the Jialing River. The Jialing River was formerly known as Yushui, and the mother city of Chongqing was built at the confluence of the Jialing River and the Yangtze River. During the Sui Dynasty, it was named Yuzhou after Yushui. (Wang Chuanping, 2023)

The Ba Yu culture was formed during the historical period of Ba people and Ba country, influenced by the mutual influence of "neighbors", namely, Eastern Chu and Western Shu, forming the Ba Chu culture and Ba Shu culture. These cultures became the background and driving force of Ba Yu culture, and became its cultural environment. It reflects the essence and background of Chongqing culture, and is the fundamental culture of Chongqing. Intangible cultural heritage is rooted in local soil and naturally forms a strong regional cultural imprint, nurturing a large amount of Chongqing's intangible cultural heritage on the soil of Ba Yu culture. These traditional cultural projects have always adhered to the natural ecology and historical context of Bashan Yushui.

However, since the Three Gorges Dam officially began storing water in 2003, the water level of the Yangtze River has significantly risen, with a height of over 100 meters turning the once steep canyon into a vast lake. The implementation of this major water conservancy project has not only changed the natural landscape of the Yangtze River Basin, but also had a profound impact on the local intangible cultural heritage. The traditional profession of boatmen has gradually disappeared due to changes in river conditions, and the scene of boatmen relying on manual labor to pull boats has become history. As a result, labor music closely related to water operations, such as Chuanjiang opera and boatman opera, have gradually lost the inheritance soil they rely on for survival.

### Xiajiang Culture

Xiajiang culture is one of the many Chongqing cultural forms with significant characteristics nurtured by Bayu culture. At the same time, it is also an important culture closely related to the intangible cultural heritage of music involved in this study. Chongqing is mountainous, with Daba Mountain to the north, Wushan Mountain to the east, Wuling Mountain and Fangdou Mountain to the southeast, Dalou Mountain to the south, and Huaying Mountain to the west. The highest peak in the area is Yintiaoling in Daba Mountain, with an elevation of 2796.8 meters. Mountains account for 75.8% of the domestic area, hills account for 18.2%, basins account for 3.6%, and flat dams account for only 2.4%. Chongqing has plenty of water. The main stream of the Yangtze River runs through the entire region from southwest to northeast, with a length of 686 kilometers. The river flows



through the Wushan Mountains, forming the famous Three Gorges of the Yangtze River, with Qutang Gorge and Wushan Gorge located within Chongqing. The main stream of the Yangtze River and numerous tributaries form a developed water system in Chongqing, with the main tributaries being Jialing River, Wujiang River, Qijiang River, Pengxi River, Meixi River, Daning River, etc. The main city of Chongqing, known as the "Mountain City," is located at the confluence of the Yangtze River and the Jialing River, with significant terrain undulations. This unique geographical environment has influenced people's production and lifestyle. The geographical environment of low mountains and many hills, as well as the cultural environment dominated by the Han ethnic group, the settlement of ethnic minorities such as Tujia and Miao, and the different levels of economic development in districts and counties, have created differences in intangible cultural heritage in various regions of Chongqing and formed the characteristics of this area.

Chongqing, as a key waterway transportation hub in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, has dense docks along the river, frequent merchant ships, and a constant stream of travelers, allowing urban cultures from central Sichuan, southwestern China, and even the entire Yangtze River Basin to blend and converge here. Therefore, Chongqing, as a typical inland port city, naturally gave birth to a unique port culture. The "History of Chongqing Literature in the 20th Century" points out that "Chongqing has a superior geographical location, not only as the intersection of the Jialing River and the Yangtze River, but also as an important transportation hub connecting southwestern provinces to various parts of the country. At the same time, Chongqing is also the intersection of northern and southern cultures in China. Therefore, the integration of ethnic cultures caused by mixed ethnic groups and large population movements has formed a unique Ba Yu culture, which constitutes the social environment for the generation of Chongqing literature. Although it is located within Kuimen, it has a tolerant and open personality." (Zhou Xiaofeng, 2009) The openness and acceptance of Xiajiang culture have created the original social environment of the Ba Yu Xiajiang region and the regional cultural spirit passed down from the depths of history. The influence of Xiajiang culture on the cultural evolution, social customs, urban ecology, behavioral patterns, culinary skills, local specialties, and other aspects of Bashu, focuses on expressing the cultural spirit of Xiajiang region. Even Xiajiang herself is deeply influenced by this cultural spirit, full of open and inclusive thinking.

#### *4.2.2 Statistics of Intangible Cultural Resources in Chongqing*

According to the "14th Five Year Plan for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Chongqing" released on the official website of the Chongqing Municipal Commission of Culture (Chongqing Municipal Commission of Culture and Tourism Development, 2021), there are a total of 11 national intangible cultural heritage projects in the first batch, 15 in the second batch, 10 in the third batch, 7 in the fourth batch, and 10 in the fifth batch, totaling 53 national intangible cultural heritage projects, and 707 municipal intangible cultural heritage projects in Chongqing. Among the 38 districts and counties in the city, the "intangible cultural heritage" is divided into 10 categories: 4260 national, municipal, and district level projects such as folk literature, traditional music, traditional art, traditional drama, folk art, and traditional skills. The three major categories account for the vast majority of the total, namely traditional music, traditional arts, and folk literature, accounting for 20.5%, 18.3%, and 17.9% of the total, respectively. The distribution of intangible cultural heritage is more concentrated in the ethnic minority areas in southeastern Chongqing, accounting for 33.2% of the national intangible cultural heritage projects in Chongqing.

#### National Intangible Cultural Heritage Resources

The nine districts of Chongqing's main urban area have concentrated and diverse intangible cultural heritage resources, accounting for 41% of the total national intangible cultural heritage projects in Chongqing; The intangible cultural heritage resources of ethnic minorities in southeastern

Chongqing are relatively abundant, mainly in the four major autonomous counties of ethnic minorities. Ethnic intangible cultural heritage has unique characteristics and accounts for 25% of the total; The regional differences of intangible cultural heritage in Chongqing are significant and obvious, and the overall spatial distribution shows a trend of more in the south and less in the north, gradually decreasing from the center of the main city to the surrounding areas and then to the two wings (northeast and southeast of Chongqing).

**Table 1** Number of National Intangible Cultural Heritage Projects and Number of National Intangible Cultural Heritage Projects Obtained by Chongqing City

Batch	National+Expansion	Chongqing City	Chongqing Music Industry
First Batch (2006)	518	11	6
Second Batch (2008)	510+147	15	4
Third Batch (2011)	191+164	10	0
Fourth Batch (2014)	153+153	7	0
Fifth Batch (2021)	185+140	10	0

The overall trend of the number of national intangible cultural heritage projects decreasing in batches does not indicate a weakening of China's enthusiasm for the establishment and protection of intangible cultural heritage, but rather reflects the gradual improvement of the rationalization level of intangible cultural heritage project establishment and the standardization level of protection. In the early days, intangible cultural heritage, as an emerging concept, received attention in the initial stage of China's socialist economic development. At this time, its understanding mainly focused on its practical economic value, and cultural and spiritual values were often overlooked. Many regions, when promoting the development of tourism and economic industries under the name of national intangible cultural heritage, have overlooked the original intention of establishing intangible cultural heritage projects, leading to doubts about the protection of intangible cultural heritage. Before 2010, some scholars criticized the global establishment and protection of intangible cultural heritage, questioning whether it truly met the goals of traditional cultural protection, and even circulating the saying that "every successful application for an intangible cultural heritage actually destroys a true heritage". Since 2011, the country has clarified the standards and implementation process for the application of intangible cultural heritage through a series of policies, emphasizing that the establishment of intangible cultural heritage aims to protect the cultural roots. Whether it is national, provincial, or minority and non minority intangible cultural heritage, it is a reflection of the development process and emotional spirit of specific regions and groups. The establishment of each intangible cultural heritage project is not only a recognition of its contemporary value, but also a commitment to the expectations and responsibilities of its cultural holders.

Although witchcraft culture is a primitive culture created by humans in ancient times to adapt to and transform nature during the process of reproduction and social development, it is also a general term for the culture during the period of people's spiritual worship of all things. It is an ancient human culture that is closely connected to the pulse of local traditional culture and the soil of people's growth. However, such sacrificial and exorcism cultures have strong folk beliefs, and the content is too sensitive to be taught to young people. Therefore, it is difficult for such cultures to be included in curriculum discussions.

In fact, the curriculum of intangible cultural heritage is not only a process of reorganizing, integrating, protecting, and inheriting various intangible cultural heritages, but also a process that



requires in-depth consideration of their actual situation. The rich intangible cultural heritage resources in Chongqing provide a wide range of content choices for courses. However, in the process, curriculum design not only needs to be based on these contents, but also must ensure that the curriculum can be continuously and effectively implemented, and ultimately achieve the goals of cultural inheritance and talent cultivation. If the dissemination and acceptance of cultural content are ignored, the curriculum will only remain at the theoretical level and cannot generate practical value. This also applies to the subsequent discussion of municipal intangible cultural heritage and Chongqing's music intangible cultural heritage.

#### Chongqing Municipal Intangible Cultural Heritage Resources

In addition to national intangible cultural heritage, each province and municipality directly under the central government in China is also determining the provincial and municipal intangible cultural heritage list based on the actual situation within the province. Chongqing municipal intangible cultural heritage is the essence of local characteristics and smart culture, which has been reviewed by experts organized by Chongqing Municipal Intangible Cultural Heritage Expert Review Committee and approved and published by Chongqing Municipal People's Government. The city has established six batches of 707 items, including 104 music related items, accounting for 14.7%.

**Table 2** Quantity of Municipal Intangible Cultural Heritage in Chongqing (2024)

Batch	Chongqing Municipal Level	City Level Music Category
First Batch (2007)	62	19
Second Batch (2009)	97	19
Third Batch (2011)	119	20
Fourth Batch (2014)	110	17
Fifth Batch (2016)	123	19
Sixth Batch (2019)	196	10

Based on a comprehensive analysis of the quantity structure and project types of intangible cultural heritage at both the national and municipal levels, it is concluded that traditional arts represent the largest category of intangible cultural heritage in Chongqing, with a total of 275 items, accounting for 36.62% of the total. Next is traditional music, with 119 items, making up 15.85%. Traditional dance, traditional crafts, and folk customs also occupy significant portions, accounting for 7.72%, 8.52%, and 8.92% respectively. Meanwhile, other categories such as medicine, folk literature, traditional drama, folk art, and sports acrobatics have relatively smaller shares, accounting for 6.26%, 4.53%, 3.99%, 3.20%, and 4.39%, respectively. Among these, traditional crafts, traditional music, traditional art, dance, and folk-related intangible cultural heritage projects tend to exhibit stronger ornamental, participatory, and experiential value. As introduced in Chapter 1, any intangible cultural heritage includes the entire cultural space on which it depends, a three-dimensional, dynamic, and comprehensive ecosystem of interdependence. Municipal intangible cultural heritage places greater emphasis on the originality and authenticity of this cultural ecology. The formation and dynamic changes of such ecological spaces deeply influence the development of regional cultures and social customs. These ecological environments not only provide the material foundation and environmental conditions for local cultural practices but also shape the distinctive social behaviors and cultural habits of each region. Elements such as resource distribution, climate conditions, and geographical features serve as the underlying logic and context for the formation and evolution of cultural traditions.

For example, the Chuandong bamboo qin, also known as Zhonghe Diao bamboo qin, studied by our research team in the Wanzhou area of Chongqing from 2022 to 2024, is a branch of the Sichuan bamboo qin. It was included in the first batch of intangible cultural heritage protection lists in Chongqing in 2006 and was later selected for the second batch of national intangible cultural heritage lists in 2008 (Heritage Number: 769 V-76). In the early Qing Dynasty, the Sichuan region already featured fishing drum tubes, also known as bamboo qin. Historical records indicate that during the suppression of the White Lotus Sect uprising, bamboo qin was used, and performers often appeared as Taoist figures, singing while walking through streets and alleys. During the reign of Emperor Guangxu, this tradition was first adopted by the general public. Performers hung bells on their sword boards and entered tobacco tea houses to sing, calling this instrument Daoqin. In the early Republic of China, the performers removed the bells and renamed the instrument bamboo qin, as both the qin tube and the bamboo board were made from bamboo (Duan Jing, 2024). The choice of bamboo as the primary material is closely linked to the abundance of bamboo resources in the Ba Yu region. The availability of bamboo, combined with its excellent acoustic properties, has made bamboo qin an essential traditional musical instrument in the area.

The singing of the Zhonghe Diao bamboo qin is usually performed solo, with one singer portraying various roles such as Sheng, Dan, Jing, Mo, and Chou through changes in singing style and tone. The language used is the Sichuan dialect, and the original scripts primarily told historical stories such as Bai Di Tuogu and Three Battles Against Lü Bu. Today, newer scripts often feature stories of local heroic figures, such as Huang Jiguang and The Legend of Hua Ziliang. Narrating Chongqing's stories in the Sichuan dialect not only showcases the region's linguistic characteristics but also demonstrates a strong sense of cultural identity. Dialects act as carriers of local culture and embody a wealth of historical and social context, making bamboo qin performances more relatable and culturally grounded. As a traditional musical art form, both the material selection and craftsmanship of the bamboo qin are influenced by local ecological resources, while its performance style and linguistic features are deeply rooted in the cultural environment and social background of the Bayu region. The formation and evolution of bamboo qin art thus reflect not only the utilization of local ecological resources but also the inheritance and innovation of regional cultural traditions. Therefore, intangible cultural heritage is a dynamic, living culture that continuously evolves. Its transmission through education cannot be confined to traditional classroom methods. When converting intangible cultural heritage into curriculum content, it is essential to consider the holistic, three-dimensional nature of the cultural space that sustains it. Only by respecting this cultural ecosystem can meaningful and effective educational integration be achieved.

#### *4.2.3 Characteristics of Music Intangible Cultural Heritage Resources in Chongqing*

According to the national intangible cultural heritage list determined by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China, approved and published by the State Council of the People's Republic of China, and the city level intangible cultural heritage list approved and published by the Chongqing Municipal People's Government after expert review organized by the Chongqing Intangible Cultural Heritage Expert Review Committee, a statistical table of Chongqing's music intangible cultural heritage has been compiled. According to statistics, there are a total of 100 national and municipal intangible cultural heritages of music in Chongqing. Based on the statistical table, this study will analyze the distribution of resources and music categories.

##### Resource Distribution

According to the announcement of intangible cultural heritage projects on the official website of Chongqing Municipal Commission of Culture and Tourism, the distribution of music intangible cultural heritage resources in Chongqing is summarized in Table 3.

**Table 3** Distribution of Music Intangible Cultural Heritage Resources in Chongqing (2024)

Serial Number	Region	Total Number	District	National Level Quantity	City Level Quantity	Project Name
1	Main Urban Area	10	Banan	2	1	Mudong Mountain Song, Jielong Blowing And Beating, Jumping Stone Kun Ci
			Yubei	1	1	Xiaohe Gongs And Drums, Huaying Gaoqiang
			Dadukou	-	2	Jumping And Kicking Stone Worker's Chant, Pan Chuan Style Guqin Art
			Beibei	-	1	Pianyan Plays Gongs And Drums
			Yuzhong District	-	1	Guqin (Ancient Chinese Musical Instrument)
			Nan'an District	-	1	Nanshan Guqin Art
2	Eastern Chongqing	17	Shizhu County	1	2	Shizhu Tujia Luo'er Tune, Shizhu Tujia Broken End Drums And Drums, Sedan Driver's Chants
			Fuling District	-	3	Fuling Imperial Drums, Longtan Eight Brand Drums, Jiaoshi Folk Songs
			Changshou District	-	6	Haitang Suona, Yihe Gongs And Drums, Changshou Stonemason's Horn, Flip Fork Horn, Longxi River Tugboat Horn, Changshou Folk Songs
			Fengdu	-	4	Longkong Blowing, Liangshan Blowing, Pickled Vegetables Stepping On The Pond, Stonemason
3	Southeast Chongqing	29	Qianjiang District	1	7	Nanxi Haozi, Houta Mountain Song, Mala Haozi, Shuai's Mang Haozi, Shicheng Love Song, Xiejia Gong And Drum, Lishui Aoyan Haozi, And Shucao Gong And Drum
			Xiushan County	1	1	Xiushan Folk Songs, Youshui Boatmen's Songs
			Youyang County	1	5	Youyang Folk Songs, Wooden Leaf Playing, Three Stick Drums, Youyang Playing Gongs And Drums, Youyang Blowing And Beating, Dongdong Kui
			Pengshui County	1	6	Miao Folk Songs, Various Buddhist Pan Songs, Pengshui Playing Gongs And Drums, Pengshui Dojo Music, Meizishan Songs, Miaoshan Fighting,

						Pengshui Taiyuan Folk Songs
					6	Houping Mountain Songs, Yaping Blows And Beats, Xiannv Mountain Plays Drums And Drums, Shiqiao Woodleaf Blows, Pingqiao Seedling Picking Chants, Wujiang Boat Workers Chants
4	Northeast Chongqing	30		2	3	Liangping Laizi Gong And Drum, Liangping Carrying Children Tune, Liangping Filial Song, Liangping Blowing Hands, Liangping Pig Tune
				-	2	Ganning Drum Music and Three Gorges Back Two Songs
				-	2	Zhongzhou Stonemasons, Zhongzhou Wind And Percussion Music
			1		4	Longgupo Lifting Work Chant, Wuyin, Dengjiabei Second Brother Chant, Wushan Folk Song, Daxichuanyang Chant
			-		3	Three Person Gongs And Drums, Grass Pulling Gongs And Drums, Love Girl Song
			-		3	Kaishan Chant, Gaofeng Yangko, Gao'an Suona
			-		3	Qutangxia Boatman's Chant, Kuizhou Folk Blowing and Beating, Kuizhou Folk Songs
			-		6	Xinjin Boatman's Chant, Grass Pulling Gong and Drum, Pounding Chant, Lifting Chant, Five Sentence Song, Bamboo Platform Filial Piety Song
			-		1	Kaizhou Folk Songs
5	Western Chongqing	13	1		3	Yongcheng Wind and Percussion, Hengshan Kunci, Triangle Wind and Percussion, Qijiang Folk Songs
			-		2	Sanjiang Haozi, Qizi Drum
			-		1	Fuguo Folk Etiquette Music
			-		3	Xishan Divine Song, Dazu Yangyang Mountain Song, Dazu Accompanying Song
			-		2	Bishan Yangge Dance, Bishan Blowing And Beating
			-		1	Yongxing Shouted

According to the above table, the city has a total of 38 districts and counties, among which Shizhu County, Qianjiang County, Xiushan County, Youyang County, and Pengshui County are minority autonomous counties, mainly composed of Tujia and Miao ethnic groups. From a regional distribution perspective, ethnic minority autonomous counties are mainly distributed in the southeastern part of Chongqing. Among the districts and counties in the city, 30 districts and counties have at least one officially recognized music intangible cultural heritage project. This data not only reflects Chongqing's rich folk art resources, but also reveals the efforts made by the city in protecting and inheriting traditional culture. Among these intangible cultural heritages in the music category, the northeastern and southeastern regions of Chongqing have an absolute advantage, with a total of 59 items, accounting for 59% of similar projects in the city. This regional concentration distribution may be closely related to the natural environment, historical background, and social structure of the region. These two areas are mountainous and hilly, and many areas have inconvenient transportation. The relatively closed geographical conditions are conducive to the preservation and development of traditional music forms. At the same time, these regions are also inhabited by multiple ethnic minorities, and cultural exchanges between different ethnic groups have promoted the diversification of music styles. In contrast, the number of intangible cultural heritage related to music in the main urban area and Yuxi district is significantly lower. This phenomenon can be explained from multiple perspectives. Firstly, with the acceleration of urbanization, modern lifestyles have had an impact on traditional customs, leading to the gradual disappearance or risk of extinction of some traditional music forms. Secondly, the active economic activities make the younger generation more inclined to pursue modern entertainment methods rather than learning and inheriting traditional arts. In addition, there may be differences in the level of attention and investment from the government and society towards the protection of intangible cultural heritage, which can directly or indirectly affect the excavation and protection effects of intangible cultural heritage in different regions.

#### Research on Music Attribute Classification

Layered research on the musical attributes of intangible cultural heritage is a key step in ensuring the effective protection and inheritance of such valuable cultural resources. In order to better understand and evaluate the feasibility of integrating intangible cultural heritage of music into primary education curriculum, it is necessary to start from the following aspects: classification of music genres, exploration of humanistic themes in music works, and analysis of the difficulty level of project implementation.

##### 1) Music genres

Overall, music genres are mainly divided into vocal genres and instrumental genres. There are significant differences between the two in terms of expression form, technical requirements, artistic expression, and cultural influence. The cultural radiation area and penetration power reflected in intangible cultural heritage are also different.

In the statistics of intangible cultural heritage projects in Chongqing, a total of 53 vocal categories were recorded. These vocal projects can be further divided into five categories based on their forms of expression and cultural background: singing songs, folk songs (covering mountain songs and high pitched tunes), yangko (specifically referring to yangko), fighting songs, and filial piety songs. Specifically, Haozi accounts for 24 items, folk songs (including mountain songs and high pitched tunes) account for 17 items, while Yangge (also known as "pulling Yangge") and Xiaoge each have 2 items. Each of these music genres has distinct regional characteristics and cultural values.

Folk songs, in a popular sense, are the music of ethnic and folk groups. But in terms of music genre classification, folk songs usually have three major characteristics: chant, mountain song, and minor tune. The folk songs that appear in the intangible cultural heritage of Chongqing should be

classified as minor tunes and mountain songs. Most minor keys belong to the form of episodic songs, characterized by a single piece accompanied by multiple lyrics. In terms of lyric organization, time series such as four seasons, five changes, and twelve hours are often used to structure the content. From the perspective of rhythm characteristics, the overall rhythm of minor keys is relatively regular, but the rhythm types are rich and diverse. In terms of singing performance form, the minor key mainly uses solo singing as the main form of expression, followed by duet and group singing, etc., with multi-faceted and detailed statements of content. The folk songs of the Han ethnic group mainly include labor songs, life songs, love songs, ritual songs, political songs, nursery rhymes, and riddle songs, while the minor tunes of ethnic minorities also include drinking songs, bitter songs, anti songs, wedding songs, funeral songs, and other types. Mountain songs are more often improvised and performed in labor settings to express emotions. Its content is extensive, the structure is short, the melody is cheerful, the emotions are simple, high pitched, and the rhythm is free.

As an important genre of folk songs, the origin of "hao zi" is closely related to collective labor, aiming to unify the pace of workers and reduce fatigue during the labor process through singing. Composed of simple lyrics and vocalizations, with extensive use of supporting words; some chants are even composed entirely of function words. The singing form is mostly led by one person, and the voices are harmonious. (Qian Zhonglian, Zhang Peiheng, Fu Xuancong, 2000) According to different types of labor, chants can be further subdivided into various forms such as boatman chants, ramming chants, stonemason chants, and carrying chants.

The Yangge in Chongqing's intangible cultural heritage of music should actually belong to the category of "pulling Yangge", which should be different from the folk song genre in Northeast China. And Yangge Dance is a unique folk song genre in Chongqing area. The origin of 'yangko' can be traced back to before the Qin and Han dynasties. Among the Han painted bricks unearthed in Sichuan, there is a picture of "pulling foot seedlings", and pottery figurines of "pulling foot seedlings" standing in paddy fields and playing drums to help sing have also been unearthed in Han tombs. During the Tang and Song dynasties, the custom of drumming and pulling rice seedlings was prevalent in rice growing areas. The Yangko dance usually consists of seven character lyrics with two or four lines, forming a complete melody. During the singing process, there is one person leading the singing, multiple people singing together, and there are also forms of duet singing, with the content mainly reflecting field work or the emotions between men and women (Zheng Ying, 2024).

Xiaoge is a unique ritual music in funerals in the southwestern region of China. During the "Zhuanxiang" (a funeral custom), those who are good at singing filial piety songs are invited to sing all night long. The melody is mournful and the lyrics are simple, mostly praising the deceased by the living.

In summary, in the vocal genre of Chongqing's intangible cultural heritage, local people always love to sing and sing about anything. Various fields involved by ordinary people can be expressed in the form of songs. In some areas of Chongqing where "song" is the main traditional music culture, local elderly people will say an old saying: "The elderly are well aware of suffering, and suffering needs to be complained about, and they also use singing to complain; young people do not know worries, only know music, and music is also used to sing; men are strong willed and prone to madness, and they also use singing to be crazy; girls have grievances in their hearts, and when grievances are heavy, they will cry, and they also use singing to cry

## 2) Instrumental genre

In a detailed review of the intangible cultural heritage of music in Chongqing, we found that a total of 35 heritage projects belong to the category of instrumental music. Through in-depth



analysis of the forms of expression and cultural background of these projects, it can be observed that "blowing and hitting" projects (mainly suona) and "gong and drum" projects (represented by playing gongs and drums) account for a significant proportion, with 14 and 11 projects respectively. In addition, there are three projects involving guqin and two projects with drums as the main instrument. This distribution not only reflects the diversity of intangible cultural heritage in Chongqing, but also deeply reflects the special favor and emphasis on specific instruments and their combinations in local folk music culture.

Blowing and hitting is an important form of instrumental ensemble in traditional Chinese music. The wind and percussion band is mainly composed of two parts: wind instruments and percussion instruments. Wind instruments usually include suona, flute, xiao, etc. Among them, suona has become the core instrument in wind and percussion bands due to its clear and penetrating sound. Percussion instruments include various types such as gongs, drums, cymbals, etc., which can produce rich rhythm changes and strong sound effects. The style of wind and percussion music is bright and lively, rich in local characteristics and folk customs. It can express a festive and joyful atmosphere, such as weddings, holiday celebrations, and other occasions; It can also be used for solemn and dignified ceremonies, such as temple fairs, sacrifices, etc. Music works often combine the characteristics of melody and rhythm, with both smooth and pleasant melodic lines and complex and varied rhythmic patterns. Blowing and playing performances are flexible and diverse, ranging from indoor performances by small groups to square performances by large bands. In some specific folk activities, wind and percussion bands may also be presented together with dance, opera, and other forms, enhancing the artistic appeal and social influence of the performance.

The gongs and drums appearing in Chongqing's intangible cultural heritage projects should be classified as "playing gongs and drums", which is different from the "pulling grass gongs and drums" mentioned in the following text. "Playing gongs and drums" is a form of folk instrumental performance for self entertainment. The instruments played are mainly drums, gongs, bowls, horse gongs, and hinges. The instrument arrangement used by gong and drum bands in different regions varies. Among these instruments, the drum plays a crucial role as the backbone conductor in the gong and drum band, sending out gong and drum ideas and mastering the rhythm, speed, and weight. And all gongs and drums have their own exclusive music pieces, called gong and drum introductions. The introduction of gongs and drums varies by region, represented by the "Eighteen Laizi" gongs and drums introduction of Liangping Laizi in Chongqing. There are mainly "old scabies", "flower scabies", "mandarin duck scabies", etc.

As an extremely ancient traditional musical instrument of the Han and Tang dynasties in China, the Guqin has a relatively mature education and inheritance system compared to other intangible cultural heritage projects. But many ancient schools are gradually disappearing, so the several guqin instruments recognized as intangible cultural heritage are mainly divided into Nanshan Tang style guqin and Pan Chuan style guqin. Among them, the Nanshan Tang Dynasty Guqin is not only known for its unique playing techniques, but also for its exquisite Guqin making skills.

### 3) A genre that combines vocal and instrumental music

In the statistical analysis of Chongqing's intangible cultural heritage in music, it was observed that several intangible cultural heritage projects integrate both vocal and instrumental genres. These projects mainly focus on two major types of music genres, namely ritual music and grass pulling gongs and drums (fighting songs). Among them, there are a total of 6 intangible cultural heritage projects in the category of grass pulling gongs and drums (playing songs), while there are 4 intangible cultural heritage projects in the category of ritual music, including ceremonial music and dojo music.

Grass pulling gongs and drums, commonly known as "fighting" and "fighting songs" by Tujia people in the Chongqing Guizhou region, and also called "mountain gongs and drums" in the western Hubei region, consist of two parts: grass pulling labor and field song art. It is a folk art form of the Tujia ethnic group that combines labor production with music. During the weeding season, Tujia people often invite two singers to participate in collective labor, one of whom beats the drum and the other beats the gong, facing the laboring masses and singing loudly to the rhythm of the gongs and drums. The lyrics are usually improvised, with praise as the main theme, and the content often involves characters and objects. The form is generally five characters and four sentences (Xiao Dongfa, Yuan Fengdong, 2014).

### Music Humanities Theme

#### 1) Strong dependence on natural geographical environment

Most labor music shows a strong dependence on natural geographical environments. For example, as the most prominent music genre, the song "hao zi" is closely related to the natural geographical environment of Chongqing, which is located in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River and mainly consists of mountains and hills. Among the intangible cultural heritage of music in Chongqing, four items have been included in the national intangible cultural heritage list, namely Chuanjiang Haozi, Nanxi Haozi, Liangping Xier Diao, and Longgupo Xiegong Haozi. Chuanjiang opera, as one of the most representative forms of music in this region, specifically refers to labor songs that are spread in the Yangtze River Basin and its tributaries in Sichuan and Chongqing, especially those widely sung in the Jinsha River, Yangtze River and its tributaries such as the Minjiang River, Tuojiang River, Jialing River, Wujiang River and Daning River. Chuanjiang bugles are not only divided into two categories: Shangshui bugles and Xiashui bugles, but each category also includes various specific forms of bugles, such as pole bugles, vertical mast bugles, sail bugles, and fiber bugles under Shangshui bugles; The Pingshui Hao, Jiantan Hao, Xiatan Hao, etc. under the Xiashui Hao. The specific names and melodies of these songs will vary depending on the water flow encountered while the ship is sailing, reflecting the profound local characteristics and cultural foundation of this music genre. In addition, the second song of the municipal intangible cultural heritage also reflects the cultural landscape of Chongqing under specific geographical conditions. In some high-altitude mountainous areas of Chongqing, due to inconvenient transportation, material transportation often relies on human labor, and workers engaged in this work are called "carrying feet" or "carrying the second child". In order to relieve the fatigue caused by long-distance travel and adjust the walking rhythm, "back footed" people will sing a special mountain song called "back two song chant" when resting on the way. This form of music is not only the crystallization of local people's wisdom, but also a cultural expression adapted to specific natural environments.

Similarly, woodwind playing is also a type of intangible cultural heritage that highly relies on natural geographical conditions. Mainly popular in remote ethnic minority areas in mountainous regions of China. These areas are densely forested, but due to inconvenient transportation and limited economic conditions, residents find it difficult to obtain traditional musical instruments, so they have developed the technique of using leaves to play for their own entertainment. Through long-term practice, they have mastered the methods of selecting suitable leaves and controlling breath, and are able to play beautiful melodies.

#### 2) Strong dependence on traditional culture

As an important traditional custom of the Chinese nation, red and white celebrations are not only an indispensable part of social life, but also an important carrier of intangible cultural heritage inheritance. These customs have their own unique forms of expression and cultural connotations in different regions, which are of great significance for maintaining social order, enhancing community cohesion, and inheriting cultural memory. Many intangible cultural heritage projects related to music are closely linked to red and white celebrations, and are preserved and passed down through these



customs.

For example, filial piety songs, as an important manifestation of filial piety culture in China, are widely spread in southern regions of the country. After the death of an elder, the descendants of the deceased will hold incense and continuously rotate around the coffin on the night before their burial. This custom is called "turning incense". This traditional custom embodies a profound cultural concept of filial piety. The reason why playing gongs and drums is so popular and diverse in the Chongqing area is that they can play different roles in red and white celebrations. In these celebrations, the performance of gongs and drums can create a festive and lively atmosphere, increasing the solemnity of the ceremony; In funeral activities, gongs and drums are used to guide the procession, ward off evil spirits, and bid farewell to the deceased. And what's more interesting is the Dazhu accompaniment song. The type of "accompaniment song" is relatively rare, also known as "seat song hall", which is a folk song sung by women. Accompanying song "is a song sung by women to avoid men and accompany the bride. Accompanying songs "is not only a form of music, but also a cultural phenomenon that reflects emotional support, solidarity, mutual assistance, cultural inheritance, and good wishes for married life among women.

Another type of custom is mainly reflected in religious rituals and sacrificial ceremonies, such as the folk ritual music of Fuguo and the music of Pengshui Daochang, which are both music used in funeral ceremonies to honor the departed souls. This type of music leans more towards functionality and solemnity. This type of music creates a solemn and solemn atmosphere through specific melodies and rhythms, enhancing the sacredness and ritual of religious ceremonies. The addition of music makes the entire ceremony more complete and organized. In sacrificial ceremonies, music is used as a medium to communicate between humans and gods, and has become a carrier of customs and culture.

#### 4.3 Summary of the Results

The analysis of Chongqing's music intangible cultural heritage resources reveals a culturally rich and regionally diverse landscape shaped by deep historical roots, unique geographical conditions, and complex sociocultural dynamics. Drawing from national and municipal datasets, as well as regional cultural frameworks, the study has yielded the following key findings:

1) Abundant and Diverse Resources: Chongqing is home to a total of 100 officially recognized music intangible cultural heritage projects at both the national and municipal levels. These include a wide array of genres such as folk songs, labor chants (haozi), yangge, filial piety songs, ritual music, and various instrumental traditions. The prevalence of such a broad range of music traditions reflects the city's rich historical and cultural fabric.

2) Distinct Regional Patterns: The spatial distribution of intangible music heritage shows a clear concentration in the southeastern and northeastern mountainous regions of Chongqing, which together account for approximately 59% of the total music-related projects. These regions are home to several ethnic minority communities, including the Tujia and Miao peoples, whose unique musical forms and customs contribute to the diversity of Chongqing's heritage.

3) Strong Cultural and Ecological Foundations: The study highlights the significant influence of natural geography and traditional social customs on the formation and continuation of music heritage. Many vocal and instrumental forms are closely tied to the environment and local livelihood practices, such as boatmen's chants along the Yangtze River and woodleaf playing in remote mountain villages.

4) **Categorization of Music Heritage:** Music heritage in Chongqing can be grouped into three main categories, vocal, instrumental, and combined forms, each with unique artistic and cultural expressions. Vocal forms are especially prominent, with labor chants and folk songs serving not only artistic functions but also community coordination and emotional expression. Instrumental forms such as blowing and percussion ensembles are widely used in festivals and ceremonies.

5) **Cultural Functions and Educational Implications:** Many of Chongqing's intangible music traditions are embedded in ritual, religious, and communal practices, including red and white celebrations, ancestral worship, and local festivals. These traditions present strong potential for educational integration, particularly in township primary schools. However, challenges remain in terms of curriculum design, preservation of authenticity, and intergenerational transmission.

6) **Dynamic and Evolving Heritage:** The findings underscore the dynamic nature of intangible cultural heritage as a living system influenced by socio-economic development, urbanization, and policy shifts. While some traditions face the threat of decline due to modernization and migration, others are being actively revived and adapted through community initiatives and government support.

In summary, Chongqing's music intangible cultural heritage is a multidimensional system sustained by regional ecology, ethnic diversity, and cultural continuity. Its integration into education requires not only technical and curricular frameworks but also deep respect for the cultural ecosystems from which these traditions arise.

## **5. Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendation**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the current status and characteristics of music-related intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in Chongqing. It reveals that Chongqing possesses a rich and diverse array of musical heritage resources, deeply rooted in the cultural foundations of Ba Yu and Xiajiang cultures. These resources encompass a wide range of genres, including vocal music, instrumental music, and integrated forms, with trumpet music, folk songs, percussion, and drum music being particularly prominent. The research finds that these musical forms are not only shaped by Chongqing's natural environment, ethnic diversity, and regional customs but also reflect the unique cultural identity and artistic legacy of the region.

Despite notable achievements in the recognition and documentation of ICH, Chongqing still faces multiple challenges. A clear regional imbalance exists in the distribution of music-related ICH projects: the northeastern and southeastern regions, which are geographically remote and culturally diverse, have more such projects compared to the main urban areas and western Chongqing. Moreover, the aging of cultural inheritors, transformations in the cultural and ecological environment, and limited public awareness are contributing to the gradual decline, and even risk of extinction, of some heritage items. The conclusion drawn is that sustainable development of music ICH requires a shift toward ecological thinking and stronger integration with modern systems such as education and community development.

### **5.2 Discussion**

The development of Chongqing's music ICH is closely linked to its deep-rooted cultural traditions. Ba Yu culture, with its emphasis on witchcraft, martial arts, dance, and trade, along with

Xiajiang culture, has cultivated a rich environment for the emergence and diversification of music-related heritage. These influences, combined with Chongqing's mountainous geography and its status as a multi-ethnic region, have given rise to highly distinctive forms of music, both in structure and meaning. The 100 music-related ICH projects currently recognized at the national and municipal levels clearly demonstrate this cultural diversity. However, their uneven geographical distribution highlights important issues in cultural accessibility and preservation. While the ethnic-rich and geographically isolated northeastern and southeastern regions host a dense cluster of heritage projects, urbanized areas lack similar cultural presence, possibly due to modernization and social transformation.

In terms of genre and function, Chongqing's music ICH spans across labor songs like Chuanjiang Haozi, folk operas such as Bei Er Ge, and ceremonial forms like filial piety songs and ritual gongs and drums. These music traditions serve vital roles in social customs, religious ceremonies, and daily life. Yet modernization poses significant threats to their continuation. The challenges are multifaceted, ranging from the diminishing number of inheritors to declining cultural participation, and require responses that address both cultural depth and societal change. To ensure sustainability, music ICH must be approached as part of a larger cultural ecosystem, one that includes education, social values, local economies, and policy support. Only through a systems-thinking approach can these living traditions continue to evolve while preserving their core identity.

### **5.3 Recommendation**

Based on the findings and discussion, several recommendations are proposed to promote the sustainable development and transmission of Chongqing's music-related intangible cultural heritage.

First, future research should expand interdisciplinary approaches, integrating perspectives from cultural studies, education, sociology, and anthropology. This can help create a more robust theoretical and practical framework for understanding the implementation and impact of music ICH, particularly in educational settings. Long-term, case-based studies should be conducted in township primary schools to explore effective models for curriculum integration, teaching methods, and sustainability strategies. These studies should evaluate the influence of ICH courses on students' cultural identity, artistic literacy, and personal development through longitudinal tracking.

Second, there is a need to strengthen the capacity of the teaching workforce. Systematic training should be provided to enhance teachers' knowledge of ICH and improve their instructional abilities. Curriculum development must be made more systematic and adaptable to students' needs, ensuring relevance and accessibility.

Third, cultural ecological protection must be prioritized. This includes safeguarding the environments and communities where music ICH originated, allowing the cultural context to continue nurturing these traditions. Scientific curriculum evaluation mechanisms should be established to monitor progress and refine educational strategies accordingly.

Fourth, broader community involvement is essential. Families and local communities should be encouraged to participate in ICH education through interactive activities such as cultural festivals, family projects, and community lectures. Social organizations and private donors should be mobilized to provide funding, materials, and logistical support.

Finally, the government must play a key role in providing policy and financial backing. This includes establishing dedicated funds for ICH education, offering subsidies for rural and under-resourced schools, and enacting legislation to promote cultural heritage awareness. A strong policy

framework combined with grassroots participation will help form a collaborative environment in which families, communities, educational institutions, and the state work together to ensure the continued vitality of Chongqing's music intangible cultural heritage.

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**From the Perspective of Classroom Teaching Customs,  
the Process of Institutional Generation: Taking the  
Music Department of C University as an Example**

by

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# From the Perspective of Classroom Teaching Customs, the Process of Institutional Generation: Taking the Music Department of C University as an Example

by

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## Abstract

This study investigates the dynamic interaction between classroom teaching customs and institutional systems in university-level music education, with a focus on the Music Department of C University. Drawing on theories from new institutionalism, it explores how informal norms, teaching customs, are formed, sustained, and transformed within formal institutional frameworks. These customs, shaped by regulatory policies, cultural values, and cognitive traditions, gradually evolve from individual strategies into collective behavior through mechanisms such as normative alignment, suitability logic, and habitual practice. Findings reveal that teaching customs serve as both stabilizing and adaptive forces within the educational environment. While institutional systems define expectations through policies, space arrangements, and evaluation mechanisms, teaching customs adapt to local conditions and fill gaps left by formal rules. In the music education context, these customs play a significant role in mediating artistic practice and instructional expectations. However, the study also highlights tensions between entrenched customs and the goals of educational reform. Traditions such as teacher-centered instruction and competition-oriented learning can inhibit innovation and collaboration, both of which are critical in modern, student-centered pedagogy. Institutional logic further reinforces these norms subconsciously, leading educators to repeat traditional methods despite reform pressures. To address these issues, the study recommends fostering reflective teaching cultures, aligning policy with lived practice, and developing locally contextualized talent cultivation models. It also advocates for interdisciplinary, empirical research to reveal hidden patterns of institutional behavior and the psychological drivers of resistance to change. Finally, it stresses the importance of culturally adaptive reforms that retain valuable traditions while reshaping outdated norms to meet contemporary educational needs. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how informal and formal systems interact in educational settings, offering practical insights for improving pedagogical effectiveness and implementing sustainable educational reforms, especially in specialized fields like music.

**Keyword:** Institutional Logic, Teaching Customs, Music Education, Educational Reform, New Institutionalism

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Background and Importance of the Problem**

The institutionalized environment of the music department at C University, with its structured physical space, rigid regulations, and clearly defined teacher-student roles, has formed a distinctive educational scene. This structured environment not only governs the actions of educators and learners but also influences their cognitive and cultural perceptions. As a social construct, the institutional environment guides and molds individual behavior through its norms and constraints.

However, this environment acts as a double-edged sword. While it fosters academic rigor and artistic discipline, it can also stifle personal freedom and creativity, often overlooking individual diversity. In this context, classroom teaching customs emerge as informal norms that complement or counterbalance formal institutional rules. These customs develop over time through repeated practice, shared understanding, and tacit agreement among teachers and students. Understanding the interplay between these informal customs and the formal education system is crucial for optimizing the educational setting and encouraging pedagogical innovation, particularly in a specialized and expressive field like university music education.

### **1.2 Research Question**

This study investigates the dynamic relationship between classroom teaching customs and institutional systems within the context of university-level music education. The research is centered around the following key questions:

- 1) How were the teaching customs in university music majors formed?
- 2) What are the influencing factors for the formation of these classroom teaching customs?

These questions aim to uncover both the origin and evolution of teaching customs and the mechanisms through which they interact with and influence formal educational systems.

### **1.3 Research Objective**

The primary objective of this study is to explore how classroom teaching customs in university music departments are established, maintained, and transformed within the institutional framework. It seeks to:

- 1) Analyze the origins and development of teaching customs in music education.
- 2) Identify the internal and external factors that influence the formation of these customs.
- 3) Examine how these informal practices interact with formal institutional rules and how they contribute to the stability, flexibility, or innovation within the education system.
- 4) Assess the role that informal teaching customs play in supplementing the limitations of formal systems, thereby offering a more comprehensive understanding of educational practice in artistic disciplines.



## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Related Concepts and Theories

Teaching Customs refer to the informal norms, habits, and practices formed through repeated interactions in educational settings. These customs reflect shared understandings and tacit agreements among teachers and students, often shaping pedagogical behavior beyond formal rules.

Educational Systems are composed of formal structures, rules, and policies designed to guide and standardize educational activities. They serve as frameworks that ensure order, consistency, and accountability in teaching and learning.

Theoretically, the interaction between informal and formal structures can be interpreted through Institutional Theory, which posits that both formal regulations and informal norms influence behavior in organizations. Sociocultural Theory (e.g., Vygotsky) also helps explain how teaching customs emerge from social interactions and cultural contexts, shaping and being shaped by individuals' participation in educational practices.

### 2.2 Literature Surveys

Recent studies emphasize the interactive relationship between teaching customs and formal systems. Teaching customs can influence how policies are interpreted and enacted. For instance, teachers' longstanding habits and shared cultural norms may affect how new curricula or evaluation standards are adopted. Likewise, students' learning behaviors often reflect prevailing classroom traditions more than formal directives.

On the other hand, formal systems aim to influence teaching customs through policy mechanisms, such as professional training and curriculum guidelines, which are designed to align classroom practices with broader educational goals.

Research also identifies the complementary role of teaching customs in modern education. They can enhance student engagement, personalize learning, and fill gaps in the rigid structures of formal systems. For example, in creative disciplines such as music, flexible classroom customs may better support students' expressive and innovative capabilities than fixed procedures.

However, studies also highlight conflicts between customs and systems, especially when traditional customs (e.g., teacher-centered instruction) contradict contemporary reforms (e.g., student-centered learning). These tensions can hinder reform efforts and lead to resistance among educators and confusion among learners.

### 2.3 Conceptual Framework

This study is built on a conceptual framework that illustrates the bidirectional interaction between teaching customs and educational systems:

1) Teaching Customs → Educational System: Influence policy implementation through behavioral norms, cultural expectations, and community practices.

2) Educational System → Teaching Customs: Shapes customs through policy mandates, institutional training, and structural constraints.

The framework assumes: teaching customs are not static but evolve in response to internal (e.g., teacher experience, student feedback) and external (e.g., policy shifts) stimuli, and effective education reform requires alignment, or at least coordination, between formal structures and informal practices.

This framework guides the study's focus on understanding the formation mechanisms, influencing factors, and functions of teaching customs within institutionalized educational environments.

## **2.4 Research Hypothesis**

Based on the literature review and conceptual framework, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Teaching customs in university music departments are significantly shaped by historical traditions, peer interactions, and disciplinary characteristics.

H2: There is a reciprocal relationship between teaching customs and educational systems, in which each influences and constrains the other.

H3: Teaching customs play a mediating role in the implementation of educational policy, influencing both teaching effectiveness and student engagement.

H4: Conflict between teaching customs and formal educational reforms negatively impacts the effectiveness of policy implementation and teaching innovation.

H5: Optimizing teaching customs through policy support and institutional innovation can improve the adaptability and effectiveness of the education system.

## **3. Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, with a case study approach serving as its central framework. By focusing on the Music Department at C University, the research aims to investigate the formation of classroom teaching customs and their interaction with institutional systems within a real and complex educational environment. Qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and field observations are employed to capture rich, contextual data, while content analysis and comparative analysis are used to provide broader insights and establish patterns across different institutional contexts. The research begins with an extensive literature review to establish theoretical grounding and refine the research questions. This is followed by a case study of the selected department, alongside a horizontal comparative analysis of music education practices at other universities, both domestically and internationally. The study is guided by the principle of triangulation, ensuring reliability and validity through cross-verification of data collected from multiple sources including interviews, observations, and documentary analysis.

### 3.2 Population and Sample

The population of this study comprises individuals involved in the teaching and administrative processes within the Music Department of C University. This department was chosen for its typicality, representativeness, and longstanding experience in both teaching practice and institutional construction. The sample includes teachers, students, and administrative staff who collectively represent the main stakeholders in the educational environment. Purposeful sampling was used to ensure a diverse range of perspectives based on roles, experiences, and institutional functions. Teachers selected for interviews represent various academic ranks and teaching backgrounds, while students are drawn from different levels of study to reflect varied experiences with classroom teaching customs. Additionally, department administrators and curriculum planners are included to capture institutional perspectives. This broad and balanced sample provides a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between teaching customs and formal educational systems.

### 3.3 Research Instruments

To collect and analyze data effectively, the study utilizes a range of research instruments designed to capture both depth and breadth of information. A semi-structured interview outline is employed to guide in-depth interviews, allowing participants to express their views freely while ensuring alignment with the research objectives. Field observations are systematically documented using an observation record form that captures key aspects such as teacher-student interactions, instructional behaviors, and classroom climate. A literature database is also used to compile and review relevant academic works, journal articles, and reports that provide theoretical and contextual support for the study. Furthermore, content analysis software such as NVivo or MAXQDA is applied to code and analyze qualitative data from interviews, observations, and documents. These tools help identify themes, extract key concepts, and construct a coding system that supports the development of analytical categories and theoretical models.

### 3.4 Data Collection

Data for this study are collected using a combination of field observation, in-depth interviews, literature review, and content analysis to ensure richness, diversity, and credibility. Field observations are conducted within the natural classroom settings of the Music Department at C University. These include both participatory and non-participatory observations, allowing the researcher to immerse in the educational environment while maintaining objectivity. In-depth interviews are conducted with teachers, students, and administrators, using a semi-structured format that encourages detailed responses while covering essential research themes. All interviews are audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed systematically. In addition, a comprehensive literature review is conducted to map the theoretical landscape and contextualize findings. Finally, content analysis is applied to the qualitative data, enabling the extraction of recurring themes, the identification of behavioral patterns, and the construction of a conceptual understanding of the relationship between teaching customs and institutional systems.

### 3.5 Statistics Used for Data Analysis

Although this research is primarily qualitative in nature, basic statistical techniques are used to support data analysis and ensure systematic interpretation. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency counts, are employed to summarize the prevalence of specific themes or behaviors identified in interview and observation data. Content analysis software facilitates the coding process by

identifying the frequency and co-occurrence of keywords, themes, and concepts, thereby allowing for structured thematic analysis. This statistical support is crucial in revealing underlying patterns and trends in teaching customs and their relationship with formal systems. Comparative thematic analysis is also conducted to explore variations across different participant groups and institutional contexts. Additionally, visual mapping tools and coding matrices are used to illustrate conceptual relationships, further enhancing the analytical rigor and depth of the study's findings.

## **4. Data Analysis and Findings**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This section presents the analysis and key findings of the study, focusing on the institutional logic underlying the formation of classroom teaching customs within the Music Department of C University. The data collected through field observations, in-depth interviews, and literature reviews were systematically analyzed using a content analysis approach. Through triangulation of multiple data sources, a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between institutional systems and teaching customs was constructed. The findings reveal that classroom teaching customs are not formed in isolation but are embedded in a broader institutional framework composed of regulatory, normative, and cultural-cognitive systems. These systems exert influence on teachers' and students' behavior through both explicit rules and implicit social expectations. The regulatory system, embodied in assessment policies, teaching regulations, and reward mechanisms, was found to directly influence teachers' willingness to engage in pedagogical innovation. The study highlights that the incentive structures within the institution, particularly those tied to professional evaluations and performance recognition, shape teachers' strategic responses and reinforce conservative teaching behaviors. Furthermore, the normative system, rooted in longstanding educational traditions such as "respecting teachers and valuing the Way", was observed to contribute to a hierarchical classroom dynamic. Teachers hold culturally sanctioned authority, which legitimizes their control over knowledge and classroom activities. This traditional authority system perpetuates passive learning behaviors among students and reinforces teacher-centered instruction models. Complementing this is the cultural-cognitive system, wherein shared beliefs, values, and teaching scripts, shaped by past educational experiences and peer norms, contribute to the stabilization of customary classroom behaviors. Teachers' internalized attitudes toward individual achievement and competition further reinforce a preference for traditional instruction over collaborative or innovative practices. In addition, the study uncovers how institutional logic operates subtly yet powerfully in shaping both teacher and student conducts. These logics form a coherent pattern of expectations that define acceptable behavior, guide pedagogical choices, and mediate classroom interaction. Through this lens, teaching customs emerge as collective, routinized practices that align with institutional objectives, even when they may diverge from educational innovation goals. Overall, the analysis demonstrates that classroom teaching customs are not merely habitual practices but are deeply embedded in the institutional fabric of the education system. They reflect a dynamic interaction between individual agency and structural constraints. While they contribute to order and predictability in the classroom, they may also limit flexibility, suppress innovation, and perpetuate outdated pedagogical models. These findings underscore the importance of understanding institutional logic when considering educational reform, particularly in fields like music education where tradition and performance-oriented evaluation systems play significant roles.

## 4.2 Data Analysis of the Qualitative Data

### 4.2.1 Analysis of the Institutional Logic behind the Formation of Classroom Teaching Customs

The classroom is not an independent entity, it usually needs to be examined within a broader institutional network framework. In the classroom, many seemingly "natural" behavioral patterns and cognitive premises actually reflect the influence of institutional logic. When analyzing the institutional factors influencing the formation of classroom teaching customs, we can borrow F. Michael Connelly's concept of "landscape" - which includes both the background resources of teachers in their social structure and cultural traditions, as well as the "current context" of teachers in their classroom teaching (F. Michael Connelly et al., 1996). The formal and informal institutional elements of an organization structure and standardize individual behavior within the organization through their unique mechanisms of action. As collective behavior gradually converges, the organization forms its own unique institutional logic, which further shapes the shared behavior patterns of its members.

#### Institutional Factors Influencing the Formation of Classroom Teaching Customs

The formation of classroom teaching customs is influenced by various institutional factors, which can be divided into regulatory systems, normative systems, and cultural cognitive systems. These systems constrain and guide the behavior of teachers and students through different mechanisms, thereby shaping classroom teaching customs.

##### 1) Regulatory System

North believes that institutions are a set of rules, legal procedures, and ethical norms established to constrain individual behavior that seeks to maximize subject welfare or utility. New institutional economics further points out that the assumption of "economic man" is more in line with reality than the assumption of "moral man". Under this assumption, teachers will follow the principle of "maximizing benefits" and make behavior decisions that are beneficial to themselves based on the pursuit of "benefits". This behavior decision is not negative or selfish, but a rational choice based on rational considerations. According to the "property rights theory" in rational choice institutionalism, whether or how teachers implement a certain system depends on the comparison of costs and benefits. When teachers feel that they only have the obligation to perform tasks without corresponding rights or rewards, resistance to reform is foreseeable.

Institutions can not only suppress opportunistic behavior, but also generate positive incentives by recognizing and promoting legitimate behavior. However, the teacher assessment and evaluation system in the music department mainly focuses on the "performance" of teachers, and the impact of students' scores, ranking, and awards on teacher performance is limited. The "High end Project Award Method for Education and Teaching Achievements" of C University links the award with "national level" and "provincial and ministerial level", becoming an important basis for teachers to evaluate professional titles, awards and promotions. Professional title evaluation, as the main promotion channel for the teaching profession, is closely related to the professional development, personal honor, and status of teachers. Therefore, teachers adopt a wait-and-see attitude towards classroom teaching reform and tend to maintain the status quo in pursuit of more efficient and economical results.

##### 2) Normative system

Max Weber believed that the basis of legitimacy can be divided into adherence to tradition, conviction of extraordinary charm, and pursuit of reason. Among them, "traditional authority" is particularly prominent in the field of education. The cultural tradition of "respecting teachers and

valuing the Way" in China since ancient times has made "respecting teachers and valuing the Way" an unwritten but normative culture, endowing teachers with traditional authority. The respect of students towards teachers is cultivated through long-term education, and this tradition of respecting teachers supports all instructions and disciplinary behaviors of teachers in the classroom, making students take the authority of teachers for granted.

In addition, as the legal representative of knowledge, teachers control students by controlling textbooks and knowledge. This legal authority makes teachers disseminators and interpreters of knowledge, while students become passive recipients of knowledge. The culture of respecting teachers and legal knowledge together constitute the "traditional authority" of teachers. While teachers meet their role expectations, they also regulate students' attitudes and behaviors, promoting students to spontaneously obey the institutional authority represented by teachers.

### 3) Culture - Cognitive Institutions

The concept of "situational definition" proposed by William Thomas states that an individual's understanding and interpretation of the environment determine their behavior. From the perspective of cultural cognition, human institutions are the sediment of meaning, and teachers gradually form a shared meaning system or action script in school life and teacher community communication. This cognitive framework has a locking effect on teachers' behavior, making them follow established patterns in teaching practice.

Most music teachers grew up in an exam oriented education environment, emphasizing that individual competition is superior to group cooperation. This deep-rooted cognition leads them to believe that learning ultimately depends on individual abilities rather than group cooperation. Therefore, teachers hold an implicit resistance attitude towards classroom teaching reform, showing a wait-and-see attitude and stubborn adherence to traditional teaching methods. Despite the excellent results achieved in the reform of choir classroom teaching, teachers are still considering the necessity and methods of the reform, which is no different from the viewpoint three years ago. Behind this 'waste of time theory' is a strong support for individual competition, which has formed a common belief and action script among the teacher community, leading to a convergence of teaching behavior patterns.

In summary, regulatory systems, normative systems, and cultural cognitive systems influence the behavior of teachers and students through different mechanisms, shaping classroom teaching customs. These institutional factors interact with each other to form a complex institutional network that affects various aspects of classroom teaching.

#### 4.2.2 *The Logic of Institutional Generation Formed by Students in Classroom Teaching*

Institutional logic is the implicit force behind the classroom, providing a set of guidelines and guidelines for actors within the organization on how to act. From the perspective of new institutionalism, based on the concept of "multiple institutional systems", the behavior patterns of teachers in classroom teaching are formed under the influence of institutional logic. Factors such as rules, norms, culture, attitudes, values, and beliefs influence the basic tendencies and self-identity of actors, which in turn affect their action logic. Therefore, the formation of classroom teaching customs is the result of the continuous game, convergence, and stabilization of "collective behavior" under institutional logic, and is constructed through the interaction between actors and various institutional elements. Once formed, these customs will evolve into a collective way of life.



From an institutional perspective, multiple institutional systems provide actors with the "institutional" root of classroom teaching action scenarios. The examination system, selection system, and assessment and evaluation system under the goal of efficiency jointly constitute the rational choice model of teachers, forming classroom teaching customs such as stable spatial arrangement, teacher determined time frame, and achievement oriented theory. The traditional authority has endowed teachers with a "legal identity" to exercise official rights, inadvertently forming a "teacher centered" attitude in the classroom, and giving rise to customs such as respecting teachers and silent evaluations. The traditional concepts internalized by teachers in their educational experiences have led to values centered around "individualism", resonating with the teacher community about "competition", and making teachers believe from the bottom of their hearts that "cooperation has little value", thus strengthening the customs of adopting traditional teaching models.

#### 4.4 Summary of the Results

This study's qualitative analysis reveals that classroom teaching customs in the Music Department of C University are not merely habitual patterns of behavior but are deeply rooted in a complex institutional network, shaped by the interplay of regulatory systems, normative traditions, and cognitive-cultural frameworks. These institutional components function together to construct the institutional logic that underpins and sustains classroom behavior among both teachers and students.

Firstly, the regulatory system establishes a framework of formal rules, policies, and incentive mechanisms that guide teachers' decision-making in classroom practice. Faculty behavior is influenced by rational cost-benefit analysis, where the perceived balance between obligations and rewards informs attitudes toward teaching innovation and reform. Institutional mechanisms such as performance evaluation standards and professional title assessments prioritize efficiency and standardized outputs, leading teachers to favor stable and predictable classroom behaviors over experimental or reform-oriented approaches.

Secondly, the normative system reinforces behavioral expectations through deeply embedded cultural traditions and societal values. Drawing on Max Weber's theory of traditional authority, the findings highlight the enduring cultural norm of "respecting teachers and valuing the Way" as a key force legitimizing the teacher's authority in the classroom. This moral authority is further reinforced by the teacher's control over knowledge dissemination, which promotes student compliance and supports hierarchical classroom dynamics. These normative expectations both constrain and validate the structure of teacher-student interaction, reinforcing traditional teaching customs such as one-way knowledge transmission and discipline-oriented classroom order.

Thirdly, the cultural-cognitive system functions at a deeper psychological and symbolic level, shaping the interpretive frameworks through which teachers and students understand their roles. Teachers' perceptions are heavily shaped by their own educational experiences, which often emphasized individual competition over collaboration. This shared cognition leads to a form of collective behavioral inertia, wherein teachers consistently replicate conventional instructional models despite external calls for reform. The persistence of such mental models contributes to a convergent and conservative teaching culture, which resists change and innovation.

Furthermore, the analysis of student behavior patterns illustrates how institutional logic extends beyond teacher conduct to influence the classroom ecosystem as a whole. Students internalize institutional expectations through repeated interactions with systemic elements such as assessments, authority structures, and classroom routines. Their learning attitudes and behavioral tendencies are shaped by the same institutional logics that govern teacher behavior, including

achievement orientation, teacher-deference, and individualism. These student responses in turn reinforce and stabilize teaching customs, forming a cyclical relationship between institutional environment and classroom practice.

In sum, the study identifies that classroom teaching customs in the music department are products of interwoven institutional systems and emergent institutional logic. Regulatory incentives, normative traditions, and cultural cognition together form a multilayered structure that stabilizes teaching practices, shapes the daily behavior of teachers and students, and ultimately defines the nature of classroom interaction. These findings underscore the importance of considering both formal systems and informal cultural dynamics when analyzing the persistence of specific teaching customs and when designing interventions for educational reform.

## **5. Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendation**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

Based on an in-depth analysis of the Music Department at C University, this study explored the formation, evolution, and institutional logic behind classroom teaching customs. Drawing from theories of new institutionalism, it was found that classroom customs are not isolated individual choices but emerge from the interaction between regulatory structures, cultural norms, and cognitive frameworks. These customs are deeply embedded in the institutional environment and reflect a process of rational adaptation, cultural inheritance, and habitual practice.

The study identifies three dominant pathways that explain how individual teaching strategies evolve into collective customs: the normative mechanism, the logic of suitability, and the practical system. The normative mechanism emphasizes alignment with policy, curriculum standards, and professional expectations, where repeated compliance leads to internalization and institutionalization. The logic of suitability refers to the strategic decision-making of teachers in selecting actions that appear safe, efficient, and appropriate within the current educational context, often leading to path dependency and resistance to reform. The practical system highlights how accumulated teaching experiences and classroom practices become habitual, stabilizing into patterns that shape daily instruction.

Ultimately, teaching customs evolve into informal but powerful institutional arrangements that guide teacher and student behavior. These customs not only help maintain order and predictability in the classroom but also act as filters that either support or hinder educational reforms. As such, they form a key component of the institutional ecosystem of education and must be acknowledged in any effort to understand or improve teaching quality.

### **5.2 Discussion**

This study revealed the dynamic interactive relationship between teaching customs and institutional systems. Teaching customs are both shaped by and contribute to the functioning of educational systems. On one hand, formal institutional arrangements, such as classroom layout, curriculum policy, and performance evaluation systems, impose constraints and incentives that guide behavior, leading to standardized practices. On the other hand, teaching customs themselves influence how systems operate in practice. For instance, flexible teaching strategies and local adaptations developed over time can prompt system-level change or reform. The role of teaching customs within the educational system is dual in nature. As informal norms, they fill the gaps left by



formal structures by fostering cooperation, reinforcing cultural values, and encouraging discipline and performance. Particularly in the music education context, where teaching involves both artistic sensibility and technical skill, customs serve as bridges between abstract educational objectives and the lived experiences of faculty and students.

However, the study also uncovers potential conflicts between traditional customs and modern educational reforms. Deep-rooted teaching habits, such as teacher-centered instruction or overemphasis on individual competition, may inhibit the cultivation of creativity, collaboration, and innovation among students. These tensions highlight the need to critically evaluate whether existing customs align with evolving educational goals. The implicit role of institutional logic is also central. Institutional logic shapes teachers' worldviews and teaching decisions without the need for overt enforcement. This tacit influence reinforces shared assumptions and legitimizes certain behaviors over others. As a result, even reform-minded teachers may unconsciously replicate traditional patterns, particularly if such practices are normalized within their peer community. This insight emphasizes the need for reflective teaching practices and conscious interrogation of institutional norms.

### 5.3 Recommendation

To improve educational outcomes and align classroom teaching customs with the goals of modern education, several strategic recommendations are proposed:

#### 1) Foster Reflective Institutional Environments

Institutions should actively encourage reflective practice among faculty, particularly in recognizing the implicit assumptions that guide their teaching behavior. Professional development programs should include training in pedagogical reflection, educational philosophy, and classroom observation analysis. Cultivating a culture of reflection can help break habitual behaviors and open space for innovation.

#### 2) Integrate Policy with Informal Practice

Reform efforts should not rely solely on top-down mandates. Instead, policy design must take into account the entrenched customs and institutional logic of educators. Reformers should work collaboratively with faculty to co-create policies that align with teachers' practical realities and cultural values, allowing for more sustainable and accepted changes.

#### 3) Design Context-Sensitive Talent Cultivation Models

Universities, particularly those offering music education, should reexamine their training objectives and align them with local conditions and student needs. Institutions must avoid homogeneous training models and instead develop distinctive educational pathways that reflect their unique resources and disciplinary characteristics. Balancing performance training with academic research and pedagogical innovation should be a key strategic direction.

#### 4) Strengthen Interdisciplinary and Empirical Research

Future research should adopt interdisciplinary frameworks that combine insights from education, sociology, and psychology. Mixed-method approaches, merging qualitative case studies with quantitative analysis, can provide deeper insight into the formation, evolution, and impact of teaching customs. Psychological experiments, behavioral tracking, and long-term classroom observation should be employed to uncover hidden mechanisms of institutional influence.

#### 5) Promote Cultural Adaptation in Education Reform

To harmonize teaching customs with the demands of modern education, reform strategies must be culturally adaptive. Educators and policymakers should identify which traditional customs support learning and which hinder progress. Reforms should preserve positive cultural values (e.g., respect for teachers) while transforming outdated practices (e.g., rigid competition) to promote creativity, cooperation, and student agency.

By acknowledging and engaging with the institutional logics that underpin teaching customs, educators and administrators can better navigate the complex terrain of educational reform. A balanced approach that respects tradition while fostering innovation will be key to developing sustainable, high-quality education systems, particularly in disciplines like music, where both heritage and creativity are deeply interwoven.

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## **Factors Influencing Chinese Tourists' Decision to Use Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. in Phuket**

by

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the influence of service quality and marketing mix factors on the decision-making behavior of Chinese tourists using the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. in Phuket, Thailand. The research was conducted in the context of Thailand's 2023 visa exemption policy aimed at boosting tourism, particularly among Chinese travelers. Given the evolving dynamics of the tourism industry and the increasing shift from group tours to Free and Independent Travelers (FIT), it has become essential for tourism businesses to understand how service and marketing strategies affect tourists' choices. A quantitative research approach was employed, with data collected from 400 Chinese tourists who had previously used the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour. The study used structured questionnaires to gather data, which were then analyzed using statistical methods to determine the relationship between service quality, marketing mix elements, and tourists' decisions. The findings revealed that both service quality and marketing mix factors significantly influenced tourists' purchasing decisions at the 0.05 level of statistical significance. Among the marketing mix components, the product factor had the most significant impact. In terms of service quality, the dimensions of responsiveness, reliability, and empathy emerged as the strongest predictors of consumer decision-making. These results are consistent with previous studies emphasizing the critical role of well-structured service delivery and targeted marketing efforts in attracting and retaining tourists. The study suggests that tour operators should prioritize improvements in service responsiveness and reliability, while also fostering personalized and empathetic customer engagement to meet the expectations of modern FIT travelers. Furthermore, enhancements in other marketing mix elements, such as pricing strategies, promotional campaigns, distribution channels, and physical evidence, are necessary to maintain competitiveness in a highly dynamic market. The research concludes by recommending future studies that incorporate qualitative methods to gain deeper insights into tourists' motivations and perceptions. It also encourages further exploration of external factors such as digital influence, travel safety, and cultural familiarity. The findings provide practical guidance for Sawasdee Thai Tour and other tourism operators seeking to improve service quality and optimize marketing strategies to support sustainable growth and customer satisfaction in Thailand's tourism industry.

**Keywords:** Chinese Tourists, Service Quality, Marketing Mix, Tour Operator Decision-Making, Phuket Tourism

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background and Importance of the Problem

The Thai government officially implemented a visa exemption policy for Chinese tourists on September 25, 2023, with the goal of stimulating the tourism sector and bolstering the national economy (Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand, 2023). This policy allows tourists from China and Kazakhstan to enter Thailand without a visa for up to 30 days, aiming to attract more visitors from China (Department of Consular Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023). The Thai government anticipates that the visa exemption will revitalize the Chinese tourist market, contributing to the achievement of national tourism revenue targets (Public Relations Department, 2024). However, the lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to financial instability and noticeable shifts in travel behavior. Specifically, Chinese tourists are increasingly favoring independent travel over traditional group tours, which were once the norm. Independent travelers, often referred to as Free and Independent Travelers (FIT), now rely heavily on Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) for travel decision-making (SiteMinder, 2024).

Phuket, as a major tourist destination in Thailand, has experienced steady growth in its tourism sector, with 744 certified tour operators registered as of 2024 (Office of the Southern Region 2 Branch, Business Registration for Tour Operators and Tour Guides, 2024). One notable player in the region is Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd., a tour operator with over 15 years of experience offering a variety of tour programs, including educational tours, MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) tours, and wellness tourism. Sawasdee Thai Tour's primary client base includes Ctrip, China's largest online travel agency (Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd., 2024). In the aftermath of COVID-19, Chinese tourist behavior has undergone significant changes. While group tours were previously dominant, many Chinese travelers now prefer independent travel, driven by strong purchasing power and a desire for more flexible and personalized travel options (Krungthep Turakij, 2019). Nonetheless, package tours and the services of travel companies remain important in meeting the diverse expectations and needs of tourists (Tannongdu, 2023). Therefore, understanding the factors influencing Chinese tourists' decisions to use tour operators is essential for companies like Sawasdee Thai Tour to remain competitive in the evolving tourism market.

Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. operates as a full-service tour operator and engages in a variety of tourism-related businesses. Located in Phuket, the company was officially registered on April 26, 2011, with a registered capital of 6,000,000 baht and an estimated company value of 5,311,631 baht as of 2024 (Department of Business Development, 2024). This study analyzes the marketing mix elements and tourist decision-making behavior, with a particular focus on Chinese tourists in Phuket. The goal is to help Sawasdee Thai Tour optimize its marketing strategies and improve service delivery to better align with the evolving needs of Chinese tourists. Furthermore, the study's findings could serve as a practical guide for enhancing the service standards of Thai tour operators, promoting sustainable growth in the tourism industry, and contributing to the national economy.

### 1.2 Research Question

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

1) What are the levels of opinions on service quality, service marketing mix factors, and the decision-making process in selecting the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. among Chinese tourists traveling in Phuket?

2) What is the relationship between service quality, service marketing mix factors, and the decision-making process in selecting the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. among Chinese tourists traveling in Phuket?

### **1.3 Research Objective**

The primary objectives of this research are:

- 1) To evaluate the levels of Chinese tourists' opinions on service quality, service marketing mix factors, and the decision-making process when selecting the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. in Phuket.
- 2) To investigate the relationship between service quality, service marketing mix factors, and the decision-making process in selecting the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. among Chinese tourists traveling in Phuket.
- 3) To provide recommendations for improving the marketing strategies and service delivery of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. based on the research findings, with the ultimate aim of enhancing customer satisfaction and business performance.
- 4) To offer insights that can help other Thai tour operators adapt their service offerings to meet the evolving needs of Chinese tourists, thereby supporting the long-term growth of the Thai tourism industry.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Related Concepts and Theories**

#### *2.1.1 Service Marketing Mix*

The service marketing mix is a framework that defines the key elements influencing the delivery of a service to customers. It is central to managing marketing in service-oriented industries. According to Sukhapornsintam and Suntayathon (2019), the service marketing mix consists of seven crucial elements:

- **Product:** The offerings designed to meet the needs and expectations of consumers.
- **Price:** The value or cost that customers must pay to acquire the product or service.
- **Place:** The distribution channels and logistics used to deliver the service to consumers.
- **Promotion:** The communication tools and techniques used to inform, persuade, and stimulate customer interest and purchase intention.
- **People:** The personnel or employees involved in delivering the service, playing a crucial role in customer satisfaction.
- **Physical Evidence:** Tangible elements, such as physical environments and materials, that support the service delivery and impact customer perception.
- **Process:** The systems, procedures, and workflows that ensure efficient, consistent, and satisfactory service delivery.

In this study, the service marketing mix will be utilized as a strategic tool to examine how businesses can best meet the needs of target customers. All seven elements will be analyzed to understand their impact on Chinese tourists' decisions to purchase outbound tour packages in Phuket.

### *2.1.2 Service Quality*

Service quality is defined as the customer's perception of how well a service meets their expectations. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) identified five key dimensions of service quality:

- **Reliability:** The ability to consistently deliver promised services accurately and dependably.
- **Assurance:** The knowledge and courtesy of employees, and their ability to instill trust and confidence, including the perceived safety and security of the service.
- **Tangibles:** The physical elements involved in service delivery, such as facilities, equipment, personnel appearance, and communication materials.
- **Empathy:** The degree of caring and individualized attention the service provider offers.
- **Responsiveness:** The willingness to help customers and provide prompt, attentive service.

In this study, service quality refers to how well Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. can meet the expectations of Chinese tourists in the five dimensions mentioned above. The aim is to differentiate the company by its service quality and improve its competitive edge in the tourism industry.

### *2.1.3 Purchase Decision-Making*

The consumer purchase decision process consists of five stages, which guide consumers in their decision-making journey (Kotler & Keller, 2012):

- **Need Recognition (Problem Recognition):** The consumer recognizes a need, which could be triggered internally (e.g., hunger, discomfort) or externally.
- **Information Search:** Once the need is recognized, the consumer searches for information about products or services that could satisfy that need.
- **Evaluation of Alternatives:** The consumer evaluates various alternatives based on specific criteria such as quality, price, brand reputation, and features.
- **Purchase Decision:** After evaluating the alternatives, the consumer chooses the option that best fits their needs and makes a purchase decision.
- **Post-Purchase Behavior:** After the purchase, the consumer assesses their satisfaction, which influences their future decisions and brand loyalty.

Understanding this process is critical for marketers who want to influence consumers at each stage of their decision-making journey.

## **2.2 Literature Surveys**

This section will focus on previous studies, literature, and findings related to the service marketing mix, service quality, and purchase decision-making, specifically in the context of tourism, with a focus on Chinese tourists and their behavior post-COVID-19. It will also highlight trends in the Phuket tourism market, identifying gaps and opportunities for Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. to improve their offerings and marketing strategies.



## 2.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is depicted in Figure 1 (which would be included visually in the document). It illustrates the relationships between the independent variables (service marketing mix and service quality) and the dependent variable (purchase decision). The framework guides the study by showing how the marketing mix and service quality influence Chinese tourists' decision-making process in selecting services from Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. in Phuket.

- 1) Independent Variables: Service Marketing Mix, Service Quality
- 2) Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision

This framework will serve as the foundation for analyzing the factors that shape Chinese tourists' choices and behaviors regarding tourism services in Phuket.

## 2.4 Research Hypothesis

Based on the conceptual framework, the research hypotheses are formulated as follows:

H1: Service marketing mix is significantly related to the purchase decision of Chinese tourists in selecting the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. for tourism in Phuket.

H2: Service quality is significantly related to the purchase decision of Chinese tourists in selecting the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. for tourism in Phuket.

These hypotheses guide the study's investigation into how different aspects of service marketing and quality affect the decision-making process of Chinese tourists in choosing tour services.

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

This research follows a quantitative design, utilizing a questionnaire as the primary research instrument. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher after conducting a review of relevant literature and previous research. The process of validating and ensuring the reliability of the research instrument was as follows:

1) Initial Draft Validation: The first draft of the questionnaire was submitted to the thesis advisor to verify content accuracy and language clarity. Revisions were made based on the advisor's suggestions to ensure that the questions aligned with the research objectives and were clear for respondents.

2) Content Validity: The revised questionnaire was then evaluated by experts in the field for content validity. This was done using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). An acceptable IOC value is greater than 0.5, and the evaluations from three experts resulted in IOC values ranging from 0.66 to 1.00, which indicated that all items were valid.

3) Pilot Testing: The questionnaire was pilot-tested with 30 individuals to assess its clarity and reliability. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was used to test reliability. Items with low congruence were revised to ensure consistency with the research variables. A Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.7 was considered acceptable. The results showed reliability scores ranging from 0.760 to 0.889, indicating satisfactory reliability for the instrument. The questionnaire was then finalized for actual data collection.

### 3.2 Population and Sample

The target population for this study consists of individuals from Mainland China who have previously used the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. for tourism purposes in Phuket. Since the total population is unspecified and potentially large, the sample size was calculated using Cochran's formula (1977) for an unknown population, assuming a normal distribution. The calculation was done with the following parameters: confidence level: 95%, margin of error: 5% (0.05), maximum variance (p): 0.5 (assuming maximum variability). According to the formula, the required sample size was calculated to be 385 respondents. To account for incomplete responses and ensure statistical reliability, a total of 400 questionnaires were distributed. Descriptive analysis of sample basic information is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** Basic Information of the Questionnaire (N=400)

Basic Information	Item	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	162	40.50
	Female	238	59.50
Age	20-30 Year	51	12.75
	31-40 Year	241	60.25
	41-50 Year	68	17.00
	51-60 Year	40	10.00
Occupation	Student	10	2.50
	Government	8	2.00
	Employee	281	70.25
	Business Owner	101	25.25
Status	Single	110	27.50
	Married	290	72.50
Monthly income	20,001-30,000 Baht	2	0.50
	30,001-40,000 Baht	24	6.00
	40,001-50,000 Baht	80	20.00
	More than 50,000 Baht	294	73.50

### 3.3 Data Collection

The data collection process was conducted between September and November 2024. The questionnaire was translated into Chinese to accommodate the target audience, and it was converted into an online survey format using the WeChat application. The survey link was then distributed through WeChat to Chinese tourists who had previously visited Phuket and used the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd.

### 3.4 Statistics Used for Data Analysis

In this study, two types of statistics were employed for data analysis: descriptive data analysis and inferential data analysis.

#### 1) Descriptive Data Analysis

This analysis focused on demographic characteristics and the behaviors of Chinese tourists visiting Phuket, as well as other relevant variables. The statistics used included frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

The interpretation was conducted using Interpretation Criteria, which were defined as follows:

- Score 4.21 – 5.00: Highest level
- Score 3.41 – 4.20: High level
- Score 2.61 – 3.40: Moderate level
- Score 1.81 – 2.60: Low level
- Score 1.00 – 1.80: Lowest level

These criteria helped interpret the responses on a 5-point scale.

#### 2) Inferential Data Analysis

For hypothesis testing, multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between the independent variables (service marketing mix and service quality) and the dependent variable (purchase decision). This analysis will provide insights into how the factors influence the decision-making process of Chinese tourists in selecting the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd.

## 4. Data Analysis and Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of data analysis conducted to address the research objectives and answer the research questions concerning the factors influencing Chinese tourists' decisions to use the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. in Phuket. The quantitative data were collected from a sample of 400 Chinese tourists through a structured questionnaire. The analysis was conducted using descriptive and inferential statistics to examine the levels of service quality, service marketing mix factors, and the decision-making process, as well as the relationships among these variables. The analysis is divided into two main sections. The first section explores the levels of opinions on service quality, marketing mix factors, and the decision-making process. This includes calculating means and standard deviations for each dimension and interpreting the levels based on standardized criteria. The second section presents the results of multiple regression analyses conducted to test the relationships between (1) service marketing mix factors and purchase decision, and (2) service quality and purchase decision. The aim is to determine whether and to what extent these variables influence Chinese tourists' decisions to select the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. The findings provide critical insights into tourist perceptions and behaviors, especially in the context of post-pandemic changes in Chinese outbound tourism. The results are expected to inform marketing strategies, service development, and business planning for tour operators targeting the Chinese market. The statistical significance and explanatory power of each factor are highlighted to

offer practical implications for improving service quality and marketing effectiveness within the tourism industry in Phuket.

## 4.2 Data Analysis of the Quantitative Data

### 4.2.1 Levels of the Service Quality, Service Marketing Mix Factors, and the Decision-Making Process

Levels of opinions on service quality, service marketing mix factors, and the decision-making process in selecting the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. among Chinese tourists traveling in Phuket were shown in Table 2.

**Table 2** Levels of Service Quality, Service Marketing Mix Factors, and the Decision-Making Process

Factors	Mean	S.D.	Level
<b>Service Marketing Mix</b>	<b>4.79</b>	<b>0.45</b>	Highest
Product	4.79	0.42	Highest
Price	4.80	0.45	Highest
Place	4.76	0.5	Highest
Promotion	4.79	0.42	Highest
Personnel	4.77	0.45	Highest
Physical Environment	4.89	0.45	Highest
Process	4.75	0.44	Highest
<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>4.80</b>	<b>0.45</b>	Highest
Reliability	4.80	0.41	Highest
Assurance	4.81	0.42	Highest
Tangibles	4.79	0.49	Highest
Empathy	4.82	0.39	Highest
Responsiveness	4.78	0.40	Highest
<b>Purchasing Decision</b>	<b>4.81</b>	<b>0.38</b>	Highest

From Table 2, the overall level of opinions regarding the marketing mix factors influencing the decision to use tour services among Chinese tourists visiting Phuket was rated at the highest level, with a mean score of 4.79. When considering each dimension individually, all were also rated at the highest level. The dimension with the highest mean was *physical evidence*, with a mean score of 4.89, followed by *price* (4.80), *product* and *promotion* (both 4.79), *people* (4.77), *place/distribution* (4.76), and *process* (4.75), respectively. Moreover, the overall perceived service quality by Chinese tourists visiting Phuket Province was also at the highest level, with a mean score of 4.80. Among the dimensions assessed, *empathy* received the highest mean score of 4.82, followed by *assurance* (4.81), *reliability* (4.80), *tangibles* (4.79), and *responsiveness* (4.78), respectively. The overall perception regarding the decision-making factors among Chinese tourists traveling to Phuket was also at the highest level, with a mean score of 4.81.

### 4.2.2 Relationship between Service Quality, Service Marketing Mix Factors, and the Decision-Making Process

The relationship between service marketing mix and purchase decision of Chinese tourists in selecting the services of Sawadee Thai Tour Company Limited for tourism in Phuket is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3** Relationship between Service Quality, Service Marketing Mix Factors, and the Decision-Making Process

Model	Purchase Decision				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.075	.241		12.766	.000
Product	.163	.037	.177	.4.357	.000**
Price	.040	.022	.074	1.831	.068
Place	.049	.026	.078	1.844	.066
Promotion	.039	.025	.064	1.541	.124
Personnel	.008	.027	.012	.296	.768
Physical Environment	.028	.028	.042	1.007	.315
Process	.038	.025	.061	1.504	.133
R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjust R <sup>2</sup>	SE(est.)	F	Sig.
.293	.086	.075	.16945	8.091	0.000**

From Table 3, the analysis revealed that marketing mix factors were positively correlated with the decision to use the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. among Chinese tourists visiting Phuket ( $R = 0.293$ ). The coefficient of determination (R Square), which indicates the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable, was 0.086. This suggests that 8.60% of the variance in the decision to use the service can be explained by marketing mix factors, while the remaining 91.40% is attributable to other factors. Based on the significance value (Sig.), it can be concluded that marketing mix factors are positively correlated with the decision to use services from Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. at a statistically significant level of 0.05. Among these, the *product* factor was found to significantly influence the decision-making process. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is accepted, and it can be concluded that marketing mix factors are positively correlated with the decision to use services provided by Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. among Chinese tourists visiting Phuket.

The relationship between service quality and purchase decision of Chinese tourists in selecting the services of Sawadee Thai Tour Company Limited for tourism in Phuket is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4** Relationship between Service Quality and Purchase Decision of Chinese Tourists in Selecting the Service

Model	Purchase Decision				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.410	.224		10.748	.000
Reliability	.148	.038	.158	3.865	.000**
Assurance	.006	.032	.007	.174	.761
Tangibles	.031	.024	.049	1.287	.199
Empathy	.088	.035	.104	2.521	.012*
Responsiveness	.229	.035	.274	6.536	.000**
R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjust R <sup>2</sup>	SE(est.)	F	Sig.
.430	.185	.178	.159	8.091	0.000**

From Table 4, the findings also indicated a positive relationship between service quality and the decision to use the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. among Chinese tourists visiting Phuket ( $R = 0.430$ ). The coefficient of determination ( $R$  Square) was 0.185, indicating that service quality explained 18.50% of the variance in the decision to use the service, with the remaining 81.50% influenced by other factors. It can be concluded that service quality significantly influenced the decision to use services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. at a significance level of 0.05. Three dimensions were found to significantly affect decision-making: *reliability*, *empathy*, and *responsiveness*. Among these, *responsiveness* had the highest standardized coefficient (Beta), followed by *reliability* and *empathy*, respectively. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is accepted, and it is concluded that service quality is positively correlated with the decision to use the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. among Chinese tourists visiting Phuket at a statistically significant level.

#### 4.4 Summary of the Results

The findings from this study highlight that both service quality and marketing mix factors play a critical role in influencing the decision-making process of Chinese tourists who choose the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. in Phuket. Chinese tourists reported very high levels of satisfaction and positive perceptions across all dimensions of service quality and marketing mix elements. This indicates a strong alignment between customer expectations and the service delivery provided by the company. Regarding the marketing mix, tourists expressed particularly favorable opinions on aspects such as product offerings, pricing strategies, and the overall physical environment of the service experience. These elements were perceived as effective in enhancing the value and attractiveness of the tour services offered. In terms of service quality, tourists placed the greatest importance on responsiveness, reliability, and empathy. These dimensions reflect the ability of the tour operator to meet customer needs promptly, deliver consistent service, and provide personalized attention—factors that were shown to strongly influence tourists' decisions to engage with the company.

The overall decision-making process of Chinese tourists was found to be shaped by a combination of both the tangible and intangible aspects of the service experience. Tourists appreciated not only the core travel products but also the professionalism, communication, and care exhibited by the service staff. This comprehensive approach to service quality and marketing strategy has contributed to the company's ability to retain and attract Chinese tourists in a competitive and rapidly evolving tourism landscape. In summary, the study confirms that enhancing both the quality of service and the strategic application of marketing mix elements is essential for improving tourist satisfaction and encouraging continued use of tour operator services. These insights provide valuable guidance for Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. and similar businesses aiming to thrive in the post-pandemic tourism recovery.

## **5. Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendation**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

The study aimed to investigate the relationship between service quality and marketing mix factors and their influence on the decision to use the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. The study employed questionnaires as the primary data collection instrument, with a sample of 400 Chinese tourists who had previously used the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. in Phuket. The study found that the overall levels of opinions regarding marketing mix factors, service quality factors, and purchasing decision-making factors among Chinese tourists traveling in Phuket were at the highest level across all dimensions. The marketing mix factors in the service context were positively correlated with the decision to use the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd., with statistical significance at the 0.05 level. Among these factors, the product component had a significant influence on the decision to use the company's services. Furthermore, overall service quality significantly influenced the decision to use the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd., also at the 0.05 level of statistical significance. Three dimensions of service quality, reliability, empathy, and responsiveness, were found to be statistically significant. Among these, responsiveness had the strongest influence on the decision-making process, followed by reliability and empathy, respectively.

### **5.2 Discussion**

Service quality demonstrated a positive correlation with the decision to use the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd. among Chinese tourists traveling in Phuket. This finding aligns with the study conducted by Wiphawi (2019), who examined the factors influencing customers' decisions to use city tour services in Phuket by True Design Holiday Co., Ltd. The research aimed to investigate levels of opinion on service decisions, service quality, and the effect of personal and behavioral factors on service decisions. The results indicated that service quality, particularly in terms of service capability, responsiveness to needs, safety and security, tangible service, and reliability, was a key determinant in customer decision-making, ranked in order of importance. Marketing mix factors were also found to be positively associated with the decision to use the services of Sawasdee Thai Tour Co., Ltd., which is consistent with the findings of Na (2022), who investigated factors influencing the decision-making of Chinese tourists traveling abroad, specifically those visiting Thailand. The study revealed that external factors and all seven elements of the marketing mix, product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence and presentation, and process, significantly influenced travel decisions. The hypothesis testing indicated a statistically significant positive correlation between each marketing mix component and Chinese tourists' travel decisions at the 0.01 level of significance. These findings emphasize the critical role that comprehensive



marketing strategies and high-quality services play in attracting and retaining international tourists, particularly from the Chinese market.

### 5.3 Recommendation

#### 5.3.1 Suggestions for Applying the Research Results

1. For entrepreneurs aiming to enhance service quality through the application of marketing mix factors, it is recommended that they prioritize the development and presentation of physical evidence, pricing strategies, product offerings, promotional activities, personnel, distribution channels, and service processes. These six dimensions were found to have a statistically significant positive relationship with consumers' service usage decisions.

2. For entrepreneurs seeking to increase customer decision-making in selecting services through the use of marketing mix factors, emphasis should be placed particularly on the product dimension, as it demonstrated a statistically significant positive correlation with customers' decisions to use the service.

3. For entrepreneurs intending to improve service quality that influences customer decision-making, it is essential to focus on reliability, empathy, and responsiveness. These three aspects were found to have a statistically significant positive relationship with service usage decisions.

#### 5.3.2 Suggestions for Further Research

1) Future studies should incorporate qualitative research methods, such as in-depth interviews, to gain more detailed and specific insights. This would be beneficial for refining service delivery to better meet the needs of service users.

2) Subsequent research should also explore other potential factors influencing tour purchasing decisions. Doing so would enable tour operators to utilize the findings in the formulation of more effective strategic planning.

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# **Reconstruction of Applied Curriculum System for Music Majors in Local Chinese Universities**

by

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### Abstract

In response to the national call for application-oriented transformation in higher education, this study investigates the current challenges and reform strategies concerning the curriculum system for music performance majors in local universities in China. Despite increasing societal demand for well-rounded, industry-ready music professionals, many universities continue to rely on outdated, theory-heavy curriculum models that fail to address contemporary performance practices and real-world applications. Through a mixed-methods research design involving literature review, questionnaire surveys, and in-depth interviews with educators and students, this study explores both the structural shortcomings of existing programs and the potential pathways toward curriculum innovation. Findings reveal that the curriculum goals of music performance majors are often ambiguous, overly broad, or narrowly defined, leading to a disconnect between educational outcomes and market expectations. The existing systems emphasize technical instruction but lack integration with industry practices and soft skills development. Additionally, teaching content and evaluation mechanisms are fragmented, resulting in poor alignment between course objectives and graduate capabilities. Students often report unclear career direction, limited stage experience, and insufficient training in collaborative or interdisciplinary contexts. To address these issues, the study proposes a comprehensive reconstruction of the curriculum system based on four key principles: (1) Establishing diversified and clearly defined training objectives aligned with labor market demands; (2) Designing a systematic and multi-level course architecture combining professional, practical, and cultural competencies; (3) Implementing multi-modal, performance-driven teaching methods, and (4) Embedding artistic practice and real-world exposure into core assessment frameworks. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of expanding the scope of institutional participation in future research and enhancing policy coordination across departments to ensure effective reform implementation. Ultimately, this research offers theoretical insights and practical strategies to guide local universities in restructuring music education curricula. It aims to support the development of application-oriented music professionals who are not only proficient in performance but also adaptive, creative, and ethically grounded, ready to meet the evolving demands of the modern cultural and creative industries.

**Keywords:** Curriculum Reform, Music Performance Majors, Application-Oriented Education, Local Universities, Talent Cultivation

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Background and Importance of the Problem**

With the ongoing transformation of higher education towards application-oriented models, local universities are increasingly seeking to reform their academic structures to better align with social and industrial demands. For music majors in particular, this transformation necessitates adaptive adjustments in the curriculum system. However, empirical evidence indicates that many universities still rely heavily on traditional discipline-based frameworks. As a result, their talent development strategies fail to keep pace with the evolving needs of the music industry and broader social changes. The current curriculum often lacks industry relevance, with teaching content disconnected from real-world practices and skill training modules exhibiting fragmented and unsystematic design. This gap significantly undermines the employment competitiveness of music graduates. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive overhaul of curriculum design that fosters integration between academia and industry, and supports the development of practical, adaptable skills. Therefore, curriculum reform has become a vital entry point for transforming talent cultivation in music education.

### **1.2 Research Question**

This study aims to address the following research questions:

- 1) What are the key issues within the current curriculum system for music majors in local universities?
- 2) Why is it necessary to reconstruct the curriculum system to align with application-oriented education?
- 3) How can a new applied curriculum system be developed that integrates both educational and industry needs?

### **1.3 Research Objective**

The primary objectives of this research are:

- 1) To analyze the shortcomings and structural problems in the existing curriculum systems for music majors in local universities.
- 2) To examine the necessity of reconstructing the curriculum to respond to the demands of social transformation and industry development.
- 3) To propose guiding principles for curriculum system reconstruction and suggest strategies for optimizing and restructuring curriculum content.
- 4) To construct a theoretical and practical framework for an applied curriculum system that effectively integrates industry and education, providing a foundation for future curriculum reforms in music education.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Related Concepts and Theories

The transformation of higher education toward an application-oriented model requires an in-depth understanding of educational theories that support curriculum innovation. Key concepts in this study include application-oriented talent cultivation, industry-education integration, and curriculum system reconstruction. Application-oriented education emphasizes the alignment of academic programs with real-world job competencies, promoting practical ability, innovation, and professional ethics. The theory of constructive alignment suggests that teaching objectives, learning activities, and assessments must be aligned with the skills required in professional settings. Additionally, vocational education theory emphasizes skill-based and competency-based training models that bridge the gap between academia and industry, particularly relevant to music majors requiring both artistic and applied proficiencies.

### 2.2 Literature Surveys

Hongling (2009) highlighted structural contradictions in music performance programs in local normal universities, emphasizing the vague positioning and broad definitions of professional abilities. Na (2012) introduced the concept of “composite skilled talent” in vocational music education, focusing on ethics, practical ability, and job-market alignment. Studies by Jie (2016) and Ximao & Fei (2008) emphasized reforming curriculum models and establishing flexible training mechanisms. Guodong (2016) proposed developing applied curricula through theoretical, practical, and skill-based integration, while Yanfang (2016) argued for ability-centered curriculum innovation.

Further, Liping (2014) and Yuanping (2015) stressed curriculum diversification and collaborative industry-academia models. Research on vocal music curriculum systems by Ping (2006), Yan (2006), and Yi (2013, 2018) underscored the need to balance professional depth with personality development and multicultural perspectives. Xiaoxiao (2024) introduced ideological-political integration into music curricula, aligning with new liberal arts initiatives. Despite progress, literature points to a continuing need for regionally adaptive, skill-oriented curriculum structures that reflect both professional and social development.

### 2.3 Conceptual Framework

This study adopts a conceptual framework based on the integration of applied education theory and curriculum design principles. The framework consists of three core elements:

- 1) Curriculum Structure: Includes theoretical knowledge, skill development, and practical application.
- 2) Talent Cultivation Orientation: Emphasizes professional adaptability, creativity, and ethical values aligned with industry needs.
- 3) Curriculum Innovation Strategy: Guided by regional characteristics, market demands, and cross-disciplinary collaboration (e.g., integrating ideology and politics).

The interaction of these components supports the development of a modern, application-oriented curriculum system for music majors in local universities.

## 2.4 Research Hypothesis

Based on the literature and conceptual framework, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: The current curriculum system for music majors in local universities does not adequately meet the professional and employment needs of students.

H2: Reconstructing the curriculum based on applied education principles and industry-education integration significantly improves the employability and practical competence of music graduates.

H3: A curriculum system incorporating regional characteristics, ideological integration, and diversified teaching methods can enhance the overall quality and adaptability of music education in local universities.

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively investigate the curriculum system of music performance majors in local universities. The literature review provides the theoretical and conceptual framework for curriculum system reconstruction. The questionnaire survey collects quantifiable data from teachers and students, offering insights into the perceived effectiveness and shortcomings of the current curriculum. Additionally, semi-structured interviews with academic professionals and industry stakeholders yield deeper, qualitative insights into practical curriculum challenges and reform needs. This integrative approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of both statistical trends and individual experiences.

### 3.2 Population and Sample

The study targets teachers and students from five local universities in China that offer music performance programs. For the teacher sample, 50 participants (approximately 10 from each university) were invited to complete the questionnaire. Out of these, 48 responses were received, and 46 were considered valid, resulting in a 92% effective response rate. For the student sample, 300 questionnaires (60 per university) were distributed, and 263 were returned, with 257 valid responses, leading to an 85.7% effective response rate. To enrich the data, a subset of teachers, chosen based on teaching experience, academic qualifications, and curriculum involvement, was invited for in-depth interviews, providing detailed reflections on curriculum design and implementation.



**Table 1** Basic Information of Interviewees

Number	Gender	Length of Teaching	Educational Background	Title	Major	Position	Area
1	Female	32	Doctor of Philosophy	Professor	Folk Music	Associate Dean	Zhengzhou
2	Male	34	Master	Professor	Voice of the People	Director of Teaching and Research Section	Shenyang
3	Male	3	Doctor of Philosophy	Lecturer	Erhu	Not Have	Zhengzhou
4	Female	26	Doctor of Philosophy	Associate Professor	Piano	Not Have	Shenyang
5	Male	20	Master	Professor	Folk Music	Deputy Secretary of the Party General Branch	Kaifeng
6	Female	10	Doctor of Philosophy	Lecturer	Konghou	Not Have	Xi'an
7	Female	6	Master	Lecturer	Vocal Music	Teaching Secretary	Xi'an
8	Female	12	Master	Associate Professor	Command	Director of Research Office	Shenyang
9	Male	7	Doctor of Philosophy	Lecturer	Piano	Not Have	Wuhan
10	Male	15	Doctor of Philosophy	Associate Professor	Musical Theory	Director of Practice Department	Zhengzhou
11	Female	21	Master	Professor	Instrumental Music	Associate Dean	Kaifeng
12	Female	11	Master	Associate Professor	Theory	Not Have	Kaifeng

### 3.3 Research Instruments

Two custom-designed questionnaires, one for teachers and one for students, were developed to examine the current status of the music performance curriculum. Each questionnaire consists of two sections. The first section gathers demographic and background information. For teachers, this includes gender, age, professional title, and workplace; for students, it includes gender, age, years of music training, and proficiency in foreign languages and computers. The second section evaluates five curriculum dimensions: (1) Course Objectives, (2) Course Structure, (3) Course Content, (4) Course Implementation, and (5) Course Evaluation. Each dimension includes items rated using a Likert scale. A semi-structured interview guide with 10 open-ended questions was also developed to explore key issues in greater depth, allowing interviewees to elaborate on challenges and suggestions for curriculum reform.

**Table 2** Interview Questions

Number	Question
Q1	What are the overall training objectives for music/music performance majors in China at present?
Q2	What are the specific training objectives of the music performance major at your school?
Q3	What is the basis for determining the training objectives?
Q4	What are the contents of the general education courses for music performance majors in your school?
Q5	What do you think are the most lacking courses in the field of music performance at present?
Q6	How do you think the credit ratio between compulsory courses and elective courses (limited and optional courses) should be set more reasonably?
Q7	What do you think is the biggest problem in the current implementation of the curriculum? What is the reason?
Q8	What do you think is the main function of course evaluation? What are the problems with the current course evaluation methods?
Q9	What do you think are the qualities or skills that music performance majors currently lack the most?
Q10	What external support conditions do you think are needed to reconstruct the curriculum system of music performance major?

### 3.4 Data Collection

Data were collected over a six-month period from January to June 2024. Questionnaires were distributed via collaboration with academic coordinators in each participating university. All participants were informed of the voluntary nature of the study and assured of the confidentiality of their responses. In parallel with the survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected teachers. These interviews aimed to generate detailed, qualitative narratives about curriculum planning, teaching experiences, and reform expectations. This dual-method approach ensured that the data captured both broad trends and in-depth perspectives regarding curriculum effectiveness and transformation.

### 3.5 Statistics Used for Data Analysis

The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize demographic characteristics and participants' perceptions across the five curriculum dimensions. Inferential statistics, including correlation analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA), were applied to explore relationships among variables and determine statistically significant differences across groups. The qualitative data gathered through interviews were analyzed using thematic content analysis, enabling the identification of recurrent patterns, key issues, and actionable recommendations related to curriculum development for music performance majors in local universities.

## 4. Data Analysis and Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from surveys and interviews conducted with teachers and students majoring in music performance at five local universities in China. The objective of the data analysis is to examine the current state of curriculum design, the alignment of talent training objectives with societal needs, and the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. Both quantitative and qualitative data were utilized to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in reforming the music curriculum system. The quantitative data, gathered through structured questionnaires, focused on several key dimensions: alignment of talent development goals with labor market expectations, achievement of curriculum objectives, and students' aspirations for future career paths. Responses from 46 teachers and 257 students were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods to identify trends and gaps in the existing curriculum system. Meanwhile, qualitative insights were drawn from semi-structured interviews with selected faculty members, which helped contextualize and deepen the understanding of survey findings. Overall, the analysis reveals significant concerns regarding the clarity, relevance, and adaptability of current training objectives and course offerings. The findings highlight the need for a diversified and application-oriented curriculum system that not only equips students with technical performance skills but also enhances their employability and professional development in a rapidly evolving cultural and creative industry landscape. These results serve as a foundation for proposing targeted reforms aimed at bridging the gap between academic training and the actual demands of society.

### 4.2 Data Analysis of the Quantitative Data

#### 4.2.1 Descriptive Statistics

In the survey, regarding the question of whether the talent cultivation goals of your school's music major meet social needs in the teacher questionnaire, the results showed that 26.6% of the total number of teachers chose "very disagree", 29.2% chose "somewhat disagree", 20.2% chose "generally agree", 14.3% chose "somewhat agree", and only 9.7% chose "very agree".

**Table 3** Survey on the Compliance between Talent Training Objectives of Local Universities and Social Needs

	Number of People	Proportion (%)	Effective Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Very Inconsistent	12	26.1	26.1	26.1
Not quite in Line	14	30.4	30.4	56.5
Generally Meets	9	19.6	19.6	76.1
More in Line	8	17.4	17.4	93.5
Very	3	6.5	6.5	100
<b>Total</b>	46	100	100	100

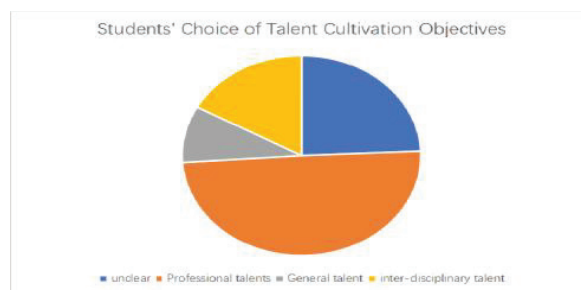
This indicates a disconnect between the talent cultivation goals of music majors in local universities and the actual demand for talent in society, resulting in overall low satisfaction. Due to the misalignment in the positioning of talent cultivation objectives, the achievement level of course goals is relatively low. As shown in the table, only 23.9% of respondents believe that the course

objectives have been fully or mostly achieved, while 56.5% believe that the objectives have not been achieved or have been insufficiently met.

**Table 4** Survey on the Achievement of Curriculum Objectives for Music Majors in Local Universities

	Number of People	Proportion (%)	Effective Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
No Achievement	10	21.7	21.7	21.7
Insufficient Achievement Level	16	34.8	34.8	56.5
General	9	19.6	19.6	76.1
Basic Achievement	7	15.2	15.2	91.3
Already Achieved	4	8.7	8.7	100
<b>Total</b>	46	100	100	100

The course objectives are closely linked to the talent cultivation objectives, and the two influences each other. Therefore, it is of great significance to investigate the talent cultivation goals of music performance majors in universities from the perspective of students. As shown in the table below, in response to the talent development goals, the results of the teacher survey are highly similar, with nearly a quarter of students choosing "unclear" and nearly half of students preferring to cultivate specialized talents. In contrast, the combined proportion of options for compound and versatile talents is relatively low. This indicates that students are more inclined to become specialized talents with professional skills in their hearts, rather than pursuing universal talents like "jack of all trades".



**Figure 1** Students' Choices of Talent Cultivation Objectives

In terms of specific talent choices, as shown in the table, 21% of the total population chose to become primary school music teachers, 29.6% chose to become middle school music teachers, 20.3% chose to become university music teachers, and only 12.1% chose to become music performance talents. In addition, 17.1% of the total population chose the "Other" option. It can be seen that there are certain differences between students' choices of personal development goals and the established training goals of the school.

**Table 5** Specific Talent Training Objectives for Music Majors

	Number of People	Proportion (%)	Effective Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Primary School Music Teacher	54	21.0	21.0	21.0
Middle School Music Teacher	76	29.6	29.6	50.6
University Music Teacher	52	20.3	20.3	70.9
Music Performance Talents	31	12.1	12.1	83.0
Other	44	17.1	17.1	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The survey results show that many local universities lack clarity in their talent cultivation goals for music majors. Although some colleges have attempted to establish distinct training objectives for music performance majors and music education majors, these new objectives have not been effectively implemented due to the constraints of traditional music education thinking. This has resulted in the convergence of training models between the two disciplines in practice. An in-depth analysis of the curriculum objectives of music majors in ordinary universities reveals a significant gap between these objectives and the actual needs of society, primarily characterized by narrow and vague goals.

Compared with the clearly defined objectives of “educators” in music education programs at normal universities and “high-level music performance professionals” in specialized music conservatories, the vocational adaptability expectations for music majors in ordinary local universities are often excessively high, broad, and ambiguous. In reality, cultivating well-rounded, technically skilled professionals who are proficient in performance, planning, instruction, and research is a highly demanding task. Due to a lack of clear training objectives and either attempts to cover too much or remain too narrow in scope, music major programs often fail to emphasize their core “performative” characteristics, thereby losing their professional distinction.

#### *4.2.2 Construction of Talent Training Objectives and Applied Course System for Music Majors in Local Universities*

##### **1) Construction of a Diversified Talent Training Objective System**

In terms of curriculum design, universities should set reasonable and diversified training goals. The demand for music professionals is highly varied. Besides primary and secondary music education, various societal organizations, such as performance companies, television stations, kindergartens, art galleries, publishing houses, youth centers, and government agencies, urgently need music and art professionals to work in production, editing, performance, coaching, planning, and management.

Given the diverse market demand, it is crucial to break free from the traditional, singular goal of music education and cultivate composite talents with a solid foundation, broad skill sets, strong professional capabilities, and flexible career paths. By adopting interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary curriculum design, universities can build a music curriculum system with diversified objectives that aligns with dynamic social needs and fosters comprehensive student development.

## 2) Create a Systematic and Comprehensive Music Curriculum Architecture

The music major curriculum should be integrated with other courses, allowing them to complement and influence each other. Curriculum design must consider various factors, including societal demands, student development needs, and institutional resources, to ensure a systematic and holistic curriculum structure in local universities. When reconstructing the music curriculum system, attention must be paid to the complex interrelations within and beyond the curriculum.

Curriculum planning should reflect the broader operation of local universities, not only focusing on students' musical skills and knowledge but also fostering social experience and emotional development. While professional techniques, such as instrumental and vocal performance, remain vital, humanistic literacy should also be emphasized. Therefore, balanced offerings in professional, practical, and general education courses are necessary.

A complete music curriculum system should include three core components: (1) Professional basic competencies (e.g., music theory, sight singing and ear training, vocal music, piano, music history), (2) Comprehensive application courses (e.g., choir conducting, song arrangement, piano improvisation, program hosting), and (3) Extension courses for educational and training purposes. This system should include primarily compulsory courses, with electives for broader development.

### *4.2.3 Building a Multi-Level Composite Application Curriculum System*

To meet students' diverse needs, a multi-type, multi-level, and modular curriculum should be developed. Students have varied interests and academic foundations, which necessitates a more flexible curriculum structure and differentiated teaching approaches. The curriculum should extend beyond traditional classrooms, utilizing societal platforms to bridge the gap between performance training and real-world experiences.

Curriculum implementation should include both in-class training and real-stage performance opportunities. Strengthening music performance training courses will help students master essential skills while also enabling them to apply their learning through actual stage experiences. Real-world performance is vital in reinforcing the effectiveness of applied music instruction.

### *4.2.4 Strengthen Artistic Practice and Enhance Application Ability*

Artistic practice should be embedded in the compulsory curriculum and included in the academic assessment plan. From their second year, students can be encouraged to participate in music and cultural fieldwork in rural areas. These activities not only deepen students' understanding of traditional music but also inspire creativity through real-life exposure. Students are encouraged to apply their learning in producing original vocal works that reflect their field experiences.

Colleges should organize music pentathlon competitions (singing, playing, dancing, speaking, and accompaniment), vocal and instrumental contests, annual showcase concerts, and graduation performances to provide students with opportunities to showcase their artistic abilities. Participation in national music contests and student art exhibitions further enhances their creative and practical capabilities.

An effective teaching system should focus on cultivating students' educational and practical competencies, developing their problem-solving abilities, and fostering an innovative mindset. Extracurricular activities should be actively promoted, providing a platform for experiential learning. Through methods such as on-site observation, instructor feedback, material collection, periodic

tutoring, and student presentations, students can improve their artistic creativity and professional readiness.

#### **4.4 Summary of the Results**

The results of this study reveal several critical issues in the current curriculum system for music performance majors in local universities. First and foremost, there is a clear disconnect between the talent cultivation objectives of university programs and the actual demands of the labor market. Many teachers and students expressed concerns that the training goals are either too broad, too vague, or misaligned with real-world professional expectations. Survey data indicate that less than a quarter of respondents believe the current course objectives have been effectively achieved, suggesting an urgent need for more precise and realistic goal-setting in curriculum design. Additionally, while some institutions have attempted to differentiate between music education and music performance majors, in practice, the training models remain overly similar due to deeply rooted traditional education frameworks. This convergence weakens the identity of music performance majors and limits their ability to develop distinctive, application-focused skill sets. Student responses further underscore this misalignment. Although universities may emphasize producing versatile and well-rounded talents, the majority of students prefer to pursue clearly defined, specialized career paths such as teaching in primary or secondary schools, rather than becoming broadly defined “composite talents.” This discrepancy highlights the need for curriculum systems that are both responsive to individual development goals and adaptable to societal changes. In terms of curriculum structure, the findings emphasize the necessity of building a comprehensive, multi-level curriculum system that balances professional, practical, and humanistic components. Current course offerings lack integration and real-world application, particularly in artistic practice and performance experience. There is widespread consensus among both faculty and students on the importance of incorporating artistic practice into the formal curriculum, enhancing students' hands-on capabilities, creativity, and professional adaptability. Overall, the study indicates that reforming the curriculum for music performance majors in local universities is essential. This includes redefining training objectives, diversifying course content, enhancing practical components, and aligning academic training more closely with the evolving demands of the music and cultural industries.

### **5. Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendation**

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

This study systematically examined the current state and existing challenges of the curriculum system for music performance majors in local universities in China. The findings highlight the inadequacy of traditional curriculum models in addressing the evolving demands of society and the labor market. As a result, the study proposes a set of foundational principles and concrete strategies for reconstructing the curriculum system. To ensure more effective talent cultivation, local universities should shift their focus toward building application-oriented curriculum frameworks. This involves updating teaching content, applying stratified teaching approaches, establishing scientific and coherent instructional systems, and promoting practical learning experiences. By optimizing practice-based courses, improving students' applied abilities, and innovating talent training models, universities can better align their curricula with societal and industry needs.



## 5.2 Discussion

With the advancement of society, the demand for music performance professionals with well-rounded competencies continues to grow. The outdated and narrowly focused curriculum structures currently in use are insufficient for preparing students to meet modern social and industry expectations. Therefore, it has become essential to design a more diverse, adaptive, and integrated curriculum that reflects a holistic approach to development and aligns with both market economy trends and the evolving cultural landscape. In recent years, societal feedback on graduates from music performance programs has revealed concerning shortcomings. Criticisms such as "strong initial performance but weak long-term growth," "curious about new trends but lacking adaptability," and "competitive but lacking dedication" reflect serious gaps in graduates' artistic cultivation and professional ethics. These concerns point to the unsustainable design of current music performance curricula and the misalignment between training outcomes and real-world needs. Consequently, curriculum construction in music majors must move beyond a one-size-fits-all model toward a more flexible, creative, and diverse system that fosters both technical skills and humanistic qualities.

## 5.3 Recommendation

### 1. Expand the Scope of Research Subjects

Due to the limited scope of the current study, which focused only on five local universities, the findings do not fully represent the nationwide situation of music performance curriculum systems. Future research should include a broader range of institutions across different regions in China. This expansion would improve the comprehensiveness, representativeness, and validity of the data and findings.

### 2. Strengthen the Implementation and Coordination of Curriculum Reform

The success of curriculum reform relies on the coordinated advancement of all its components. The interconnectedness of curriculum objectives, structure, content, and evaluation requires that reforms be implemented in a synchronized and comprehensive manner. Any delays or inefficiencies in one area can undermine the overall effectiveness of the reform. Therefore, it is critical to enhance cross-departmental coordination, improve data integration, and ensure full implementation of reform strategies. By doing so, the educational system can better respond to the demands of society and improve the quality and sustainability of talent cultivation in music performance majors.

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# **Research on the Influencing Factors of Social Responsibility Awareness among College Students in Western China**

by

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### Abstract

Social responsibility awareness is a critical dimension of individual moral development and civic identity, particularly among economically disadvantaged college students in China's western region. While many of these students exhibit a high degree of moral concern and identity orientation, their behavioral execution of social responsibility often remains insufficient. This study investigates the level of social responsibility awareness among university students in western China, analyzes the influence of personal values, and explores the interaction of internal and external mechanisms shaping responsible behavior. Grounded in two-factor theory and humanistic management theory, a structured questionnaire was administered to students across various universities in Guizhou Province. Quantitative analysis using SPSS software reveals that students generally exhibit high awareness across six dimensions: self, family, collective, national, human society, and regional responsibility. Among these, national and family responsibilities score the highest, while regional responsibility scores the lowest, indicating a gap in localized civic engagement. The study finds that external factors such as family atmosphere, teacher behavior, and school culture have a more significant influence on students' social responsibility than internal traits like personality or beliefs. Differences based on grade level and academic discipline were statistically significant, while gender differences were negligible. The interplay between internal and external factors was found to be strongly correlated, underscoring the need for integrated educational approaches. However, challenges persist, including a mismatch between awareness and action, and the rise of individualism over collective responsibility. Based on these findings, the study proposes several recommendations: integrating social responsibility into academic and extracurricular programs, enhancing experiential learning opportunities, involving families and communities in value education, using technology to foster engagement, and promoting localized and global civic awareness. Furthermore, universities should develop tracking systems to monitor progress and refine interventions. The research contributes both theoretical insights and practical strategies for fostering socially responsible citizenship in higher education, particularly within underdeveloped regions. These findings have implications for educational policymakers, university administrators, and civic organizations aiming to cultivate a generation of responsible, empathetic, and community-conscious youth in China's western region.

**Keywords:** Social Responsibility, College Students, Western China, Value Education, Educational Strategies

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background and Importance of the Problem

Social responsibility awareness is a key component of individual moral development and civic identity. It reflects a person's internalized understanding of their duties and obligations to society. Among economically disadvantaged college students, particularly in China's western region, research has shown that many students possess a certain degree of social responsibility awareness, demonstrating a sense of moral duty and social concern (Cui Xiuran, 2018). However, despite this strong identity orientation, deficiencies remain in their behavioral execution of social responsibility. In response to this, the Chinese government has implemented a range of policy initiatives since 2019 to provide financial aid and holistic development support for impoverished college students. These policies emphasize economic assistance, ideological education, and practical engagement to foster socially responsible and well-rounded graduates. Nevertheless, in the unique socio-cultural and economic environment of China's western region, there remains a gap in understanding how values, internal traits, and external factors interact to shape students' sense of responsibility. Without a clear understanding of their responsibility toward individuals, families, communities, and society, students may face moral hesitation, inaction, or indifference in real-life situations. Thus, it is crucial to examine how their values influence their sense of responsibility and how various factors work together in this process.

### 1.2 Research Question

This study aims to address the following key research questions:

- 1) What is the current level of social responsibility awareness among economically disadvantaged college students in the western region of China?
- 2) How do students' values affect their sense of social responsibility?
- 3) What are the internal and external mechanisms that influence their awareness and behavior of social responsibility?

### 1.3 Research Objective

The primary objectives of this research are:

- 1) To assess the status quo of social responsibility awareness among economically disadvantaged university students in western China.
- 2) To explore the influence of students' personal values on their social responsibility attitudes and behaviors.
- 3) To analyze the internal (e.g., psychological traits, moral beliefs) and external (e.g., institutional support, social environment) factors affecting the development of social responsibility.
- 4) To provide theoretical insights and practical recommendations for promoting responsible citizenship among college students through targeted policy and educational strategies.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Related Concepts and Theories**

Social responsibility awareness refers to an individual's internal understanding, moral obligation, and self-consciousness in fulfilling duties towards society. It involves the recognition of personal roles in promoting social harmony, contributing to community welfare, and supporting national development. This awareness is shaped by personal values, education, cultural environment, and social experiences. In interdisciplinary terms, the concept integrates perspectives from philosophy (moral responsibility), sociology (citizenship and social roles), psychology (moral cognition), and education (value-oriented development). In global discourse, Western scholars have long studied social responsibility from various disciplinary angles, creating mature theories and models. In contrast, Chinese research on this topic, especially in the context of economically disadvantaged students in the western region, remains underdeveloped and often lacks systematic theoretical construction (Mao Yu, 2003; Lin Chunyi & Liu Li, 2005).

### **2.2 Literature Surveys**

A review of Chinese literature reveals that current studies on college students' social responsibility awareness in the western region are limited in both depth and scope. While some scholars have focused on ideological education or moral cultivation, few have adopted a comprehensive approach combining structural analysis, empirical investigation, and interdisciplinary theory. In contrast, international research, particularly in Western countries, emphasizes interdisciplinary inquiry, long-term empirical studies, and diverse theoretical exploration. Western academia also benefits from well-established educational methodologies to instill social responsibility through value education, experiential learning, and moral psychology. However, despite the rich body of international work, these theories must be adapted to the specific cultural and political context of China. Chinese scholars argue that social responsibility education should align with socialist values and national development goals (Chen Jianhua & Gao Ming, 2009).

### **2.3 Conceptual Framework**

This study adopts a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative strategies. The conceptual framework is built on three dimensions:

- 1) Internal factors – such as personal values, self-identity, and emotional intelligence;
- 2) External factors – including family background, school education, social environment, and policy support;
- 3) Outcome variable – the actual level of social responsibility awareness and its behavioral manifestation.

The framework integrates theoretical constructs from sociology, psychology, and education to explain how these internal and external variables interact to influence college students' awareness and enactment of social responsibility.

## 2.4 Research Hypothesis

Based on the above framework and literature review, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: There is a significant positive correlation between college students' personal values and their level of social responsibility awareness.

H2: Institutional support (e.g., educational policy, school guidance) positively affects the development of social responsibility awareness.

H3: Social and family environment plays a mediating role between personal values and social responsibility awareness.

H4: Economically disadvantaged students with strong identity recognition are more likely to display higher levels of social responsibility awareness despite external limitations.

These hypotheses will guide the empirical analysis conducted through questionnaire surveys and provide insights for policy and educational reform.

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-method research design that integrates theoretical exploration and empirical investigation. The theoretical component draws upon Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and humanistic management principles to construct an analytical framework for understanding the influencing factors of social responsibility awareness among college students in western China. The empirical component combines quantitative methods (questionnaire surveys) with qualitative approaches (interviews) to examine the influence of various dimensions, such as self-responsibility, family responsibility, social responsibility, and national responsibility, on the overall formation and development of students' social responsibility awareness. This dual-method approach ensures the scientific rigor, comprehensiveness, and practical relevance of the research.

### 3.2 Population and Sample

The target population of this study includes college students enrolled in higher education institutions in the western region of China. To ensure representativeness, the sample was drawn from multiple universities across different provinces in the region, considering diversity in academic majors, years of study, and socio-economic backgrounds. Stratified random sampling was used to select participants. In total, 500 questionnaires were distributed, and 472 valid responses were collected, yielding an effective response rate of 94.4%. In addition, a purposive sample of 20 participants, including students, educators, and experts from educational institutions, was selected for semi-structured interviews to gain deeper qualitative insights.



### 3.3 Research Instruments

Two primary instruments were used in this study:

1) Questionnaire Survey: The questionnaire was self-designed based on existing validated scales, refined through expert consultation and pilot testing. It consists of five dimensions: self-responsibility, family responsibility, social responsibility, national responsibility, and behavioral intentions. Responses were recorded using a 5-point Likert scale (from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”).

2) Interview Protocol: A semi-structured interview guide was developed to explore participants’ perceptions of the role and development of social responsibility awareness. The interview questions were designed to elicit insights into contextual challenges, motivational factors, and institutional support mechanisms.

### 3.4 Data Collection

Data collection was carried out over three months. The questionnaires were distributed both in paper form and electronically, depending on the accessibility and preferences of the participating universities. Prior to distribution, respondents were informed of the research purpose, and anonymity and confidentiality were assured. Interviews were conducted in-person and via video conferencing, depending on availability and location. Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and was recorded (with consent) for transcription and analysis.

### 3.5 Statistics Used for Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS and AMOS software. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency) were used to summarize the general trends in responses. Inferential statistical techniques such as exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modeling (SEM) were employed to verify the scale’s validity and test hypothesized relationships. Qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed using thematic coding to identify recurring themes, contextual insights, and patterns that complement the quantitative findings. This combination allowed for a more robust understanding of the driving mechanism behind college students’ social responsibility awareness.

## 4. Data Analysis and Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from a survey on social responsibility awareness among college students in the western region of China. The primary aim of this section is to explore the current state, influencing factors, and differences in social responsibility awareness based on various demographic and institutional variables. The data analysis is based on responses to a structured questionnaire distributed to undergraduate and graduate students across diverse universities and colleges in Guizhou Province. A total of 1,700 questionnaires were distributed, with 1,650 valid responses received, resulting in an effective response rate of 97.06%. The analysis in this chapter is structured around seven core dimensions of social responsibility awareness: self responsibility, family responsibility, responsibility toward others, collective responsibility, national responsibility, human social responsibility, and regional (western region)

responsibility. These dimensions reflect both internal personal values and external societal commitments expected from college students. To ensure reliability and validity, Cronbach's alpha and KMO-Bartlett tests were employed, confirming the robustness of the measurement instrument used. This chapter systematically examines the findings through descriptive statistics, independent sample t-tests, one-way ANOVA, and cross-tabulations. It begins by summarizing the demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as gender, age, grade level, type of school, major, and place of origin. It then proceeds to analyze variations in social responsibility awareness across different groups, focusing particularly on gender, academic level, institutional type, and field of study. Moreover, this chapter identifies key influencing factors, such as family environment, school culture, teachers' behavior, and media exposure, that significantly impact the development of students' social responsibility. By using both quantitative results and interpretive discussion, the chapter aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of how internal traits and external environments interact to shape students' awareness and behavior regarding social responsibility. Through this analytical approach, the study contributes valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and university administrators striving to enhance civic and ethical education in higher education, especially in less-developed regions of China.

## **4.2 Data Analysis of the Quantitative Data**

### *4.2.1 Basic Information on Questionnaire Design and Survey*

This study will be conducted around seven dimensions, which are organically combined to form social responsibility awareness, namely self responsibility awareness, family responsibility awareness, others' responsibility awareness, collective responsibility awareness, national responsibility awareness, human social responsibility awareness, and western region responsibility awareness. Social responsibility consciousness emphasizes both collectivism or macro responsibility consciousness, as well as individual self responsibility consciousness. Different scholars give different connotations and meanings. Here, we will discuss the scope and content of responsibility awareness from both internal and external perspectives. Internally, the sense of self responsibility refers to the responsible attitude of college students towards their own life safety, self-discipline, emotional performance, comprehensive quality development, and career planning. The sense of responsibility towards the family refers to the caring attitude and responsibility of college students towards their families, their willingness to make corresponding contributions and efforts for their families, and their sense of mission to try various ways and methods to maintain family stability and harmony, making the family happy and fulfilled. The responsibility towards others refers to whether college students are willing to lend a helping hand to classmates, friends, and strangers when they encounter difficulties, whether they have emotional sympathy, and whether they have a sense of responsibility to help others.

On the external level, the sense of collective responsibility is that college students attach great importance and value collective achievements and honors, actively serve the collective, are willing to participate in collective activities, and obey collective decisions. The sense of national responsibility refers to the great interest shown by college students in the political, economic, scientific, and cultural development of the country. They love and inherit the excellent culture of the Chinese nation, uphold national sovereignty and dignity, and resist and protest against actions that harm national interests. The sense of responsibility in human society is for college students to support equality, mutual learning, dialogue, and inclusiveness among people of different races, skin colors, and languages, and to support the diversity of different civilizations, systems, and paths in various countries, as well as the effective promotion of national, social, and human development through technology. The sense of responsibility in the western region refers to college students'

concern and attention to the economy, culture, politics, and humanistic feelings of the western region, and their efforts to help the development and progress of the region. This survey investigates the social responsibility scale of college students on seven levels of personal, family, others, collective, national, human, and western regions. This study combines the psychological characteristics of Chinese university students and is suitable for conducting research on a social responsibility scale for university students in western regions.

### Survey Subjects

The survey targeted first-, second-, third-, and fourth-year undergraduate students, as well as graduate students (master's and doctoral levels) from several universities in Guizhou Province.

### Survey Location

As of now, there are 75 universities in Guizhou Province, including 1 key undergraduate institution (Guizhou University), 28 general undergraduate institutions (21 public and 7 private), and 46 vocational colleges (38 public and 8 private). This study conducted a questionnaire survey at the following institutions: one key undergraduate institution—Guizhou University (the only “Double First-Class” university in Guizhou Province); three general undergraduate institutions—Guizhou Normal University, Tongren University, and Guizhou University of Traditional Chinese Medicine; six public vocational colleges—Tongren Preschool Teachers College, Guizhou Aerospace Vocational and Technical College, Tongren Vocational and Technical College, Guizhou Health Vocational College, Qiannan Ethnic Preschool Teachers College, and Bijie Preschool Teachers College; and one private institution—Guizhou Engineering Vocational College. A total of 150 students were randomly selected from each school. The specific list of surveyed schools is as follows:

- Key Undergraduate Institution (1): Guizhou University
- General Undergraduate Institutions (3): Guizhou Normal University, Tongren University, Guizhou University of Traditional Chinese Medicine
- Public Vocational Colleges (6): Tongren Preschool Teachers College, Guizhou Aerospace Vocational and Technical College, Tongren Vocational and Technical College, Guizhou Health Vocational College, Qiannan Ethnic Preschool Teachers College, Bijie Preschool Teachers College
- Private College (1): Guizhou Engineering Vocational College

### Survey Sample

This survey adopted a stratified random sampling method. First, five regions within Guizhou Province were selected: Guiyang City, Tongren City, Zunyi City, Bijie City, and Qiannan Prefecture. Within each region, schools were categorized by type into four groups: key undergraduate institutions, general undergraduate institutions, vocational colleges, and private colleges. Approximately 150 students were randomly selected from each institution based on their grade level and academic major.

### Basic Information of Questionnaire

This research questionnaire was developed based on relevant literature concerning college students' social responsibility awareness, drawing from studies by scholars in both China and the United States. Key references include Li Fang's doctoral dissertation *Research on Civic Quality Education in Chinese Universities* (2006), Li Yuanjing's doctoral dissertation *Research on the Social Responsibility Awareness and Cultivation of Post-90s College Students* (2017), and Wang Xiaoya's master's thesis *Research on the Social Responsibility Awareness of College Students under the Background of Epidemic Prevention and Control* (2021). Based on the frameworks and findings of

these studies, a questionnaire was designed to investigate the improvement of social responsibility awareness among college students in western China (see Appendix 1 for details).

The collected responses were reviewed for quality assurance, and invalid questionnaires were removed based on criteria related to standardization and logical consistency. Data were analyzed using SPSS and Excel software. The survey was conducted using both offline (paper-based) distribution and online dissemination through the Questionnaire Star platform. A total of 1,700 questionnaires were distributed, with 1,665 returned, resulting in a response rate of 97.94%. After excluding 15 invalid responses, a total of 1,650 valid questionnaires remained, yielding an effective response rate of 97.06%. The analysis and interpretation of the questionnaire results are presented in the following sections.

**Table 1** Summary of Questionnaire Processing

Questionnaire	Fraction	Proportion (%)
Retrieve Questionnaire	1665	97.94
Remove Invalid Questionnaires	15	0.90
Effective Questionnaire	1650	97.06

By conducting descriptive statistical analysis on valid questionnaire data, multiple basic information such as students' gender, grade, school, place of origin, age, family members, and political affiliation can be obtained.

In terms of gender ratio, the proportion of male students in the survey sample is 32.12%, and the proportion of female students is 67.88%. The ratio of male to female students is close to 1:2, and there are significantly more female students than male students. According to the survey of grade levels, the proportion of undergraduate students in the lower grades (freshmen and sophomores) is 49.21%, the proportion of undergraduate students in the upper grades (juniors and seniors) is 36.72%, and the proportion of graduate students and above is 14.06%. Among them, the number of undergraduate students surveyed is the largest, nearly half of the proportion, and the proportion of graduate students and above is the smallest.

According to the analysis of the types of schools, key undergraduate colleges account for 9.09%, general undergraduate colleges account for 27.27%, vocational colleges account for 54.55%, and private colleges account for 9.09%. The main target of this survey is vocational colleges. According to the classification of their place of origin, urban students account for 17.58%, rural students account for 82.42%, and rural students make up the majority. In terms of the number of children in the family, one child accounts for 13.76%, two children account for 47.27%, three children account for 26%, and four or more children account for 12.97%. From the age distribution of students, students aged 18 and below account for 2.73%, students aged 19-20 account for 43.94%, students aged 21-22 account for 32.06%, and students aged 23 and above account for 21.27%. In terms of the political outlook of students, the proportions of Communist Party members (including probationary members), democratic parties, Communist Youth League members, and the masses are 5.58%, 0.55%, 54.18%, and 39.7%, respectively. The basic information of the questionnaire survey sample is detailed in Table 2.

#### Reliability and Validity Testing of Questionnaire

Reliability and validity analysis is to ensure the reliability and effectiveness of the survey questionnaire. The reliability test mainly uses the Cronbach alpha coefficient method. The validity

test can be conducted using principal component analysis, and the conventional approach is to perform KMO and Bartlett coefficients.

#### 1) Reliability Analysis

This article uses SPSS24.0 software to conduct reliability analysis of the questionnaire. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the second part Q1-Q35 is 0.981; The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for Q1-Q11 in the third part are 0.944, all greater than 0.6, meeting the requirements for reliability testing.

#### 2) Validity Analysis

By analyzing the validity analysis results of the second part Q1-Q35, the KMO value exceeds 0.977, and the Bartlett significance is less than 0.000. The validity analysis results for the third part Q1-Q11 show that the KMO value exceeds 0.953 and the Bartlett significance is less than 0.000, meeting the requirements for validity testing.

On the basis of conducting reliability and validity tests on the survey subjects, descriptive analysis was conducted on the dimensions and observed variables of the study using SPSS software, including minimum, maximum, mean, variance, skewness, kurtosis, and overall mean. The results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 2** Basic Information of Questionnaire Survey Samples

	Category	Frequency	Proportion (%)		Category	Frequency	Proportion (%)
Gender	Male	530	32.12	Number of Children	1 Person	227	13.76
	Female	1120	67.88		2 People	780	47.27
Grade	First Grade	147	8.91		3 People	429	26
	Second Year	665	40.3		4 or More People	214	12.97
	Third Grade	467	28.3	Age	18 Years Old and Under	45	2.73
	Fourth Grade	139	8.42		19-20 Years Old	725	43.94
	Master Degree or Above	232	14.06		21-22 Years Old	529	32.06
	Key Undergraduate Institutions	150	9.09		23 Years Old and Above	351	21.27
School	General Undergraduate Institutions	450	27.27	Political Status	Communist Party Members (Including Probationary Members)	92	5.58
	Vocational Colleges	900	54.55		Democratic Party	9	0.55
	Private Colleges and Universities	150	9.09		Communist Youth League Member	894	54.18
	Town	290	17.58		Masses	655	39.7
Students	Rural Area	1360	82.42				

**Table 3** Descriptive Analysis of Dimensions and Observational Variables

Dimension	Serial Number	Observe Variable	Maximum Value	Minimum Value	Mean Value	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis	Overall Mean Value
Self Responsibility Awareness	1	SR1	5	1	3.91	0.808	-0.323	0.063	4.156
	2	SR2	5	1	4.30	0.718	-0.999	1.803	
	3	SR3	5	1	4.26	0.727	-0.799	0.880	
	4	SR4	5	1	4.11	0.749	-0.438	-0.073	
	5	SR5	5	1	4.15	0.742	-0.525	0.170	
	6	SR6	5	1	4.36	0.718	-0.965	1.027	
	7	SR7	5	1	4.00	0.794	-0.346	-0.290	
Family Responsibility Awareness	8	FR1	5	1	4.40	0.702	-1.035	1.158	4.251
	9	FR2	5	1	4.33	0.698	-0.840	0.909	
	10	FR3	5	1	4.38	0.693	-0.951	1.141	
	11	FR4	5	1	4.10	0.795	-0.461	-0.339	
	12	FR5	5	1	4.03	0.848	-0.514	-0.129	
	13	FR6	5	1	4.24	0.744	-0.736	0.530	
	14	FR7	5	1	4.28	0.723	-0.769	0.564	
Sense of Responsibility Towards Others	15	OR1	5	1	4.30	0.720	-0.809	0.656	4.202
	16	OR2	5	1	4.28	0.752	-0.892	0.984	
	17	OR3	5	1	4.17	0.748	-0.611	0.356	
	18	OR4	5	1	4.06	0.799	-0.507	0.105	
Collective Responsibility Awareness	19	CR1	5	1	4.18	0.748	-0.658	0.489	4.168
	20	CR2	5	1	4.23	0.721	-0.681	0.581	
	21	CR3	5	1	4.12	0.790	-0.642	0.398	
	22	CR4	5	1	4.14	0.776	-0.644	0.469	
	23	CR5	5	1	4.17	0.748	-0.620	0.413	

National Sense of Responsibility	24	NR1	5	1	4.50	0.673	-1.441	3.059	4.487
	25	NR2	5	1	4.50	0.715	-1.609	3.429	
	26	NR3	5	1	4.54	0.668	-1.534	3.008	
	27	NR4	5	1	4.36	0.726	-0.945	0.870	
	28	NR5	5	1	4.50	0.681	-1.372	2.400	
	29	NR6	5	1	4.52	0.672	-1.502	3.227	
Human Social Responsibility Awareness	30	HR1	5	1	4.38	0.730	-1.112	1.496	4.353
	31	HR2	5	1	4.36	0.747	-1.025	1.054	
	32	HR3	5	1	4.32	0.762	-0.889	0.534	
Responsibility Awareness in the Western Region	33	LR1	5	1	3.97	0.924	-0.525	-0.327	3.926
	34	LR2	5	1	3.94	0.954	-0.589	-0.248	
	35	LR3	5	1	3.87	0.993	-0.590	-0.214	



### Investigation and Analysis of Factors Influencing College Students' Social Responsibility Awareness in Western Regions

The influencing factors of social responsibility awareness among college students in the western region of China are the full integration and utilization of various resources, from school culture to social atmosphere, from family atmosphere to media promotion, to enhance the social responsibility awareness of college students in the western region of China through various channels, methods, and techniques. According to Table 4, analyze the impact of various factors on the improvement of social responsibility awareness among college students in the western region. This discussion uses the sum of the proportions of "very large" and "relatively large" (referred to as the sum of the two) and the average value as two numerical indicators to assess the impact on enhancing college students' awareness of social responsibility. Regarding 'school culture', the sum of the two items is 73.27%, with an average of 3.96; Analyzing the impact of "family atmosphere", the sum of the two factors is 76.79%, with an average value of 4.09; Considering the role of "social atmosphere", the sum of the two factors is 75.09%, with an average value of 4.05; Analyzing the impact of "social practice activities", the sum of the two is 73.03%, with an average of 4.00; Analyzing the impact of "learning ideological and political theory", the sum of the two items is 71.94%, with an average value of 4.00; Analyzing the impact of "Internet social/video platform", the sum of the two is 72.25%, with an average of 3.99; Analyzing the impact of "mutual television broadcasting newspapers", the sum of the two items is 57.39%, with an average value of 3.67; Regarding the influence of peer groups, the sum of the two factors is 66.25%, with an average of 3.84; Analyzing the impact of "teachers' words and deeds", the sum of the two factors is 76.24%, with an average value of 4.05; Regarding the role of idols/role models, the sum of the two is 66.18%, with an average of 3.85; The impact of analyzing the living conditions in the western region is 64.3%, with an average of 3.85. By percentage classification, if the sum of two items is greater than 75%, they are classified into one category: family atmosphere, teacher's words and deeds, and social atmosphere; 70% -75% fall into the second category, including school culture, social practice activities, ideological and political theory learning, and Internet social/video platform; Below 70% are classified into three categories: television, radio, newspapers, peer group influence, idol/role model influence, and living conditions in western regions. Analysis has found that among the factors influencing the improvement of social responsibility awareness among college students in the western region, family atmosphere, teachers' words and deeds, and social atmosphere have a significant impact; The influence of television, radio, newspapers, peer groups, and idols/role models on the living conditions in western regions is relatively small. Classify 1-3 into one category, 4-7 into two categories, and 8-11 into three categories by sorting by average value (from large to small). Among them, the average ranking 1-3 is family atmosphere, social ethos, teachers' words and deeds, the average ranking 4-7 is social practice activities, ideological and political theory learning, Internet social networking/video platforms, school culture, and the average ranking 8-11 is television, radio, newspapers, peer group influence, idols/role models, and living conditions in the western region.

The formation of college students' sense of social responsibility is not an independent and spontaneous process, but the result of the mutual influence and interaction between personal traits and external environment. On the one hand, college students change social relationships by fulfilling and assuming social responsibilities, reflecting their autonomy and subjective initiative; On the other hand, college students are subject to social value judgments, value choices, and value practices in their interactions and communication with others and society, reflecting the external environment's ability to transform individuals. In this interactive process, college students are participants and receivers of social relationships, as well as shapers and creators of social relationships. Therefore, to explore the ways of college students' social responsibility awareness, it is necessary to analyze the factors that affect college students. This chapter believes that the social responsibility awareness of college students in the western region is mainly influenced by individual characteristics, family

environment, and school environment. The individual characteristics of college students mainly include gender, grade level, major, political affiliation, etc. The family environment includes the place of origin and family structure, and the school environment includes the level of school operation.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of various factors on the social responsibility awareness of college students in the western region, this chapter uses SPSS 24.0 to conduct independent sample t-tests and chi square tests to analyze whether there are significant differences in responsibility awareness among college students of different genders, and uses one-way analysis of variance to analyze whether there are limitations in the influencing factors of social responsibility awareness, such as the type of major, grade, and political affiliation of students.

#### *4.2.2 Gender Factor Analysis*

In the analysis of the impact of gender on the social responsibility awareness of college students in the western region, this section uses independent sample t-test to analyze whether there are significant differences in the internal and external dimensions of social responsibility awareness among college students in the western region. The results are shown in Table 5. From the analysis of gender differences, the test value Sig of F in the 7 dimensions is observed. The values are all less than 0.05, and the absolute values of the t-values are all greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no discrimination in the question items, indicating that there is no significant difference in the factor selection of social responsibility awareness among college students in the western region based on gender. From the average values of seven dimensions, firstly, there are differences in the mean values of male and female students on different items. In terms of individual subjectivity, boys have a lower average impact on the improvement of students' social responsibility awareness, such as "self responsibility awareness", "family responsibility awareness", and "others' responsibility awareness", compared to girls. At the external factor level, boys have lower levels of "collective responsibility awareness, human social responsibility awareness, and western region responsibility awareness" compared to girls. This indicates that compared to boys, girls have a more optimistic overall perception and participation expectation of social responsibility awareness, suggesting that women believe more than men that students should know how to give back to society and take on social responsibility. However, in terms of "national responsibility awareness", the average value of boys is higher than that of girls, indicating that boys have a more radical attitude towards the relationship between national interests and personal interests, highlighting stronger national interests and national honor. Secondly, comparing the average values of seven dimensions as a whole, the average value of the sense of responsibility dimension in the western region has the lowest score among the overall mean values of boys and girls, while the average value of the sense of national responsibility dimension has the highest score among the overall mean values of boys and girls. Gender has a significant impact in some dimensions, with girls being more emotional and willing to communicate and interact with their parents, family, and friends, and paying more attention to and understanding their own expectations. Boys, on the other hand, are more rational, have stronger independence, and pay more attention to international real-time dynamics. At the same time, due to their limited knowledge and cognitive abilities, they are easily influenced by some factors, leading to impulsive behavior and performance. In contrast, girls are more active than boys in terms of personal responsibility, others' responsibility, and family responsibility.

**Table 5** Analysis of Gender Factors in College Students

Variable	Gender	Average Value	Standard Deviation	F-Value	Sig.	t	Sig (Bilateral)
Self Responsibility Awareness	Male	3.823	0.851	17.614	0.000	-0.341	0.722
	Female	3.902	0.873			-0.353	0.726
Family Responsibility Awareness	Male	3.723	0.782	18.250	0.000	1.098	0.268
	Female	3.975	0.916			1.076	0.265
Sense of Responsibility Towards Others	Male	3.994	0.832	16.533	0.001	-0.239	0.763
	Female	4.175	0.896		0.000	-0.236	0.784
Collective Responsibility Awareness	Male	4.175	0.805	18.762	0.000	0.862	0.164
	Female	4.260	0.854			0.851	0.156
National Sense of Responsibility	Male	4.566	0.809	16.654	0.000	1.686	0.092
	Female	4.380	0.947			1.655	0.098
Human Social Responsibility Awareness	Male	4.132	0.806	16.526	0.000	1.383	0.150
	Female	4.225	0.921			1.420	0.122
Sense of Responsibility Towards the Western Region	Male	3.360	0.761	12.563	0.000	1.361	0.120
	Female	3.483	0.833			1.425	0.133

**Note:** \*\* p<0.05

#### 4.2.3 Analysis of Grade Factors

The target of this survey is students in five grades, from freshman to master's degree and above. According to the data analysis results, students' grade level factors have significant differences in their sense of self responsibility, family responsibility, others' responsibility, collective responsibility, national responsibility, human social responsibility, and responsibility in the western region.

Firstly, by comparing the average values of the seven dimensions, it can be concluded that external factors are more effective in changing the social responsibility awareness of college students in the western region compared to internal factors. Among them, national responsibility awareness (4.209), collective responsibility awareness (4.090), others' responsibility awareness (4.022), and human social responsibility awareness (4.004) rank in the top four, while family responsibility awareness (3.910), western region responsibility awareness (3.890), and self responsibility awareness (3.729) rank in the bottom three.

Secondly, comparing the average values of different grades in each dimension, it was found that freshmen and graduate students and above are more willing to take on social responsibility. Among them, in terms of self responsibility awareness, the average of graduate students and above is the highest (3.932), while the average of freshmen is the lowest (3.627). Students in their sophomore

and junior years have less strong self responsibility awareness than those in their senior years; In terms of family responsibility awareness, graduate students and above have the highest average (4.028), while freshmen have the lowest average (3.767); In terms of the sense of responsibility towards others, graduate students and above have the highest average (4.132), while freshmen have the lowest average (3.921); In terms of collective responsibility awareness, the mean of freshmen is the highest (4.231), and the mean of graduate students and above is the lowest (3.935), indicating that the higher the grade level, the less positive the correlation between collective responsibility awareness may be; In terms of national responsibility awareness, the average of seniors is the highest (4.121), while the average of freshmen is the lowest (4.083); In terms of human social responsibility awareness, the average of sophomore students is the lowest (4.021), and the average of graduate students and above is the highest (4.134); In terms of sense of responsibility in the western region, the average of sophomore students is the lowest (3.842), and the average of graduate students and above is the highest (3.987).

From the perspective of the influence of grade factors on the social responsibility awareness of college students in western regions, higher grade students exhibit better sense of responsibility than lower grade students. In general, the higher the level of education, the more patriotic and quality education one receives, and the stronger the sense of social responsibility. Of course, there are also a few college students who have the opposite situation, which requires reflection on the ways and methods of education. When choosing behaviors, college students will not only consider their own knowledge level, basic skills and accumulated experience, but also be influenced by their own values and life beliefs. At the same time, they will also accept the influence of the external environment and ethos. Especially in the current era when mobile Internet and artificial intelligence are prevalent, short videos and games have a profound impact on college students. Lower grade students have not completely rid themselves of the habits they have developed since elementary school. Although they have reached adulthood, many of their behaviors are similar to those in high school, mainly focused on learning and exams, with little opportunity to interact with various aspects of society. Under the influence of this consciousness, the behavior of lower grade students tends to be closer to expectations and rarely exhibits abrupt actions. Senior students have more opportunities to understand the complex and ever-changing social environment, and are gradually adapting to the changes in society. They may encounter some confusion and perplexity, find that there is a big gap between their ideals and reality, and are easily influenced by negative thoughts, which can affect their judgment ability and behavior. When there is a conflict between personal interests and collective interests, the sense of collective responsibility is at a disadvantage, and focusing on personal interests is at an advantage. School education as a whole can enhance students' awareness of social responsibility, but some dimensions cannot be simultaneously improved. Therefore, universities need to carry out targeted cultivation of college students' social responsibility awareness according to different grades, fully tap into the personality characteristics of male and female students, create a good and clean campus environment, and provide guarantees for students' growth and success.

#### *4.2.4 Analysis of School Factors*

According to the data analysis results (see Table 6), it can be seen that there is no significant difference in the factors affecting students' sense of self responsibility, family responsibility, others' responsibility, collective responsibility, national responsibility, human social responsibility, and responsibility in the western region when they attend different types of universities. From the perspective of average student choices across different dimensions, there is little variation in the mean values among different types of schools. However, in the comparison of the mean values of different types of schools in each dimension, it can be found that overall, the mean values of key

undergraduate colleges are generally higher, while vocational college students perform poorly. Overall, the average number of students in key undergraduate colleges is generally higher, followed by general undergraduate colleges, followed by private universities, and vocational colleges perform slightly worse. Due to the limitations of sample size and the constraints of survey subjects, the mean difference between key undergraduate institutions and general undergraduate institutions is not significant, and it is temporarily impossible to present differences more accurately in each dimension.

**Table 6** Analysis of School Type Factors

Variable	School Nature	Mean Value	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	F Value	Significance
Self Responsibility Awareness	Key Undergraduate Institutions	3.931	0.875	0.034	0.487	0.543
	General Undergraduate Institutions	3.792	0.860	0.041		
	Vocational and Technical College	3.843	0.833	0.052		
	Private Colleges and Universities	3.848	0.819	0.035		
Family Responsibility Awareness	Key Undergraduate Institutions	3.965	0.652	0.036	0.514	0.547
	General Undergraduate Institutions	3.878	0.866	0.027		
	Vocational and Technical College	3.913	0.734	0.045		
	Private Colleges and Universities	3.921	0.689	0.053		
Sense of Responsibility Towards Others	Key Undergraduate Institutions	3.924	0.674	0.032	0.624	0.501
	General Undergraduate Institutions	3.911	0.817	0.023		
	Vocational and Technical College	3.898	0.726	0.051		
	Private Colleges and Universities	3.936	0.735	0.049		

Collective Responsibility Awareness	Key Undergraduate Institutions	4.131	0.627	0.033	0.723	0.137
	General Undergraduate Institutions	4.125	0.716	0.035		
	Vocational and Technical College	3.987	0.801	0.042		
	Private Colleges and Universities	4.015	0.763	0.029		
National Sense of Responsibility	Key Undergraduate Institutions	4.322	0.587	0.043	0.468	0.531
	General Undergraduate Institutions	4.147	0.654	0.037		
	Vocational and Technical College	4.198	0.784	0.027		
	Private Colleges and Universities	4.076	0.753	0.031		
Human Social Responsibility Awareness	Key Undergraduate Institutions	4.028	0.655	0.051	0.652	0.982
	General Undergraduate Institutions	3.986	0.783	0.043		
	Vocational and Technical College	3.913	0.814	0.042		
	Private Colleges and Universities	4.013	0.835	0.039		
Responsibility Awareness in the Western Region	Key Undergraduate Institutions	3.785	0.818	0.023	0.498	0.605
	General Undergraduate Institutions	3.801	0.827	0.045		
	Vocational and Technical College	3.768	0.786	0.039		
	Private Colleges and Universities	3.796	0.804	0.037		

#### 4.2.5 Professional Factor Analysis

According to the analysis of professional factors affecting the social responsibility awareness of college students in the western region, there are seven dimensions: self responsibility awareness, family responsibility awareness, others' responsibility awareness, collective responsibility awareness, national responsibility awareness, human social responsibility awareness, and responsibility awareness in the western region. The analysis results (see Table 7) indicate that. Firstly, there are significant differences in the dimensions of self responsibility awareness and collective responsibility awareness among students from different disciplines (significance of 0.026, 0.041), while there are no significant differences in family responsibility awareness, others' responsibility awareness, national responsibility awareness, human social responsibility awareness, and responsibility awareness in the western region. Secondly, observe the mean values between different dimensions, and there are significant differences in the mean values among different science students. Students in education, philosophy, and law have a relatively high overall average in the seven dimensions, while students in art and engineering have a lower average. Agriculture has the highest average sense of responsibility in the western region, indicating that only those who are on the front line in the western region have a stronger sense of responsibility. Thirdly, in terms of national responsibility awareness and human social responsibility awareness, students from various majors choose a larger average, indicating that different majors invest a lot of energy and attention in patriotic education and national consciousness cultivation, which also reflects the good spiritual outlook of contemporary college students and their confidence in the country and the nation. Fourthly, there are significant differences in the dimensions of self responsibility and collective responsibility among students in education, law, philosophy, art, literature, and engineering.

**Table 7** Analysis of Discipline Factors for Discipline Types

Variable	Major	Mean Value	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	F-Value	Significance
Self Responsibility Awareness	Philosophy	3.872	0.784	0.187	1.562	0.026
	Economics	3.854	0.765	0.161		
	Management	3.837	0.679	0.112		
	Medicine	3.901	0.532	0.073		
	Neo-Confucianism	3.895	0.675	0.058		
	Engineering	3.843	0.739	0.070		
	Agronomy	3.910	0.823	0.067		
	Jurisprudence	4.012	0.817	0.059		
	Art Theory	3.854	0.717	0.080		
	History	3.897	0.834	0.056		
	Literature	3.867	0.847	0.089		
	Pedagogy	3.955	0.657	0.085		
Family Responsibility Awareness	Philosophy	3.963	0.975	0.087	0.864	0.332
	Economics	4.021	0.864	0.102		
	Management	4.926	0.831	0.065		
	Medicine	3.873	0.674	0.087		
	Neo-Confucianism	3.855	0.879	0.064		
	Engineering	3.901	0.758	0.079		
	Agronomy	3.983	0.884	0.132		
	Jurisprudence	3.969	0.845	0.147		
	Art Theory	3.721	0.527	0.092		



Variable	Major	Mean Value	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	F-Value	Significance
	History	3.876	0.637	0.096		
	Literature	3.961	0.743	0.115		
	Pedagogy	4.124	0.639	0.094		
Sense of Responsibility Towards Others	Philosophy	4.021	0.895	0.174	1.046	0.403
	Economics	3.856	0.724	0.167		
	Management	3.954	0.672	0.112		
	Medicine	3.972	0.641	0.068		
	Neo-Confucianism	3.893	0.766	0.071		
	Engineering	3.965	0.673	0.087		
	Agronomy	3.934	0.815	0.152		
	Jurisprudence	4.013	0.684	0.144		
	Art Theory	3.867	0.835	0.119		
	History	3.917	0.630	0.088		
	Literature	3.927	0.875	0.068		
	Pedagogy	4.143	0.861	0.154		
	Philosophy	4.212	0.564	0.511		
	Economics	4.028	1.092	0.743		
Collective Responsibility Awareness	Management	4.194	0.871	0.283	0.874	0.041
	Medicine	3.986	0.563	0.141		
	Neo-Confucianism	4.032	0.557	0.084		
	Engineering	3.963	0.787	0.140		
	Agronomy	4.189	0.891	0.124		
	Jurisprudence	4.023	0.775	0.123		
	Art Theory	3.875	1.131	0.213		
	History	4.034	0.584	0.755		
	Literature	3.978	0.268	0.103		
	Pedagogy	4.201	0.746	0.069		
	Philosophy	4.258	0.967	0.137	2.209	0.376
	Economics	4.123	0.854	0.091		
National Sense of Responsibility	Management	4.117	0.335	0.106		
	Medicine	4.097	0.691	0.069		
	Neo-Confucianism	4.187	0.778	0.104		
	Engineering	4.194	0.864	0.078		
	Agronomy	4.156	0.671	0.085		
	Jurisprudence	4.215	0.763	0.545		
	Art Theory	4.037	0.982	0.647		
	History	4.157	0.866	0.458		
	Literature	4.193	0.674	0.651		
	Pedagogy	4.227	0.653	0.117		
Human Social Responsibility Awareness	Philosophy	4.164	1.751	0.075	3.641	0.532
	Economics	4.086	0.357	0.042		
	Management	4.066	0.542	0.061		
	Medicine	3.993	0.437	0.058		
	Neo-Confucianism	4.029	0.760	0.112		
	Engineering	4.076	0.652	0.106		
	Agronomy	4.072	0.491	0.121		



Variable	Major	Mean Value	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	F-Value	Significance
	Jurisprudence	4.125	0.672	0.146		
	Art Theory	3.953	1.760	0.137		
	History	4.127	0.652	0.105		
	Literature	4.065	0.951	0.158		
	Pedagogy	4.208	0.887	0.134		
Responsibility Awareness in the Western Region	Philosophy	3.867	0.876	0.058	5.243	0.371
	Economics	3.914	0.784	0.117		
	Management	3.923	0.764	0.075		
	Medicine	3.971	0.673	0.127		
	Neo-Confucianism	3.942	0.995	0.107		
	Engineering	4.027	0.874	0.051		
	Agronomy	4.121	0.842	0.083		
	Jurisprudence	3.937	0.614	0.079		
	Art Theory	3.871	0.885	0.171		
	History	4.032	0.541	0.121		
	Literature	3.963	0.972	0.087		
	Pedagogy	4.084	0.849	0.072		

#### *4.2.6 Strategies for Enhancing College Students' Social Responsibility Awareness in Western Region Universities*

When formulating development strategies and cultivating social responsibility awareness among college students in western regions, universities should not only consider their own development, but also fully consider various demands, comprehensively analyze the impact on society and the country, and maximize the value of the goal of cultivating social responsibility awareness among college students. The practice of social responsibility into the daily operation and management of universities was integrated, and incorporating it into the practical process of university social responsibility awareness in various aspects such as teacher management, student training, and campus construction, to achieve the concept of responsible management. University administrators in the western region can strengthen the publication and management of the social responsibility system, establish and improve the stakeholder participation mechanism, actively discuss and exchange with teachers, students, parents, enterprise managers, etc., and promote stakeholders to participate in major issues related to the cultivation of college students' social responsibility awareness through the comprehensive use of various traditional methods and Internet communication channels (microblog, official account, platform).

#### Western Universities Improving Flexible Assessment Systems and Incentive Mechanisms

The dual factor theory and humanistic management theory of this study have verified the coupling effect of internal and external factors, which can increase and mobilize students' enthusiasm, guide students to establish correct values and social responsibility awareness in behavior orientation, standardize the participation channels of college students in enhancing social responsibility awareness in behavior constraints, systematically train students' potential for responsibility, and promote students to actively enhance social responsibility. University administrators can improve the flexible assessment system for college students, focus on guiding them to simulate and implement the behaviors and actions expected by universities, so that college students can judge the correct and meaningful things advocated by universities, thereby enhancing their socialist values and social responsibility awareness. In terms of specific means and methods, university administrators can

strengthen the social responsibility awareness of college students from both spiritual and material aspects by setting goals for college students, building their spiritual civilization, cultivating their values, conducting discussions and exchanges, and forming emotional recognition, verbal appreciation, assessment incentives, and material incentives.

#### Creating a Favorable Training Atmosphere and Management System in Universities in the Western Region

Universities in the western region firmly grasp the main task of cultivating morality and talents, creating a good campus atmosphere, including classroom and campus environment, fully exploring the pivot of cultivating social responsibility awareness, attaching importance to ideological guidance and ideal belief education for college students, and fully guiding college students to have deeper connotations and extensions. Combining social responsibility with national and social conditions, cultivating social responsibility awareness as an important component of ideological and political classrooms, and exercising college students' collective consciousness, social responsibility consciousness, and dedication spirit through activities. Through a series of activities, help students understand the basic national conditions and social reality of China, continuously improve their personal cognitive level through exploration and practice, find ways to achieve their ideals, find their own values, enhance their self-efficacy, and fully recognize the important relationship between personal future and destiny and national development. At the same time, universities and education management departments in the western region have introduced corresponding policies, established and improved management systems, strengthened communication and interaction among different stakeholders under the leadership of the education department, promoted dialogue and negotiation among universities, teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders, and created a good atmosphere and public opinion supervision environment for cultivating the social responsibility awareness of college students in the western region throughout society.

### **4.3 Summary of the Results**

The findings from the data analysis reveal a multifaceted landscape of social responsibility awareness among college students in the western region of China. The results demonstrate that students possess varying degrees of awareness across seven core dimensions: self responsibility, family responsibility, responsibility toward others, collective responsibility, national responsibility, human social responsibility, and responsibility toward the western region. Among these, national responsibility awareness ranked highest in terms of average scores, while responsibility toward the western region ranked lowest, indicating a need for targeted reinforcement in regional identity and commitment. Gender analysis showed that while both male and female students demonstrated overall moderate to high levels of social responsibility awareness, female students scored higher in most dimensions, particularly in self, family, and interpersonal responsibility. Male students exhibited slightly higher awareness in the national responsibility dimension. This suggests gendered differences in values, emotional expression, and perception of societal roles.

Grade-level analysis revealed that students at higher academic levels, particularly graduate students, generally showed greater awareness in most dimensions. Notably, freshmen demonstrated the highest levels of collective responsibility, while senior students and postgraduates scored higher in self and human social responsibility. This pattern indicates a developmental trajectory in which students' awareness of personal and broader societal responsibilities grows with age and academic maturity. School-type analysis showed limited significant differences in social responsibility awareness among students from key undergraduate, general undergraduate, vocational, and private institutions. However, key undergraduate institutions tended to score slightly higher in most dimensions, particularly in national and collective responsibility, suggesting the potential influence

of institutional culture and academic environment. Professional (discipline) analysis identified notable differences across academic majors. Students in pedagogy, law, and philosophy generally demonstrated higher levels of social responsibility across most dimensions. In contrast, students in engineering and art-related disciplines scored lower, particularly in collective and self responsibility. Interestingly, students in agronomy showed the highest awareness of responsibility toward the western region, likely due to the close alignment between their studies and regional development issues.

The study also identified external factors, such as family environment, teacher behavior, school culture, social practices, and media influence, as significant contributors to the development of social responsibility awareness. Among these, the family atmosphere, teacher guidance, and broader social ethos were found to have the most substantial impact. Overall, the results underscore the importance of multidimensional and contextual approaches in cultivating social responsibility awareness among college students. Effective strategies should consider individual, familial, institutional, and societal factors, and be tailored to specific demographic and educational backgrounds. This comprehensive understanding provides a strong empirical basis for developing educational policies and interventions aimed at strengthening civic values and social commitment in higher education institutions, particularly in China's western regions.

## **5. Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendation**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

In the new era of China's educational reform, cultivating social responsibility among college students has become a key component of quality education and national development strategy. This study focused on the social responsibility awareness of college students in the western region, particularly Guizhou Province, by applying the two-factor theory and humanistic management theory. A comprehensive survey was conducted using structured questionnaires, with data analyzed through SPSS software for validity and reliability. The results demonstrate that college students possess a generally high level of social responsibility awareness, covering multiple dimensions such as self, family, collective, national, and human society responsibility, as well as regional responsibility specific to the western region.

The study revealed several critical insights. External environmental factors—such as family atmosphere, school culture, and teacher influence—had a more significant impact on social responsibility awareness than internal individual traits. Gender differences were not statistically significant, suggesting a consistent level of responsibility across male and female students. However, grade level showed significant differences, with graduate students generally displaying higher responsibility awareness than freshmen. Differences were also observed across academic disciplines, particularly in self and collective responsibility. Furthermore, the coupling of internal and external factors was found to be highly correlated, suggesting that their interaction is a key driver of social responsibility formation. Lastly, the findings highlight that students can be effectively motivated through a combination of personal values, external encouragement, and humanistic educational management to internalize and act on social responsibility.

### **5.2 Discussion**

The results of the study highlight that college students in the western region of China generally exhibit strong awareness of social responsibility, which can be understood across six key

dimensions. In terms of self responsibility, a large majority—over 88%—believe they should enhance their own responsibility and give back to society. Most students actively pursue personal growth and self-discipline, aligning with the identity of educated individuals in the new era. However, while students express bravery in principle, actual willingness to intervene in dangerous situations is slightly lower, indicating room for further cultivation of civic courage.

The sense of family responsibility is deeply rooted in Confucian values, with around 90% of students showing gratitude toward family, society, and the nation. Many students take interest in family matters, although their participation in household chores is relatively limited. In terms of collective responsibility, over 80% of students express a strong commitment to group goals and actively participate in collective activities, suggesting that teamwork and group identity remain central among youth in the region. The national responsibility dimension shows particularly strong performance, with over 91% of students affirming the importance of national unity, cultural pride, and political engagement. This highlights the deep alignment of students with patriotic values and their commitment to national development.

Regarding responsibility toward human society, students demonstrate openness, inclusiveness, and support for global cooperation. A majority agree with promoting scientific progress and cultural diversity, which is crucial in today's interconnected world. However, the lowest scores were observed in the dimension of responsibility toward the western region. Fewer students are fully aware of the challenges, policies, and developmental needs specific to their local region. This suggests a gap between national patriotism and regional engagement that requires attention from educators and policymakers.

Despite the overall positive trend, two challenges remain. First, a segment of students demonstrates a weakened sense of self responsibility and limited empathy for others. Some prioritize personal gain over collective interest, influenced by individualism and lack of institutional encouragement for prosocial behavior. Second, a mismatch between social responsibility awareness and actual behavior exists. Although students express idealistic values, a portion fails to translate them into responsible actions. This divergence is influenced by factors such as peer pressure, media influence, and inconsistencies in educational reinforcement. Therefore, bridging the gap between value and action remains a critical challenge for institutions.

### 5.3 Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, several key recommendations can be made to enhance the social responsibility awareness of college students in the western region of China. First, it is crucial to strengthen students' internal motivation through a holistic educational approach that links personal development with a sense of social responsibility. This can be achieved by integrating social responsibility education into academic curricula and promoting self-reflection and peer influence programs that encourage students to internalize these values. Additionally, universities should increase students' exposure to real-world social issues through community engagement initiatives, partnerships with government bodies and NGOs, and experiential learning opportunities. These experiences allow students to bridge the gap between knowledge and action, translating their awareness into meaningful contributions to society.

Furthermore, targeted support should be provided for students who demonstrate a weaker sense of social responsibility. Workshops on empathy, ethical decision-making, and civic participation can help these students develop a more collective mindset. At the same time, universities need to address the rising trend of individualism by fostering a culture that values

cooperation and service. Families and communities also play a vital role and should be involved in nurturing students' social values through parental education and public awareness campaigns. Technology can be used to enhance engagement, with online platforms offering resources and interactive content on social responsibility, while data analytics can help track student participation and inform targeted interventions.

Regional awareness must also be improved, as many students lack a clear understanding of the development challenges and potential within their own communities. Universities can organize field visits, seminars, and collaborative projects to deepen this understanding and motivate students to participate in regional development efforts. A culture of social responsibility on campus should be actively promoted through student-led initiatives and the establishment of recognition systems to reward socially responsible behaviors. Additionally, fostering global awareness and encouraging students to think as global citizens through exchange programs and international collaborations will broaden their perspectives and deepen their understanding of the interconnectedness of social issues.

Finally, universities should implement longitudinal tracking to measure changes in students' social responsibility awareness over time and use feedback loops involving students, faculty, and community stakeholders to continuously refine and improve educational programs. These comprehensive and coordinated efforts, grounded in both internal and external motivational strategies, will be essential in cultivating a socially responsible, community-conscious, and globally aware generation of college students in the western region of China.

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# **A Qualitative Research on the College Landscape Education Incorporating Local Cultural Elements - Taking H University as an Example**

by

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the educational and cultural significance of university campus landscapes, using H University as a case study to explore how local cultural elements can be effectively integrated into campus design to support student development. While school buildings and landscapes are essential physical environments for educational activities, their cultural and symbolic dimensions have often been overlooked. Campus landscapes not only enhance aesthetic appeal but also serve as crucial mediums for fostering students' cultural identity, sense of belonging, and moral development. Through a combination of theoretical analysis, literature review, field observation, and interviews with university stakeholders, this research reveals that H University's current landscape design incorporates some local cultural features but lacks systematic integration and thematic coherence. Different stakeholders—including administrators, educators, and students—hold varied perspectives on the role and potential of campus landscapes in education. The study finds a strong consensus on the need for a multilevel, culturally grounded approach to landscape construction that aligns with the university's educational mission and regional heritage. Key recommendations include embedding local culture into top-level planning, aligning landscapes with humanistic education, designing multifunctional and aesthetically meaningful educational spaces, and promoting a national model for culturally responsive campus landscape education. This research contributes to the advancement of educational space theory by demonstrating that campus landscapes can function as “silent teachers” that communicate cultural values and support holistic student growth across moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education. The findings highlight the importance of transforming campus landscapes into meaningful, interactive, and culturally rich environments that inspire students and strengthen institutional identity. Ultimately, this study advocates for the integration of regional cultural elements and national spirit in university landscapes as a vital strategy for educational reform and cultural continuity within China's higher education system.

**Keywords:** Campus Landscape, Cultural Integration, Educational Space, University Design, Student Development

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background and Importance of the Problem

School buildings and landscapes, as core physical environments for educational activities, are fundamental to supporting the normal operation of academic institutions. They play an irreplaceable role in enhancing educational effectiveness and serve as tangible reflections of a society's educational philosophy, values, and cultural development. However, the architectural and landscape aspects of campuses, especially their cultural and symbolic dimensions, have often been undervalued in both planning and research. With the advancement of educational management as a discipline, interest in the spatial dimension of education, including school architecture and landscape design, is increasing. Educational management must be understood within a specific cultural context, and therefore, research on campus landscape culture must be rooted in the study of local culture. Unfortunately, many universities suffer from a lack of cultural identity in their landscape construction. Their campuses lack both distinctive institutional character and regional cultural elements, resulting in generic and uninspired environments.

Campus landscapes are not merely decorative, they play an educational role. The quality and cultural resonance of a campus landscape can directly impact students' sense of identity, belonging, and engagement with their environment. Therefore, campus landscape construction should not only showcase the aesthetic appeal of a contemporary university but also preserve and reflect the unique cultural characteristics of the surrounding region. Integrating local cultural elements into campus design is essential for creating meaningful, context-aware, and educationally valuable spaces. This study uses the landscape construction of H University as a case study to explore how embedding local cultural elements in university landscapes can contribute to student development, with the aim of enriching school spatial theory and providing a model for culturally responsive campus design.

### 1.2 Research Question

This study seeks to answer the following key research questions:

- 1) What are the educational functions and cultural implications of university landscape construction?
- 2) How can local cultural elements be effectively integrated into campus landscapes to enhance educational outcomes?
- 3) What mechanisms and practices are involved in the landscape-based cultural education of students at H University?

### 1.3 Research Objective

The primary objective of this study is to explore the educational mechanism and practical pathway for integrating local cultural elements into the landscape construction of H University. By applying theoretical analysis, literature review, field observation, and interviews, this research aims to:

- 1) Examine how landscape elements (e.g., plants, water features, architecture, philosophical themes, regional symbols) contribute to educational outcomes;

- 2) Analyze the role of cultural context in shaping university spatial environments;
- 3) Offer innovative insights into the educational potential of culturally embedded landscape design.

This study seeks to advance the field of educational space research and offer practical guidance for culturally grounded campus planning in higher education.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Related Concepts and Theories**

The integration of educational environments and cultural identity has been widely acknowledged as a critical factor in holistic education. School architectural landscapes serve not only as physical environments but also as carriers of cultural meaning, moral values, and aesthetic expression. The theoretical foundation for this study includes the Theory of Environmental Education, which emphasizes the influence of physical space on students' development, and Place-based Education Theory, which argues that local culture and environment should be central to the educational experience. Additionally, the Cultural Symbolism Theory suggests that landscape elements, such as buildings, sculptures, and vegetation, can convey symbolic meanings that reinforce cultural identity and values.

### **2.2 Literature Surveys**

Research on school architectural landscape education remains underdeveloped both in China and internationally. Current literature tends to focus on three main areas: (1) exploring the educational implications embedded in campus environments, (2) examining the functional roles of school buildings and landscapes in shaping student behavior and institutional culture, and (3) discussing the adaptability of architectural space to meet the evolving needs of education. However, most of this research is fragmented, lacking systematic analysis or unified theoretical models.

Studies on local culture in design are more common in the fields of industrial design and urban planning, often focusing on regional characteristics and heritage preservation. However, few studies specifically address the integration of local cultural elements into university landscape construction. Existing research primarily examines aesthetic incorporation or superficial decorative elements, without delving into the deeper educational mechanisms or long-term developmental impacts on students. Furthermore, little attention has been given to how such integration fosters identity, cultural continuity, or place-based learning in university settings.

### **2.3 Conceptual Framework**

Based on the literature review and theoretical foundation, this study proposes a conceptual framework that integrates:

- 1) Cultural Input: Local cultural elements embedded in university landscape features (e.g., sculptures, regional plants, symbols, traditional architecture)
- 2) Spatial Media: Physical structures and open spaces as educational carriers

3) Educational Mechanism: Student interaction with the landscape through observation, participation, and reflection

4) Learning Outcomes: Enhanced cultural identity, moral development, aesthetic appreciation, and environmental awareness

This framework suggests that campus landscapes serve as intermediaries that convert cultural resources into educational stimuli, promoting cognitive and emotional engagement with local culture.

## **2.4 Research Hypothesis**

Based on the framework above, the study formulates the following hypotheses:

H1: University landscape features embedded with local cultural elements positively influence students' cultural identity.

H2: Physical interaction with culturally enriched campus spaces enhances students' sense of belonging and moral development.

H3: The integration of regional cultural elements into landscape construction improves students' perception of the university's educational value.

H4: Educational outcomes from landscape interaction vary by student background (e.g., discipline, hometown, and year of study).

## **3. Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This research employs a qualitative case study design, centered on H University as a representative example of campus landscape construction integrating local cultural elements. The study aims to explore the educational mechanisms and implementation strategies through field-based, interpretive methods. It adopts a triangulated approach combining theoretical analysis, literature review, field observations, and semi-structured interviews to generate in-depth insights.

### **3.2 Population and Sample**

The target population includes administrators, landscape designers, faculty members, and students at H University. Purposeful sampling is used to select participants who have experience or insights into the campus landscape's construction and educational impact. The sample includes:

- 5 university administrators involved in planning or facilities
- 3 campus landscape architects or designers
- 10 faculty members across different disciplines
- 30 students from various years and majors

### 3.3 Research Instruments

The instruments used in this study include:

- 1) Observation Checklist: To systematically record landscape elements, cultural symbols, spatial arrangements, and student interactions on campus.
- 2) Interview Guide: Semi-structured interview questions focused on participants' perceptions of the landscape's educational value, cultural symbolism, and personal experiences.
- 3) Document Analysis: Review of campus planning blueprints, landscape proposals, and official statements related to cultural integration.

### 3.4 Data Collection

Data were collected over a three-month period. On-site observations were conducted at various times of day to capture usage patterns. Interviews were carried out in person and digitally, with participants' consent and anonymity ensured. Relevant institutional documents were collected from campus archives and administrative offices.

### 3.5 Statistics Used for Data Analysis

Although this study is primarily qualitative, descriptive statistics (e.g., frequency counts, percentage analysis) are used to summarize observation data. Thematic analysis is applied to interview transcripts to identify recurring patterns and key themes related to the educational function of landscape elements. Coding was conducted using NVivo software to organize qualitative data systematically.

## 4. Data Analysis and Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis and research findings derived from both field observations and in-depth interviews conducted at H University. The aim of the analysis is to understand the current status of campus landscape education, the integration of local cultural elements, and the perceptions and expectations of stakeholders including university managers, teachers, and students. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the educational function of H University's campus landscape, the research employed a combination of qualitative data collection methods. These included structured observations across various campus zones, textual and photographic documentation of key educational landscape features, and semi-structured interviews with 2 managers, 2 faculty members, and 18 students from diverse backgrounds. The qualitative data were then systematically analyzed using NVivo12 software to identify themes, perceptions, and suggestions related to landscape education. The initial data analysis followed a three-level coding process: open coding, axial (spindle) coding, and selective coding. Through open coding, 33 key codes were identified and categorized into educational domains such as moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education. These codes reflected detailed components of the landscape experience, such as layout zoning, functional division, integration of cultural elements, facility quality, and user satisfaction. Axial coding further grouped these into thematic clusters, while selective coding synthesized the data into three primary stakeholder perspectives: managerial,

teaching, and student views. From the managerial perspective, the data reveal a strong emphasis on rational campus zoning, the improvement of facilities, and strategic planning for integrating local culture into the landscape. Managers acknowledge the cultural and educational potential of iconic figures such as Han Yu and Chen Weinan and advocate for spatial improvements, including the renovation of Dongli Lake and the addition of culturally themed squares.

From the teacher's perspective, campus landscape is seen as a medium for both symbolic and functional education. Teachers emphasize the moral influence of celebrity statues, the academic atmosphere fostered by library design, and the potential for landscapes to support hands-on learning and aesthetic appreciation. They recommend developing specialized zones such as outdoor practice bases and labor education areas to complement formal teaching. From the student perspective, insights reflect lived experiences and emotional engagement with the campus environment. Students express appreciation for specific landmarks such as Dongli Lake and the library, and acknowledge the role of the campus in promoting moral reflection, aesthetic growth, and physical wellness. However, they also express expectations for more modern facilities, multifunctional leisure spaces, and greater integration of regional cultural identity within the campus. The findings suggest that while H University has made progress in integrating educational functions into its landscape, there remains a need for more cohesive planning and thematic consistency. The landscape's potential as a medium for cultural transmission and student development is acknowledged by all stakeholder groups, but greater emphasis is needed on systematic design, facility enhancement, and the embedding of local cultural narratives to fully realize its educational value. The subsequent sections will elaborate on the specific findings from each perspective, managerial, teaching, and student, based on the coding structure, supported by direct interview excerpts and interpretive commentary.

## 4.2 Data Analysis of the Qualitative Data

### 4.2.1 On Site Observation and Investigation of H University

The author first conducted discovery and exploration at H University as an observer, and conducted research through photography and text recording. On campus, the author discovered many meaningful landscapes and scenes. The author divided the observed educational landscapes of the school into three categories along the central axis of the campus, spanning from the western district to the Dongli Lake area. They compared these landscapes with the Jiageng architecture and the "Jiageng Spirit" of Xiamen University, and affirmed H University's landscape construction measures to promote the "Weinan Spirit". At the same time, I obtained the school's "14th Five Year Plan" document from a middle-level manager, and compared the content of the document with the observation site to determine the gains and losses of the school's landscape education measures. Thus drawing observational conclusions.

H University is located in the outskirts of the city, facing the Han River and bordered by Bijia Mountain (also known as Han Mountain) to the north. The campus is mostly steep and mountainous, but it is also surrounded by mountains and water, with beautiful scenery and great momentum. The campus is 226 kilometers away from Xiamen University, belonging to the Minnan language department, with a subtropical climate, and both are century old schools. Although the landscape of H University may not have the grandeur and well-organized layout of Xiamen University, it still has a certain charm, with educational landscapes visible everywhere.

The school's location follows the philosophical concept of "harmony between heaven and man" and "integration with nature", making it a feng shui treasure trove for studying. From the West

District to the Central District to Donglihu District, the school is not lacking in craftsmanship and has constructed many educational landscapes.

1) Cultural and educational landscapes. Mainly reflecting the nature of the school as a teacher education institution, and on the side of the Han Temple, the school's name originates from Han Yu (Han Yu was demoted to Chaozhou for eight months, promoting culture and education, driving away crocodiles and eliminating malpractices, benefiting the people, thus giving Chaozhou's mountains and rivers the Han surname). To commemorate Han Yu's merits, the school takes Han Yu as the main line, constructs many landscapes, and encourages learning and motivation.

In addition, the portrait of Mr. Rao Zongyi, a famous alumnus of H University and an internationally renowned scholar, as well as the statue of the famous Chinese educator Tao Xingzhi, are also cultural ambassadors for campus education. The establishment of the predecessor of the school, Hanshan Academy, and the promotion of legal culture in the flower rack corridor also demonstrate the ingenuity of cultural education.

## 2) Landscape of School History Education

### 3) Landscape of patriotism education

The author walked to the statue of Chen Weinan at the Chen Weinan Star Memorial Square in the central district and found that the statue of Mr. Chen Weinan, an outstanding alumnus and patriotic overseas Chinese of the school, not only had people offering flowers, but also often had people spontaneously offering flowers to commemorate him. The fresh flowers in front of me vary in brightness, some of which are clearly beginning to wither due to dehydration, indicating a continuous stream of flower donors. At present, the author has noticed a refined gentleman bowing to the statue of the gentleman (without consent, photography and posting are not allowed). Through conversations with the person bowing, the author confirmed that Mr. Chen Weinan's statue has been spontaneously presented with flowers to commemorate him all year round, and many teachers and students on campus stop and bow to the statue spontaneously when they come here. Actions like his are common scenes. This cannot help but move the author!

To further understand the deeds of Mr. Chen Weinan, it was found that relevant literature from the Chaozhou Municipal People's Government detailed his outstanding contributions. Chen Weinan is the founding chairman of the Hong Kong Chiu Chow Association and the chairman of Ping Shan Enterprise Limited. He is a highly respected industrialist, philanthropist, and social activist. He has always been concerned about national affairs and actively engaged in social welfare undertakings, especially in supporting education, healthcare, and municipal construction in his hometown, making outstanding contributions. His motto is 'Success in career comes from hard work, and the value of life lies in dedication', which not only reflects his profound emotions towards his country and hometown, but also reflects his selfless sense of social responsibility. His noble character and generous actions have become a model for his hometown and even society, profoundly interpreting the "Weinan Spirit" of "loving the country, being grateful and dedicated", and inspiring generation after generation.

Chen Weinan's deeds demonstrate his noble demeanor as a patriotic industrialist, not only achieving significant achievements in the business field, but also actively participating in social welfare and national construction, demonstrating his profound patriotism. In order to give back to society and the country, he has won many honors, including the Guangdong Province Love for Children Medal, the Hong Kong Bronze Bauhinia Star, the honorary citizen titles of Guangzhou, Shantou, Chaozhou and Jieyang, the global model of Chaozhou business, the philanthropist of



Southern Guangdong, the 2008 Charity Figure who moved Guangdong, and the "Most Respected Person" who moved Chaozhou in 2016. In commemoration of his outstanding contributions to the country and society, the Purple Mountain Observatory in Nanjing named a small asteroid "Chen Weinan Star", which engraved his historical status.

Nowadays, Chen Weinan's spirit is forever commemorated on campus, through sculptures, flower offerings, and bowing, people will always remember his good deeds and contributions. The "Chen Weinan Star" symbolizing his virtue still shines brightly, becoming a force that inspires people to move forward. Chen Weinan wrote his own life with wisdom and benevolence, and his' Weinan spirit 'is like moistening things silently, influencing and inspiring everyone.

This kind of "Weinan spirit" may not be comparable to Xiamen University's "Jiageng spirit", and the school does not inherit and promote the "Jiageng architecture" and the "Jiageng spirit" conveyed behind such a large-scale architectural complex like Xiamen University. However, H High School's construction of a memorial square and the practice of naming and engraving buildings can still achieve the educational effect of spring breeze and rain, moistening objects silently, and cultivating patriotism.

To further understand H University, the author conducted multiple visits and investigations using various methods. Discovery of H University: As a century old school and located in Chaozhou with a profound and unique cultural heritage, the school's landscape construction has consciously integrated Chaozhou culture and glorious school history culture. For example, the statue of Han Yu, such as the old school road memorial archway, the school history museum, and the memorial square of Chen Weinan Star. However, the current distribution of disciplinary and professional education institutions in schools is relatively scattered, and the combination of landscape construction along the central axis and disciplinary and professional construction is almost non-existent. Obviously, there is no conscious effort to strengthen practical construction in this area.

The author visited a deputy director in charge of landscape greening in the Logistics and Asset Management Department of H University, who provided me with the school's "14th Five Year Plan" for campus cultural construction. From the content of the document, it can be seen that H University is already planning to explore local cultural resources and integrate them into the school's material cultural construction. With the principle of highlighting characteristics, it aims to shape a unique and tasteful campus landscape and enhance the quality of school cultural construction. However, as the author's on-site investigation has shown, the cultural landscape of H University lacks a unified overall planning and construction, and the combination of landscape construction along the central axis with disciplinary and professional construction is almost invisible, only proposing the construction of distinctive departmental cultures. The construction of a cultural small square in the western district proposed in the document, as well as the construction of themed sculptures along the stone road from the western district to the central district (formerly named the eastern district), has not been realized.

Looking at the spiritual brand of the school, the key is to create the "Weinan Spirit" and "Shidao Spirit" in the landscape, display local cultural characteristics, and combine distinctive Chaozhou cultural elements with subject construction to build a campus cultural landscape with unique charm and educational effects. Overall, the promotion of the "Weinan Spirit" in the school landscape has been relatively successful, but the construction of the "Teacher's Way Spirit" based on Han Yu's original ideas is still far from enough; How to combine disciplinary construction with Chaozhou cultural elements to create scenery and present its disciplinary characteristics is almost unknown.



#### 4.2.2 In-Depth Interviews

This interview is aimed at H University, and selected teachers, school administrators, and students of different ages and genders as the interviewees. A 20 minute interview survey was conducted.

This interview outline refers to the content of Zhang Yao's (2020) survey questionnaire on "Research on Campus Cultural Landscape Design Based on Regional Context" and Wu Bo's (2016) interview outline on "Research on the Educational Value of School Buildings". A preliminary draft of the interview outline for "Research on University Landscape Education" has been prepared. In order to verify the feasibility of the interview outline, the author invited some experts to make a judgment. This pre interview invited 10 interviewees from behavioral event interviews and 6 teachers with doctoral or associate professor titles in education, psychology, educational economics and management, or management from H University to review the interview content. The main task is to identify whether the interview content is easy to understand and whether it is operable. According to the modification suggestions provided by experts, the content that is not specific and lacks operability has been deleted and modified, and the outline content has been determined as 10 questions.

The results of the three-level coding are presented as follows:

##### 1) Analysis Method

In this study, NVivo12 software was used for qualitative coding analysis to explore in depth the current situation of cultural landscape education in H University, the perception and satisfaction of managers, teachers, and students towards landscape education, as well as suggestions for measures to transform and enhance the landscape. The specific steps are: import the collected documents related to landscape education at H University into NVivo12 software; Based on the research objectives and problems, create corresponding coding nodes in the software, such as campus layout, landscape education functions, landscape renovation suggestions, etc; Carefully read each document and encode the content related to the encoding nodes line by line, ensuring that the text content is accurately classified into the corresponding encoding nodes to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the encoding. By using NVivo12 software for qualitative coding analysis, it is possible to systematically organize and analyze large amounts of text data, deeply explore the information within it, and provide strong support for research.

##### 2) Encoding Result

Encode the interview texts of 2 managers, 2 teachers, and 18 students sentence by sentence, forming a total of 33 open-ended codes a1-c11, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** Open Encoding

Number	Open Coding	Explanation
a1	Layout Zoning	Teaching and research area, student living area, cultural and leisure area, and characteristic landscape area
a2	Auxiliary Facilities	Greening facilities, safety and fire-fighting facilities, living service facilities, teaching facilities
a3	Site Selection	Natural environment, cultural heritage, and long-term development
a4	Moral Education	Cultural Corridor, Celebrity Sculptures
a5	Qizhi Education	Library, laboratory
a6	Fitness Education	Stadium,Sports Ground
a7	Aesthetic Education	Flower beds, sculptures, fountains
a8	Labor Education	Campus greening maintenance
a9	Add Facilities	Improve campus culture construction and establish campus cultural symbols
a10	Renovation Area	Constructing a cultural square in the western district and renovating the surrounding area of Dongli Lake
a11	Enhance The Environment	High grade greening renovation, creating an elegant and peaceful atmosphere
b1	Functional Division	Teaching area, living area, sports area
b2	Usage Effect	Meet the needs of teaching and daily life
b3	Cultural Integration	Integration with local cultural elements
b4	Moral Guidance	Cultural Corridor, Celebrity Statues
b5	Enlightenment Atmosphere	Creating an academic atmosphere
b6	Fitness Support	Improve sports facilities
b7	Aesthetic Cultivation	Greening and beautification work
b8	Labor Education	Encourage students to participate in labor activities
b9	Facility Addition	Building outdoor practice foundation
b10	Perfect Space	Develop diverse campus characteristic landscapes
b11	Rich Functionality	Add labor practice base
c1	Partition Situation	Teaching area, living area, sports and leisure area, etc
c2	Usage Effect	Meet the needs of learning and life, promote communication and integration

c3	Featured Preferences	Favorite landscape areas or buildings
c4	Moral Influence	The influence of cultural corridors and celebrity sculptures
c5	Enlightenment Effect	Learning environment in libraries and laboratories
c6	Fitness Value	The promotion of physical health by sports venues
c7	Aesthetic Feeling	The Aesthetics and Artistry of Campus Environment
c8	Labor Consciousness	Experience of participating in campus labor
c9	Facility Improvement	Increase advanced teaching equipment and improve sports facilities
c10	Space Addition	Multi functional leisure area, art square, etc
c11	Environmental Optimization	Enhance campus greening and strengthen safety management

Open coding includes layout zoning, auxiliary facilities, school site selection, moral education, intellectual disability education, physical fitness education, aesthetic education, labor education, adding facilities, renovating areas, enhancing the environment, functional division, usage effect, cultural integration, moral guidance, intellectual disability atmosphere, physical fitness support, aesthetic cultivation, labor education, facility addition, space improvement, functional richness, zoning situation, usage effect, characteristic preferences, moral influence, intellectual disability role, fitness value, aesthetic perception, labor consciousness, facility improvement, space addition, environmental optimization, etc. These codes cover multiple aspects such as campus layout, facilities, educational functions, renovation suggestions, and students' experiences and expectations of campus landscapes, providing a comprehensive and systematic framework for in-depth analysis of the current situation of cultural landscape education in H University.

**Table 2** Spindle Coding

Number	Selective Encoding	Node	Concept Explanation
A1	Campus layout and facilities	a1-a3	This includes the layout and zoning of the campus, the provision of auxiliary facilities, and factors related to site selection, such as the impact of natural environment and cultural heritage on site selection, as well as considerations for the long-term development of the school.
A2	Landscape education function	a4-a8	The role of campus landscape in moral education, intellectual enlightenment education, physical fitness education, aesthetic education, and labor education is realized through specific landscape elements such as cultural corridors, celebrity sculptures, libraries, sports halls, etc.
A3	Landscape renovation suggestions	a9-a11	Suggestions for renovating the campus landscape, including adding relevant facilities to improve campus cultural construction,

			identifying campus cultural symbols, renovating specific areas, and carrying out high-quality greening renovations to enhance the environmental atmosphere.
B1	Campus layout cognition	b1-b3	Teachers' understanding of campus layout, including functional division, usage effects, and integration with local cultural elements.
B2	Perception of Landscape Education	b4-b8	Teachers' perception of the educational function of campus landscape is reflected in moral guidance, the creation of an intellectual atmosphere, physical support, aesthetic cultivation, and labor education, which are achieved through corresponding landscapes and facilities.
B3	Landscape improvement suggestions	b9-b11	The suggestions put forward by teachers for improving campus landscape include building outdoor practice bases, developing diverse campus characteristic landscapes, and adding labor practice bases.
C1	Campus Layout Experience	c1-c3	Students' experience of campus layout, including the zoning situation, usage effects, and landscape areas or buildings that students particularly like.
C2	Landscape Education Evaluation	c4-c8	The evaluation of the educational function of campus landscape by students covers aspects such as moral influence, intellectual enlightenment, physical fitness value, aesthetic perception, and labor consciousness. The educational value of landscape is evaluated through personal experience and experience on campus.
C3	Expectations for Landscape Renovation	c9-c11	Students' expectations for campus landscape renovation include facility improvement, space addition, and environmental optimization, hoping to enhance the quality and educational function of campus landscape through these renovations.

The spindle encoding in Table 2 further summarizes and integrates open encoding. The A1 code "Campus Layout and Facilities" covers nodes a1-a3, mainly including the layout and zoning of the campus, the provision of auxiliary facilities, and relevant factors for site selection. It comprehensively considers the impact of natural environment and cultural heritage on site selection, as well as considerations for the long-term development of the school principal. The A2 code "Landscape Education Function" involves nodes A4-A8, emphasizing the role of campus landscape in moral education, intellectual education, physical education, aesthetic education, and labor education. These educational functions are achieved through specific landscape elements. The A3 code "Landscape Renovation Suggestions" includes nodes a9-a11, mainly related to suggestions for campus landscape renovation, including adding facilities to improve campus cultural construction,

determining campus cultural symbols, renovating specific areas, and carrying out high-grade greening renovation to enhance the environmental atmosphere.

The B1 code "Campus Layout Cognition" includes nodes b1-b3, reflecting teachers' understanding of campus layout, involving functional division, usage effects, and integration with local cultural elements. The B2 code "Perception of Landscape Education" covers nodes b4-b8, reflecting teachers' perception of the educational function of campus landscape education, which is reflected in moral guidance, creating a stimulating atmosphere, supporting physical fitness, aesthetic cultivation, and labor education. It is achieved through corresponding landscapes and facilities. The B3 code "Landscape Improvement Suggestions" includes nodes b9-b11, which are mainly suggestions put forward by teachers regarding campus landscape improvement, including the construction of outdoor practice bases, the development of diverse campus characteristic landscapes, and the addition of labor practice bases.

The C1 code "Campus Layout Experience" includes nodes c1-c3, reflecting students' experience of campus layout, including the zoning situation, usage effect, and landscape areas or buildings that students particularly like. The C2 code "Landscape Educational Evaluation" covers nodes c4-c8, reflecting students' evaluation of the educational function of campus landscapes, including moral influence, intellectual enlightenment, physical fitness value, aesthetic perception, and labor consciousness. It evaluates the educational value of landscapes through personal experience and experience on campus. The C3 code "Landscape Renovation Expectations" includes nodes c9-c11, reflecting students' expectations for campus landscape renovation, including facility improvement, space addition, and environmental optimization. It is hoped that through these renovations, the quality of campus landscape and educational functions can be improved.

**Table 3** Selective Encoding

Number	Selective Encoding	Node
A	Managerial Perspective	A1-A3
B	Teacher's Perspective	B1-B3
C	Student Perspective	C1-C3

The selective coding in Table 3 divides the research subjects into three perspectives: managers, teachers, and students. Among them, A represents the perspective of managers, including three nodes A1 (campus layout and facilities), A2 (landscape education function), and A3 (landscape renovation suggestions), mainly focusing on managers' views on campus layout, landscape education function, and proposed landscape renovation suggestions. B represents the perspective of teachers, including three nodes: B1 (campus layout cognition), B2 (landscape education perception), and B3 (landscape improvement suggestions), focusing on teachers' cognition of campus layout, perception of landscape education function, and proposed landscape improvement suggestions. C represents the perspective of students, covering three nodes: C1 (campus layout experience), C2 (landscape education evaluation), and C3 (landscape renovation expectations), mainly reflecting students' experience of campus layout, evaluation of landscape education, and expectations for landscape renovation. This classification method helps to comprehensively analyze the current situation of cultural landscape education in H University from different perspectives.

### 4.2.3 Interview Results

#### Managerial Perspective

In terms of campus planning and facilities, the school divides the overall space into teaching and research areas, student living areas, cultural and leisure areas, and characteristic landscape areas, aiming to provide a comprehensive learning, living, and entertainment environment for teachers and students. Auxiliary facilities such as greening, safety and fire protection, living services, and teaching facilities are already relatively complete, but there is still room for further improvement to meet the growing demand. The site selection of the school takes into account the superiority of the natural environment and profound cultural heritage, which is conducive to the long-term development of the school and creates a good learning and working atmosphere.

The landscape education function of campus involves multiple aspects, including moral education, intellectual enlightenment education, physical fitness education, aesthetic education, and labor education. Provide moral education through facilities such as cultural corridors and celebrity sculptures to help students establish correct values; Libraries and laboratories support intellectual education, promote knowledge accumulation and intellectual development; Facilities such as gyms and sports fields promote fitness education and encourage students to participate in sports activities to maintain physical health; Flower beds, sculptures, and fountains enhance aesthetic education and cultivate students' artistic perception abilities; And campus greening maintenance is also integrated into labor education, cultivating students' labor consciousness and sense of responsibility.

In terms of landscape renovation, managers suggest further improving campus cultural construction by adding facilities and establishing cultural symbols with characteristics and cohesion. For example, it is proposed to construct a cultural square in the western district and renovate the surrounding area of Dongli Lake to enhance the functionality and aesthetics of these areas. In addition, there are plans to carry out high-end greening renovation, creating an elegant and peaceful atmosphere, further improving the campus environment, and providing more comfortable learning and living spaces.

For example, Manager A stated that the school's planning and design are reasonable, with centralized teaching and research areas, teaching buildings, laboratory buildings, and libraries, providing high-quality teaching and research conditions for teachers and students; The student living area includes dormitories, canteens, and activity centers, fully meeting the living and social needs of students; The cultural and leisure area is equipped with a gymnasium and sports field to promote students' physical and mental health; The characteristic landscape area has created multiple educational attractions through campus history and local characteristics. Manager B mentioned, "The integration of facilities such as libraries and laboratories with the surrounding green landscape creates an ideal learning atmosphere for students." This highlights the crucial role of libraries and laboratories in early childhood education. In addition, the management believes that there is still room for improvement in the educational value of the school's landscape design, especially in the eastern area. It is recommended to carry out green transformation according to high standard scenic spot requirements, creating an elegant, peaceful, and clean campus environment.

#### Teacher's Perspective

Teachers' understanding of campus layout involves functional division, usage effects, and cultural integration. By dividing the campus area into teaching, living, and sports areas and clarifying the functions of each area, it not only helps to improve the efficiency of teaching and living, but also provides a convenient daily living environment for teachers and students. The campus should integrate local cultural elements, create a campus landscape with local characteristics, and enhance

students' sense of identity and belonging to local culture. In terms of landscape education, teachers believe that facilities such as cultural corridors and celebrity statues can subtly carry out moral education and guide students to establish a sense of integrity. A strong academic atmosphere helps to inspire students' thinking, stimulate their thirst for knowledge and innovative spirit. Meanwhile, well-equipped sports facilities not only support students' physical exercise, but also promote their physical and mental health. The greening and beautification of the campus provide students with a pleasant visual experience, cultivate their aesthetic taste, and encourage them to participate in labor activities, enhancing their sense of responsibility and labor consciousness.

In terms of optimizing the campus landscape, teachers have put forward some beneficial suggestions, such as adding new facilities, optimizing existing spaces, and enhancing their functionality. Establishing outdoor practice bases can provide students with more practical opportunities and enhance their hands-on abilities. By developing distinctive campus landscapes such as vegetable gardens, it can stimulate students' innovative thinking and enrich the campus cultural atmosphere. Establish labor practice bases to enable students to improve their skills and enhance their sense of social responsibility in practical work.

For example, Teacher C believes that through facilities such as cultural corridors and celebrity sculptures, schools can subtly help students establish correct moral concepts and create a strong academic atmosphere; Constructing comprehensive sports facilities, such as sports fields and basketball courts, to meet the exercise needs of students; Campus greening and beautification provide students with a beautiful learning environment; Encourage students to participate in campus cleaning, greening and other activities to help them enhance their labor awareness and practical abilities.

Teacher D pointed out that in terms of moral education, promoting teacher ethics through sculptures such as Han Yu and Tao Xingzhi is in line with the training objectives of teacher trainees; Promote positive values of life and align with moral education goals through facilities such as the statue of Chen Weinan, planetarium, and Dexin Exhibition Hall; In terms of intellectual education, the "Poetry Corridor" on both sides of the underground passage provides students with a space to learn poetry and books; In terms of physical education, open track and field facilities and various sports venues are used to encourage students to participate in sports activities and enhance their physical fitness; In terms of aesthetic education, places such as libraries, bookstores, photography studios, and ancient roads in the western district aim to enhance students' aesthetic awareness; In terms of labor education, Dongli Lake's open park is part of the school community, encouraging students to participate in community cleaning activities, cultivating a sense of civic responsibility, and reflecting the value of labor.

#### Student Perspective

Students' perception of campus layout is mainly reflected in the functional allocation, effect manifestation, and unique landscape of different areas. Understand the regional division of the campus, such as teaching, living, and sports and leisure areas, to help students better adapt and integrate into the campus environment. Reasonable campus planning should meet the academic and living needs of students, promote interaction and communication among different disciplines and students, and provide support for their comprehensive development. Students have a strong preference for specific buildings and landscapes on campus, which also demonstrates the attractiveness of campus landscapes to them.

In terms of the impact of landscape on students' growth, students generally believe that facilities such as cultural corridors and celebrity statues play a subtle role in moral education, which



can influence students' spirit and thoughts. Academic places such as libraries and laboratories provide a good platform for inspiring students' learning interests and thinking, which helps to accumulate knowledge and personal growth. The construction of sports facilities not only helps to enhance students' physical fitness, but also encourages them to actively participate in physical exercise. The beautification and artistic design of the campus have enhanced students' aesthetic awareness and enriched their cultural experience. At the same time, participating in labor activities on campus can cultivate students' labor concepts, enhance their recognition and appreciation of labor achievements.

In terms of landscape improvement, students expect to further enhance the campus experience by updating facilities, optimizing spatial layout, and improving environmental quality. For example, adding advanced teaching facilities and upgrading sports venues can greatly enhance the learning and physical exercise experience; Setting up more fully functional leisure areas and art squares will provide students with more activity space and enrich their extracurricular life; Strengthening campus greening and safety management measures will create a more comfortable and safe learning environment for students.

For example, Student 1 stated that the campus layout is simple and hierarchical, with clear functional zoning. Academic facilities such as teaching buildings and libraries are concentrated in the teaching area, while dormitories and canteens are provided in the living area to meet students' daily needs. The sports and leisure area encourages students to actively participate in sports activities, while the cultural landscape area adds a cultural atmosphere. Student 4 believes that the functional division of the campus is reasonable and effective. The teaching area facilitates academic activities, the living area provides comfortable accommodation and dining conditions for teachers and students, the sports area meets the needs of physical exercise, and the leisure area provides a place for teachers and students to relax. In addition, students have a special fondness for scenic areas such as Dongli Lake and the library, and hope to add new facilities and spaces during the landscape renovation process, such as improving sports facilities and building more multifunctional leisure areas.

### 4.3 Summary of the Results

The data collected through field observations, interviews, and qualitative coding at H University provide a comprehensive view of the current state of campus landscape education and its relationship with local cultural integration. The results reveal important insights from multiple stakeholder perspectives, managers, teachers, and students, each highlighting both achievements and areas for improvement. From the managerial perspective, there is a clear recognition of the strategic importance of campus landscape as an educational medium. Managers emphasize rational spatial layout, functional zoning, and the symbolic significance of landscape elements such as statues and squares. They advocate for further renovation of iconic areas (e.g., Dongli Lake, themed squares) and call for more systematic planning that integrates local culture into the university's long-term development framework. Managers acknowledge that while some cultural landmarks exist, their educational utility has yet to be fully realized. From the teacher's perspective, campus landscape is viewed as an important extension of the formal curriculum. Educators underscore the role of landscape in moral education (e.g., statues of historical figures), intellectual stimulation (e.g., library surroundings), and practical engagement (e.g., outdoor learning spaces). Teachers highlight the need to develop more hands-on and interactive environments, such as practice bases and labor education areas, to align with contemporary pedagogical goals. They also stress the importance of enhancing aesthetic and humanistic elements in landscape design to inspire deeper emotional resonance and identity formation among students.



From the student perspective, the campus landscape is closely tied to daily experience, personal growth, and emotional engagement. Students express appreciation for existing scenic areas like the library, Dongli Lake, and sports zones, which contribute to physical relaxation, aesthetic enjoyment, and moral reflection. However, students also voice a desire for greater modernization, improved functionality, and more distinctive cultural features that resonate with regional identity. Many express expectations for multifunctional leisure spaces and student-centered designs that enhance usability and inclusiveness. Overall, the results indicate that while H University's campus landscape has made meaningful strides in supporting student development, its full educational potential, particularly in transmitting local culture and values, remains underutilized. Stakeholders unanimously support further integration of regional cultural elements, improved facility design, and a more holistic educational approach to campus space planning. These insights lay the foundation for targeted recommendations and future policy development aimed at maximizing the cultural and educational functions of university landscapes.

## **5. Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendation**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

This study explores the educational role of university campus landscapes through the case of H University, with a particular focus on the integration of local cultural elements. Through literature review, theoretical exploration, and empirical analysis, including field observations and interviews with university managers, teachers, and students, it was found that landscape design plays a significant role in shaping students' cultural identity, moral development, and aesthetic appreciation.

The study concludes that while H University has established a basic framework for landscape education and campus layout, there remains substantial room for improvement. The integration of local cultural elements into campus design is still insufficiently systematized, and the educational value of cultural landscapes has not yet been fully realized. To cultivate students effectively, the university landscape must reflect local heritage, align with the university's educational mission, and create spaces that foster emotional connection and civic awareness.

### **5.2 Discussion**

The findings from interviews indicate that different university stakeholders view landscape education from varied perspectives. University administrators emphasize planning rationality, facility optimization, and the strategic educational role of landscape elements. Teachers are concerned with spatial functionality, the symbolic integration of culture, and how landscape features support the learning environment. Students focus more on experiential aspects, expressing expectations for aesthetically pleasing, interactive, and educationally meaningful spaces.

The study reveals that while H University's campus landscape contains elements of local culture, these are scattered and lack coherent thematic expression. Stakeholders generally agree on the educational potential of landscapes but highlight a disconnect between existing designs and students' cultural learning needs. In particular, students desire greater interaction with the environment, and educators seek deeper alignment between space, curriculum, and cultural symbolism.

There is consensus that meaningful landscape construction requires a multilevel strategy, combining macro-level campus planning with meso- and micro-level cultural expressions.

Integrating local traditions, school history, and moral education into visible, experiential components of the landscape can greatly enhance its pedagogical value.

### 5.3 Recommendation

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the educational role of university landscapes:

1) Integrate local cultural elements into top-level landscape planning

Universities should incorporate landscape culture as a key component in institutional development strategies such as the "15th Five-Year Plan." This includes embedding regional heritage, school history, and educational philosophy into spatial design at both symbolic and practical levels. Micro-landscape design should reflect both tradition and innovation, reinforcing campus identity and values.

2) Align cultural landscapes with humanistic education

Campus landscapes should serve as platforms for moral and cultural learning. Integrating local cultural elements with humanistic themes will foster a deeper emotional and intellectual connection among students. Inclusive design processes that encourage teacher and student participation will ensure that the landscape resonates with the campus community and supports students' holistic development.

3) Create distinctive educational landscapes that balance aesthetics, utility, and pedagogy

Campus landscapes must not only be visually appealing and functional but also serve as "silent teachers." Through careful design, every corner of the campus, from walls to pathways, can carry cultural messages and support character education. The landscape should complement curriculum development, strengthen discipline-based identity, and promote comprehensive student growth across the "five educations" (moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education).

4) Promote a national model for culturally embedded landscape education

The approach demonstrated at H University, integrating national spirit and regional culture into campus design, offers a replicable model for universities across China. Emphasizing the development of "implicit curricula" through landscape construction can help build a distinctive spiritual culture on campus, contributing to the cultivation of talents aligned with the goals of the new era.

In summary, universities should commit to constructing campus landscapes that go beyond decoration, spaces that teach, inspire, and embody cultural continuity. The integration of regional culture and national values into landscape design is a vital direction for future educational reform in China's higher education system.

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# **Service Marketing Mix and Brand Value Influencing Consumers' Purchasing Decision of Used Car in Phuket**

by

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the impact of service marketing mix factors and brand equity on consumer decision-making in the context of purchasing used cars in Phuket, Thailand. As competition intensifies within the used car market, understanding the factors that influence consumer behavior becomes essential for businesses seeking to retain and attract customers. The objective of this research is to examine how elements of the service marketing mix and brand equity shape purchasing decisions, offering insights into effective business strategies for used car dealerships. A quantitative research methodology was employed, using a structured questionnaire distributed to 400 respondents who had previously purchased used cars from dealerships in Phuket. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis to assess the relationship between the independent variables, service marketing mix (product, price, promotion, place, people, process, and physical evidence) and brand equity (brand association, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty), and the dependent variable, which is the consumers' purchase decision. The findings reveal that the majority of respondents were male, aged 30–39 years, held a bachelor's degree, and earned between 30,001–40,000 THB per month. Eco-cars and sedans were the most frequently purchased vehicle types, with Honda and Toyota as the most preferred brands. Statistical analysis demonstrated that all components of the service marketing mix had a significant and positive effect on consumer purchase decisions. Likewise, all brand equity dimensions also exhibited strong positive correlations with purchasing behavior. These results suggest that both marketing strategies and brand perception play a vital role in influencing consumer behavior in the used car market. The study recommends that used car businesses in Phuket improve service delivery, showroom presentation, online visibility, and after-sales support. Strengthening brand-customer relationships, particularly by building trust, enhancing customer experience, and promoting loyalty, is also emphasized as a strategic priority. Future research should explore additional influencing factors such as technological adoption, online review credibility, or financing options, and expand the geographic scope to include other provinces for comparative insights. The findings offer valuable guidance for businesses aiming to optimize marketing efforts and build sustainable consumer relationships in Thailand's used car industry.

**Keywords:** Used Car Market, Service Marketing Mix, Brand Equity, Consumer Decision-Making

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background and Importance of the Problem

Cars are an essential part of modern daily life, work, and business. Automobiles are the most popular land transportation vehicles because they provide convenience and serve multiple purposes. From the past to the present, Thailand has experienced continuous economic growth, and the automobile industry has expanded steadily. The demand for private vehicles among consumers has increased each year (Manager Online, 2023).

The need for transportation is essential for Thai citizens. Used cars, or pre-owned vehicles, offer an alternative for individuals looking to purchase a car at an affordable price suitable for their income (Pholphirul, 2007). As a result, the used car market has gained interest and has been growing rapidly, with a trend toward continued expansion, even during economic downturns. Kasikorn Research Center reported that despite the economic recession caused by the pandemic, the used car market continued to grow due to increasing consumer demand for private vehicles. It is estimated that in 2022, the used car market would expand by 3–5%, reaching approximately 600,000–700,000 units. This growth is attributed to the recovery of the overall economy and household income, alongside inflation, which has directly impacted consumers and encouraged them to consider used cars over new ones (Kasikorn Research Center, 2022).

The used car business in Phuket is highly competitive due to the large number of showrooms and dealerships. Additionally, a used car association was established in Phuket in 2005, with 60 business members operating within the province (Sathaporn Chumnoon, 2024). Therefore, purchasing a used car is a crucial decision for consumers, requiring consideration of multiple factors. These factors include the price of the vehicle, its certified condition, vehicle history, bank financing options, acceptable interest rates, installment periods, dealership promotions, value for money, maintenance costs, and after-sales service. Consumers often compare these aspects before making a final purchase decision.

Thus, the researcher is interested in studying customer opinions regarding the factors influencing their decision to buy used cars in Phuket. The findings from this study will be utilized to develop and improve the management and operation of the used car business in Phuket to enhance its efficiency.

### 1.2 Research Question

- 1) What are the demographic characteristics and purchasing behaviors of consumers buying used cars in Phuket?
- 2) What are the levels of service marketing mix factors, brand value factors, and decision-making factors influencing consumers' purchase of used cars in Phuket?
- 3) How are service marketing mix factors and brand value factors related to consumers' decision-making when purchasing used cars in Phuket?



### 1.3 Research Objective

- 1) To study the demographic factors and purchasing behavior of consumers buying used cars in Phuket.
- 2) To examine the levels of service marketing mix factors, brand value factors, and decision-making factors influencing consumers' purchase of used cars in Phuket.
- 3) To analyze the relationship between service marketing mix factors, brand value factors, and decision-making factors affecting consumers' purchase of used cars in Phuket.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Related Concepts and Theories

The service marketing mix factors refer to a group of marketing tools that businesses utilize to craft and execute strategies aimed at influencing consumer decisions, particularly in the context of purchasing used cars in Phuket Province. These elements, commonly known as the 7Ps, include Product, Price, Place (distribution channels), Promotion, Process (service procedures), People (service personnel), and Physical Environment. Each component plays a vital role in delivering value, building trust, and enhancing customer satisfaction in service-driven industries like the used car business. In parallel, the concept of brand value pertains to the significance and worth that customers assign to a particular brand. This value is not limited to financial considerations but also encompasses customer perceptions regarding quality, trust, and brand image. Components of brand value include brand association, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. A brand with high perceived value helps a business stand out in a competitive market and strengthens consumer confidence in the purchasing decision. Furthermore, the consumer purchasing decision process is typically described as a five-stage model. The process begins with problem or need recognition, where internal or external stimuli prompt a consumer to identify a need. Next, the consumer engages in an information search to explore product options. This is followed by the evaluation of alternatives based on specific criteria such as price, brand, and service quality. The fourth stage involves making the actual purchase decision, influenced by factors such as product availability, peer opinions, and perceived risk. Finally, post-purchase behavior reflects the consumer's assessment of their satisfaction with the product. A positive experience may lead to repeat purchases and brand loyalty, while dissatisfaction can result in negative word-of-mouth or switching to a competitor. Understanding these concepts provides a foundation for analyzing how service quality, brand perception, and consumer behavior affect used car purchasing decisions in Phuket.

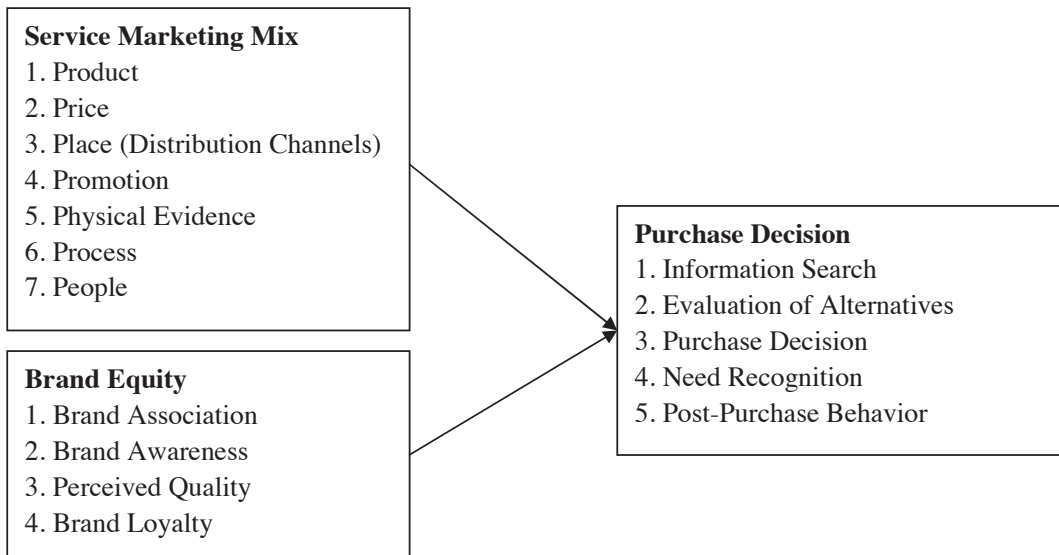
### 2.2 Literature Surveys

Several previous studies have examined the relationships between marketing strategies, brand value, and consumer behavior in the used car market and other similar service-based industries. Pholphirul (2007) pointed out that the affordability of used cars makes them a practical choice for Thai consumers, especially those with limited income, thus fueling the growth of the second-hand vehicle sector. More recent market analyses by Manager Online (2023) and the Kasikorn Research Center (2022) confirm the continued expansion of the used car industry, even during periods of economic downturn. These sources report that inflation and the increased cost of living have made used cars a more attractive option, as consumers seek cost-effective alternatives to new vehicles. In terms of marketing strategy, the extended marketing mix or 7Ps has been widely studied for its

impact on consumer decision-making and service satisfaction. Scholars such as Lovelock and Wirtz have argued that these marketing mix elements are essential in crafting a seamless service experience, particularly in high-involvement purchases like vehicles. In the domain of brand value, Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) have laid the theoretical foundation for understanding how brand equity components, such as brand loyalty, awareness, and perceived quality, contribute to a brand's market performance and customer retention. Furthermore, Kotler and Keller (2016) emphasized the relevance of the five-stage consumer decision-making model in explaining how consumers process information and make choices in high-risk, high-cost situations like buying a car. Overall, these studies offer a comprehensive background for exploring the interplay between service marketing, brand perception, and consumer purchasing behavior in the context of used cars in Phuket.

## 2.3 Conceptual Framework

Based on the summary of the literature review, the author has developed a research framework, as illustrated in Figure 1 below. This study employs a quantitative research methodology, and the researcher has defined the research framework with the following details.



**Figure 1** Conceptual Framework

## 2.4 Research Hypothesis

1) The service marketing mix factors have a statistically significant positive relationship with the purchase decision of used cars among consumers in Phuket.

2) The brand equity factors have a statistically significant positive relationship with the purchase decision of used cars among consumers in Phuket.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This research employed a quantitative approach to examine the factors influencing consumer decisions in purchasing used cars in Phuket. The study aimed to analyze relationships among service marketing mix factors, brand equity, and purchasing decision factors. The primary data collection method was the use of a structured questionnaire, designed and developed by the researcher based on theoretical frameworks, previous literature, academic texts, research articles, and relevant theses. The study was conducted systematically to ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected and to meet the research objectives.

#### **3.2 Population and Sample**

The population in this study consisted of consumers who purchased used cars from dealerships in Phuket Province. However, the exact size of this population is unknown and considered to be large and indefinite. Therefore, the sample size was determined using W.G. Cochran's formula, with a 95% confidence level and a  $\pm 5\%$  margin of error. The result of the calculation indicated that at least 385 samples were required. To ensure accuracy and minimize potential errors, the researcher rounded up the sample size to 400 respondents. The sampling method employed was purposive sampling, targeting individuals who had experience purchasing used cars in Phuket and were willing to provide relevant information for the study.

#### **3.3 Research Instruments**

The main research instrument used in this study was a self-constructed questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed based on theories and findings from literature reviews, academic publications, and previous studies relevant to consumer behavior, marketing, and brand value. The questionnaire consisted of five sections. Section 1 included screening questions to collect demographic data and purchasing behaviors. Section 2 assessed the respondents' opinions on service marketing mix factors using a 5-point Likert scale. Section 3 measured brand equity factors, also using a 5-point Likert scale. Section 4 evaluated the respondents' opinions regarding their purchasing decisions. Section 5 provided open-ended questions for additional comments, suggestions, and recommendations from the participants.

#### **3.4 Data Collection**

Data collection for this study was conducted from September 2024 to January 2025. The researcher initiated the process by submitting a request for data collection approval to the Business Administration Department, Faculty of Management Sciences, Phuket Rajabhat University. Upon receiving approval, the questionnaire was distributed through an online platform using a Google Forms link and QR code, allowing participants to access and complete the survey conveniently. After the data collection period ended, all returned questionnaires were screened for completeness and accuracy. Valid responses were then used for further data analysis.

#### **3.5 Statistics Used for Data Analysis**

The statistical analysis in this study was divided into two main parts: descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the respondents' demographic information, as well as their opinions on the service marketing mix, brand equity, and purchasing

decisions. The analysis employed measures such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. For inferential statistics, multiple regression analysis was applied to test the research hypotheses, specifically to explore the influence of service marketing mix and brand equity on consumer decision-making in the purchase of used cars in Phuket.

## **4. Data Analysis and Findings**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the quantitative data collected through the research instrument. The primary aim is to explore and evaluate the factors influencing consumers' decisions to purchase used cars in Phuket, Thailand. The analysis was conducted in alignment with the research objectives, focusing on two key aspects: (1) the influence of the service marketing mix on purchase decisions, and (2) the impact of brand equity on consumer behavior in the used car market. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic profile of respondents, including gender, age, education, marital status, occupation, income, car preferences, and purchasing behavior. The findings provide a clear picture of the sample characteristics and help contextualize the factors affecting consumer decisions. To examine the relationships between independent variables (i.e., components of the service marketing mix and brand equity) and the dependent variable (purchase decision), multiple regression analysis was employed. Prior to this, a correlation analysis was conducted to ensure the absence of multicollinearity among independent variables. The correlation values ranged between 0.268 and 0.648, which are within acceptable limits and confirm the suitability of variables for regression analysis. The regression analysis results are presented in two parts, corresponding to each research objective. Each analysis highlights the statistical significance of the independent variables and their relative influence on consumers' decisions. The results are interpreted using standardized beta coefficients, p-values, and the adjusted  $R^2$  values, offering insights into the extent to which the variables explain variations in purchase behavior. The findings from this analysis serve as a foundation for drawing conclusions and formulating recommendations in subsequent chapters.

### **4.2 Data Analysis of the Quantitative Data**

The research findings indicate that the majority of respondents were male (58.8%). Most were aged between 30-39 years (59.1%), followed by those aged 40-49 years (24.6%). The highest level of education among respondents was a bachelor's degree (51.4%), followed by secondary education/vocational certificate (34.5%). The majority were single (60%), followed by married individuals (29.3%). The most common occupation was business owner/self-employed (37%), followed by private company employees (35.5%). The highest proportion of respondents had a monthly income between 30,001-40,000 THB (31.8%), followed by those earning 20,001-30,000 THB (30.5%).

The most purchased type of car was an eco-car (68.2%), followed by a sedan (52.9%). The most preferred car brand was Honda (58.8%), followed by Toyota (51.4%). The most common car replacement period was 4-6 years (51.4%), followed by 7-10 years (24%). The highest budget for purchasing a new car per unit was 500,001-1,000,000 THB (51.1%), followed by 1,000,001-3,000,000 THB (22.3%).

This study used a quantitative research methodology to address Objectives 1 and 2. A correlation analysis was conducted between independent variables to ensure that their correlation did

not exceed 0.80, both positively and negatively. The obtained values ranged between 0.268 and 0.648, indicating that there were no issues of multicollinearity. Subsequently, multiple regression analysis was used to address Objectives 1 and 2.

Objective 1: The research findings revealed that the service marketing mix factors have a statistically significant positive relationship with consumers' decision to purchase used cars in Phuket, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** Results of Multiple Regression Analysis of Service Marketing Mix Factors Affecting Consumers' Decision to Purchase Used Cars in Phuket

Model	Purchase Decision				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.787	.142	.000	5.548	.000
Product	.288	.033	.113	2.657	.008
Price	.101	.032	.133	3.120	.002
Distribution Channels	.055	.028	.076	1.923	.055
Marketing Promotion	.145	.038	.171	3.832	.000
Physical Appearance	.167	.031	.215	5.347	.000
Service Process	.143	.029	.188	4.861	.000
Personnel	.116	.031	.151	3.728	.000
<b>R</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Adjust R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>SE(est.)</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
0.792	0.627	0.621	0.130	94.252	0.000

\*Indicates that the P-value < 0.05

From Table 1, it was found that service marketing mix factors have a statistically significant positive relationship with consumers' decision to purchase used cars in Phuket (p-value = 0.00). The service marketing mix factors can explain 62.1% of the variation in consumers' purchase decisions for used cars in Phuket (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.621).

Considering each component, product, price, marketing promotion, physical appearance, service process, and personnel all have a statistically significant positive relationship with consumers' decision to purchase used cars in Phuket (p-value < 0.05). Among these factors, physical appearance has the highest influence on purchase decisions, followed by service process, marketing promotion, personnel, price, and product, respectively.

Objective 2: The research findings indicate that brand equity has a statistically significant positive relationship with consumers' decision to purchase used cars in Phuket, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2** Results of Multiple Regression Analysis of Brand Equity's Positive Relationship with Consumers' Decision to Purchase Used Cars in Phuket

Model	Purchase Decision				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.122	.146	.000	7.675	.000
Brand Relationship	.268	.033	.324	8.132	.000
Brand Awareness	.170	.028	.235	6.190	.000
Perceived Quality	.142	.025	.221	5.614	.000
Brand Loyalty	.169	.029	.233	5.881	.000
<b>R</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Adjust R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>SE(est.)</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
0.753	0.568	0.563	0.140	129.66	0.000

\*Indicates that the P-value < 0.05

From Table 2, it was found that brand equity has a statistically significant positive relationship with consumers' decision to purchase used cars in Phuket (p-value = 0.00). Brand equity can explain 56.3% of the variation in consumers' purchase decisions for used cars in Phuket (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.563). When considering each component, brand relationship, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty all have a statistically significant positive relationship with consumers' decision to purchase used cars in Phuket (p-value < 0.05). Among these factors, brand relationship has the highest influence on purchase decisions, followed by brand loyalty, brand awareness, and perceived quality, respectively.

### 4.3 Summary of the Results

The results of the study provide valuable insights into consumer behavior in the used car market in Phuket. The demographic analysis showed that respondents came from diverse backgrounds in terms of age, education, marital status, occupation, and income. Most participants were working professionals with varying levels of education and income, reflecting a wide range of consumer perspectives. In terms of car purchasing behavior, eco-cars and sedans emerged as the most popular choices among buyers, with a strong preference for well-established car brands. Respondents typically considered replacing their cars within a moderate time frame and had a clear budget range in mind when making purchase decisions. The regression analysis addressing the first objective demonstrated that the service marketing mix significantly influenced consumers' decisions to purchase used cars. Specifically, factors such as physical appearance, service process, marketing promotion, and personnel had the strongest impact. This suggests that both tangible and service-related elements play a crucial role in shaping consumer preferences. For the second objective, the analysis confirmed that brand equity also had a significant positive relationship with purchase decisions. Components such as brand relationship, loyalty, awareness, and perceived quality were all influential, with brand relationship being the most impactful. Overall, the findings highlight that both marketing strategies and brand perception are key drivers in the decision-making process for used car buyers in Phuket.

## 5. Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendation

### 5.1 Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the impact of service marketing mix factors and brand equity on consumers' purchase decisions regarding used cars in Phuket. A total of 400 respondents who had purchased used cars from dealerships in Phuket were surveyed using a structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed using various statistical methods, including frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and multiple regression analysis. The findings showed that the majority of respondents were male, aged between 30–39 years, and held at least a bachelor's degree. Most were single or married and worked as business owners or employees in private companies, with a monthly income ranging from 30,001 to 40,000 baht. The most purchased car types were eco-cars and sedans, with Honda and Toyota as the most preferred brands. The average car replacement cycle was 4–6 years, and the purchasing budget typically ranged between 500,001 and 1,000,000 baht.

Hypothesis testing revealed that service marketing mix factors, including product, price, marketing promotion, physical evidence, service process, and personnel, were positively and significantly associated with consumers' purchase decisions. Similarly, brand equity factors, including brand association, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty, also showed a statistically significant positive relationship with purchase decisions. These findings highlight the critical role of both service strategies and brand perception in shaping consumer behavior in the used car market in Phuket.

### 5.2 Discussion

Regarding Objective 1, the study found that service marketing mix factors had a significant positive influence on used car purchasing decisions. Factors such as product characteristics, price fairness, promotional strategies, physical presentation, service process, and personnel competence were all significantly correlated with consumer decisions. Key considerations influencing buyer decisions included engine performance, suspension quality, accident-free body condition, parts availability, and after-sales service. Price consideration was strongly tied to perceived product quality. Moreover, the availability of information through online platforms, visual promotional materials, pre-sale inspections, and knowledgeable sales staff further reinforced buyer confidence. These findings are consistent with prior research, including the studies by Nattapong Srijaiwong and Thanom Kanit (2022) in Lampang, and Sophonwit Cheewanandadit and Praiphan Thanaleritsofit (2021) in Chiang Mai, both of which confirmed that marketing mix factors significantly impact consumer decisions in the used car sector.

In relation to Objective 2, brand equity also played a significant role in influencing purchase decisions. Among the brand equity components, brand relationship, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty all exhibited a strong positive correlation with consumer decisions. This outcome can be attributed to the long-standing presence and reputation of used car dealerships in Phuket, which have built trust among local consumers. Word-of-mouth recommendations and brand familiarity have further enhanced consumer confidence. These findings align with the study by Cheewapat Aatkan and Napawan Trepradit (2024), which examined the influence of marketing mix, brand equity, and technology acceptance on electric vehicle purchases in Chiang Mai. Their results also found marketing mix and brand equity to have significant impacts on consumer decisions, particularly at the 0.001 significance level.



### 5.3 Recommendation

#### 1) Recommendations for Applying the Research Findings

For Objective 1, the study revealed that service marketing mix factors are closely tied to used car purchasing decisions, especially physical characteristics. Therefore, used car businesses in Phuket should invest in enhancing the physical appeal of their vehicles and showrooms, such as by improving vehicle display areas, conducting thorough vehicle inspections, and offering detailed specifications. Businesses should also modernize their marketing approaches by promoting products on various digital platforms. In today's digital age, consumers frequently research and compare options online before making a decision. As such, boosting online visibility, providing detailed product descriptions, and maintaining active engagement on platforms like Google and social media can help increase consumer confidence and purchasing intent.

For Objective 2, brand equity, particularly brand relationship, was found to have a significant influence on consumer decisions. Used car businesses should therefore focus on strengthening relationships with customers. This includes maintaining consistent communication, offering personalized service, and creating loyalty programs to foster long-term connections. A strong emotional bond between customers and the brand can lead to increased trust, repeat purchases, and positive word-of-mouth. Collecting and acting on customer feedback can also help businesses continuously improve and meet customer expectations more effectively.

#### 2) Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should consider including additional independent variables beyond the service marketing mix and brand equity. Factors such as technological innovation, information systems, or service quality may also significantly influence purchasing decisions and should be explored. Additionally, this study was limited to consumers in Phuket Province. Expanding the research to include other provinces or conducting comparative studies across regions would provide broader insights into the factors influencing used car purchasing behavior in different local contexts.

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# **Research on Financial Risk Early Warning of Yunnan Aluminum Industry**

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### Abstract

Between 2019 and 2023, Yunnan Aluminum encountered fluctuating financial risks stemming primarily from persistent negative investment cash flows, unstable investment returns, and limited benefits from asset disposals. Despite a decline in capital expenditures, these costs continued to absorb substantial financial resources, highlighting inefficiencies in investment decisions and capital utilization. The company's moderate improvements in operational efficiency have not been sufficient to offset structural vulnerabilities. This study confirms that internal issues—particularly in investment planning and cash flow management—remain central to the company's financial risk exposure. Therefore, the establishment of a comprehensive, indicator-based early warning system is essential to improve financial stability and support strategic development in the long term. To address these issues, Yunnan Aluminum should pursue financial optimization across three key areas: financing, operations, and investment. In financing, reducing reliance on short-term debt and shifting toward long-term instruments will reduce liquidity pressure and enhance stability. Implementing dynamic cash flow monitoring will also allow for more effective treasury management. Operationally, the company should strengthen control over accounts receivable and inventory, optimize asset utilization, and improve capital turnover through lean management and better resource allocation. In terms of investment, rigorous project selection criteria and alignment with strategic priorities are essential. The company must focus on high-return investments and innovation, while curbing excessive or redundant spending. In light of these findings, it is recommended that Yunnan Aluminum restructure its debt portfolio to favor long-term financing, enhance liquidity monitoring systems, and reinforce operational processes. Capital expenditure should be strictly prioritized, and a real-time, data-driven financial risk early warning system should be implemented. This model will enable proactive risk identification and provide actionable insights for strategic decision-making. These combined measures will strengthen Yunnan Aluminum's financial resilience and competitiveness in a rapidly changing industrial environment, offering a model for similar resource-intensive enterprises.

**Keywords:** Financial Risk Management, Early Warning System, Investment Efficiency, Liquidity Optimization, Aluminum Industry

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Background and Importance of the Problem**

As China's economy shifts into a stage of high-quality development, enterprises face increasing challenges from both internal and external environments. Market volatility, evolving national economic policies, and tightening environmental regulations have created heightened financial risks, particularly in resource-intensive industries such as aluminum production. The aluminum industry, driven by investment expansion and capacity growth, is highly sensitive to supply-demand fluctuations, environmental restrictions, and international market dynamics. Yunnan Aluminum, a leading enterprise in the sector, is currently burdened by high levels of debt and capital pressure, raising concerns about its financial sustainability. Establishing a reliable and proactive financial risk early warning system is critical for ensuring the company's financial stability and long-term development. This study addresses a pressing need to build such a mechanism by analyzing Yunnan Aluminum's financial status and using risk modeling approaches, thereby contributing both theoretical and practical value to financial risk management in the industry.

### **1.2 Research Question**

What are the major financial risks currently faced by Yunnan Aluminum, and how can a financial risk early warning model be constructed to identify and mitigate these risks effectively?

### **1.3 Research Objective**

The objective of this study is to conduct a comprehensive financial risk assessment of Yunnan Aluminum and develop a scientific and data-driven financial risk early warning model. This model aims to identify potential financial risks using financial indicators and analytical tools, enabling timely detection and response. In doing so, the study seeks to:

- 1) Monitor and evaluate the financial health of Yunnan Aluminum using a structured indicator system.
- 2) Propose risk prevention strategies tailored to the company's financial context.
- 3) Offer theoretical contributions to the study of financial risk early warning systems, particularly within resource-intensive sectors.
- 4) Provide practical management guidance and risk control strategies that can be adopted by other enterprises in the aluminum industry to support their sustainable development.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Related Concepts and Theories**

Financial risk refers to the uncertainty and potential loss associated with a company's financial activities, such as financing, investment, and asset management. Theoretical foundations for understanding financial risk include Modern Portfolio Theory, Agency Theory, and Signal Theory. Modern Portfolio Theory emphasizes risk diversification, suggesting that spreading investments across various assets reduces exposure to financial loss. Agency Theory examines the

conflicts between management and shareholders, highlighting how poor governance can exacerbate financial risk. Signal Theory deals with how information asymmetry affects market behavior, emphasizing the role of transparency and accurate financial reporting in risk management.

In addition, Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) provides a comprehensive framework for identifying, assessing, and responding to all types of risks. The ERM framework integrates strategic planning, operations, and financial management into a unified risk control system. More recently, technological theories such as Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Diffusion of Innovation are relevant in understanding how digital tools (e.g., AI and big data analytics) are integrated into financial risk management.

## 2.2 Literature Surveys

A growing body of literature explores financial risk from both theoretical and empirical perspectives. According to Zhang et al. (2020), internal factors such as debt ratio, cash flow status, and inventory turnover significantly impact a company's risk level. External variables like policy shifts and macroeconomic instability also play critical roles (Li & Huang, 2019). With increasing digitization, studies such as Chen and Xu (2021) highlight how information asymmetry, resulting from inadequate data transparency, has become a new source of financial risk.

In terms of methodologies, early research relied on ratio analysis and discriminant analysis, like the Altman Z-score model (Altman, 1968). However, recent studies have introduced machine learning, neural networks, and deep learning algorithms to improve predictive capabilities (Liu et al., 2022). These models allow for real-time, dynamic forecasting of financial distress with improved precision.

Furthermore, the integration of big data analytics, blockchain, and AI into financial risk assessment frameworks is gaining scholarly attention. Studies by Wang & Sun (2022) found that AI-enhanced models significantly improve early warning accuracy. Nonetheless, a gap remains in sector-specific application and validation, particularly in resource-heavy industries like aluminum manufacturing, which face unique challenges related to environmental regulation and cyclical demand.

## 2.3 Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature review, the conceptual framework of this study integrates three core components:

- 1) Input Factors: Internal factors (e.g., governance quality, asset-liability structure) and external factors (e.g., policy shifts, market fluctuations).
- 2) Analytical Tools: Financial ratio analysis, big data analytics, and machine learning-based early warning models to assess financial risk.
- 3) Outcomes and Strategies: Risk identification, real-time monitoring, strategic responses, and improved financial decision-making.

This framework serves as a guide for evaluating financial risk in Yunnan Aluminum by aligning traditional financial analysis with modern digital tools and sector-specific challenges.

## 2.4 Research Hypothesis

Drawing from the conceptual framework and literature review, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Internal financial indicators (e.g., debt ratio, cash flow, ROA) significantly influence the financial risk level of Yunnan Aluminum.

H2: External environmental factors (e.g., policy changes, market volatility) have a measurable impact on financial risk.

H3: The application of data-driven early warning models (e.g., machine learning algorithms) enhances the accuracy and responsiveness of financial risk prediction.

H4: The integration of financial early warning mechanisms contributes to improved financial stability and operational efficiency in resource-intensive enterprises.

These hypotheses will be tested through empirical analysis to validate the effectiveness of the proposed financial risk early warning model for Yunnan Aluminum.

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design that integrates descriptive, analytical, and case study methodologies to evaluate and construct a financial risk early warning model for Yunnan Aluminum. The research process begins with financial ratio analysis to assess the company's debt-paying ability, liquidity, profitability, and capital management. Time series analysis is then applied to identify historical trends in financial indicators, offering insight into the evolution of financial health over time. Correlation analysis is utilized to detect and eliminate redundant or highly correlated indicators, ensuring the validity and scientific robustness of the model. Subsequently, the entropy method is employed to determine the weight of each financial indicator based on its degree of information variability. The functional coefficient method is used to synthesize the weighted indicators into a comprehensive risk score. Finally, the case study method is applied using Yunnan Aluminum's financial data from 2019 to 2023 to assess the model's practical applicability and validate its predictive performance.

### 3.2 Population and Sample

The population of this research includes Chinese enterprises within the aluminum industry that face similar financial and operational risks. Yunnan Aluminum was purposefully selected as the sample for this case study due to its leading role in the industry, substantial investment scale, and exposure to both internal financial stress and external market fluctuations. The financial data spanning from 2019 to 2023 were chosen to ensure the inclusion of both stable and volatile economic periods, thereby capturing dynamic changes in financial risk and enhancing the reliability of the study's findings.



### 3.3 Research Instruments

To support the analysis, a series of research instruments were employed. Financial ratio analysis tools, such as the current ratio, quick ratio, return on assets (ROA), return on equity (ROE), and debt-to-equity ratio, were used to evaluate the core financial dimensions of the company. Time series analysis helped identify evolving trends and potential risk signals in financial performance over multiple fiscal years. Correlation analysis was implemented to eliminate overlapping indicators, thus ensuring the independence and clarity of variables in the early warning model. The entropy method was chosen to objectively assign weights to indicators based on their informational entropy, improving the accuracy of indicator contribution. Finally, the functional coefficient method was used to combine the weighted indicators into a single, interpretable financial risk score, enabling a comprehensive evaluation of Yunnan Aluminum's financial status.

### 3.4 Data Collection

Data for this study were collected primarily from Yunnan Aluminum's publicly available financial reports, including audited annual reports, balance sheets, income statements, and cash flow statements covering the years 2019 to 2023. Supplementary data were obtained from industry databases, government publications, and macroeconomic reports to contextualize financial changes. All data were standardized and validated for consistency and accuracy prior to analysis. The use of five years of longitudinal data provides a solid empirical basis for assessing trends and verifying the predictive capacity of the financial risk early warning model.

### 3.5 Statistics Used for Data Analysis

Various statistical methods were employed to process and interpret the data effectively. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the values of key financial indicators and assess their variability over time. Time series analysis allowed the detection of long-term trends and cyclical patterns in financial performance. The Pearson correlation coefficient was applied to determine the strength of relationships among variables and eliminate multicollinearity. The entropy method provided an objective framework for weighting financial indicators based on their variability and informational content. Lastly, the functional coefficient method was used to aggregate the weighted indicators into a single financial risk index, which reflects the overall risk level of the enterprise. These integrated statistical techniques enabled a scientifically grounded and operationally useful early warning model.

## 4. Data Analysis and Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis and findings of the study on the financial risk early warning of Yunnan Aluminum, based on comprehensive financial data from 2019 to 2023. The analysis integrates quantitative methods such as ratio analysis, trend observation, correlation analysis, entropy method, and the functional coefficient method to assess the financial condition and risk level of the company. The goal is to identify potential risk signals, evaluate financial performance across key dimensions, profitability, operational efficiency, fundraising ability, and development capacity, and construct a practical and data-driven financial risk early warning system. The analysis begins with a review of Yunnan Aluminum's background, outlining its industrial role, strategic importance, and recent financial performance. This is followed by a detailed examination of key financial

statements, including the balance sheet, income statement, and cash flow statements from operating, investing, and financing activities. Next, the study introduces a preliminary set of financial risk indicators, which are refined using correlation and entropy weight analysis to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the final early warning model. Each financial dimension is then assessed individually to provide insight into Yunnan Aluminum's financial health and evolving risk profile. Scores calculated using the functional coefficient method allow for year-to-year comparisons and risk level categorization based on established benchmarks. The findings reveal both improvements and vulnerabilities in the company's financial structure and serve as the foundation for actionable recommendations in subsequent sections. This comprehensive data analysis not only validates the early warning model's applicability to Yunnan Aluminum but also provides meaningful guidance for broader application within the aluminum industry.

## 4.2 Data Analysis of the Quantitative Data

### 4.2.1 Current Status of Yunnan Aluminum Industry Development

Yunnan Aluminum was established in 1970 and joined Chinalco in 2019. It is one of the important enterprises in China's aluminum industry, with an integrated industrial chain of bauxite, alumina, electrolytic aluminum and aluminum processing. As a key state-owned enterprise in Yunnan Province, the company has domestic leading technology in aluminum smelting and processing, and has become an important player in the industry with its resource, environmental protection and market advantages. The company is committed to innovation-driven, continuously optimizing the industrial layout and enhancing global competitiveness.

### 4.2.2 Analysis of Yunnan Aluminum's Financial Data

**Table 1** Yunnan Aluminum's Main Financial Data from 2019 to 2023

Unit: 100 Million Yuan

Financial Metrics	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total Current Assets	90.67	60.51	53.61	82.46	98.63
Total Non-current Assets	305.12	349.67	324.77	308.14	294.47
Total Assets	395.79	410.19	378.37	390.60	393.10
Total Current Liabilities	205.15	173.53	98.36	90.47	60.86
Total Non-Current Liabilities	64.91	99.07	70.91	47.36	39.77
Total Liabilities	270.06	272.60	169.27	137.83	100.63
Total Owners' Equity (Shareholders' Equity)	125.74	137.59	209.10	252.77	292.47
Total Operating Income	242.84	295.73	417.51	484.63	426.69
Total Operating Costs	236.07	280.30	350.41	426.11	372.55
Operating Profit	5.83	13.70	47.38	59.05	55.42
Net Profit	5.45	12.34	42.29	52.68	47.19

**Source:** Yunnan Aluminum 2019-2023 Annual Report

Yunnan Aluminum optimized its asset and financial structure between 2019 and 2023, with an increase in current assets and a decrease in non-current assets, indicating that the company has improved the efficiency of capital use; liabilities have dropped significantly and financial leverage has been reduced; shareholders' equity has increased by 132%, and net profit has increased to 4.719 billion yuan, showing that the company has achieved remarkable results in improving operating efficiency and controlling costs.

**Table 2** Yunnan Aluminum's Cash Flow Statement from Financing Activities from 2019 to 2023

Unit: 100 Million Yuan					
Key Data	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Absorb cash from investment	30.07	0.63	30.49	0.00	-
Cash received from borrowing	116.16	165.25	58.85	41.40	0.70
Cash received from other financing activities	6.88	0.95	0.05	0.50	0.00
Subtotal of cash inflows from financing activities	153.11	166.84	89.38	41.90	0.70
Cash paid to repay debts	119.64	162.79	123.57	76.75	21.18
Cash paid as dividends, profits or interest payments	8.20	6.73	5.81	8.96	10.10
Payment for other financing activities	24.44	21.87	7.73	20.81	0.21
Subtotal of cash outflows from financing activities	152.27	191.39	137.11	87.79	31.50
Net cash flows from financing activities	0.84	-24.55	-47.73	-45.89	-30.80

**Source:** Yunnan Aluminum 2019-2023 Annual Report

Yunnan Aluminum's financing activities fluctuated significantly during the period of 2019-2023. From 2019 to 2020, the company obtained a large amount of cash inflow through large-scale borrowing and investment, but from 2021, borrowing and investment decreased, indicating that the company gradually reduced debt financing and optimized its capital structure. Debt repayment cash outflows have declined year by year since 2020, and net cash flow from financing has turned negative since 2020, indicating that the company has gradually relied on its own funds to support operations and achieve sound financial management.

**Table 3** Yunnan Aluminum's cash flow statement from operating activities from 2019 to 2023

Unit: 100 Million Yuan					
Key Data	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cash received from sales of goods and provision of services	226.68	281.08	319.67	441.23	412.21
Tax refunds received	0.87	2.44	0.55	1.45	0.00
Other cash received related to operating activities	3.31	3.48	2.90	2.13	3.76
Subtotal of cash inflow from operating activities	230.85	287.01	323.12	444.80	415.97
Cash paid for purchasing goods or receiving services	169.13	208.57	211.33	326.37	312.72
Cash payments to and for employees	15.33	15.96	18.55	20.27	19.84
Taxes and fees paid	7.65	10.05	21.31	25.27	20.74
Other cash payments related to operating activities	1.91	2.62	2.31	3.75	3.96
Subtotal of cash outflow from operating activities	194.02	237.20	253.50	375.65	357.26

Net cash flow from operating activities	36.84	49.81	69.62	69.15	58.71
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**Source:** Yunnan Aluminum 2019-2023 Annual Report

From 2019 to 2023, Yunnan Aluminum's operating cash flow grew steadily, especially in 2021 and 2022, with net cash flow of 6.962 billion yuan and 6.915 billion yuan respectively, mainly due to increased sales revenue. In 2023, due to the decline in sales to 41.221 billion yuan, net cash flow fell to 5.871 billion yuan. Although the company has improved its cost management, it still needs to pay attention to the risk of market fluctuations.

**Table 4** Financial Data of Cash Flow from Investment Activities of Yunnan Aluminum from 2019 to 2023

Unit: 100 Million Yuan

Key Data	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cash received from investment recovery	0.00	1.13	0.63	0.00	0.00
Cash received from investment income	0.01	2.87	0.05	0.02	0.03
Net cash received from disposal of fixed assets, intangible assets and other long-term assets	0.03	0.40	0.04	0.00	3.02
Other cash received related to investing activities	0.00	2.72	0.21	0.34	0.00
Subtotal of cash inflows from investing activities	0.04	7.15	0.92	0.37	3.05
Cash paid for the purchase and construction of fixed assets, intangible assets and other long-term assets	35.40	6.08	12.74	9.64	7.33
Cash paid for investment	0.00	9.61	0.00	0.09	0.87
Other cash payments related to investing activities	0.18	1.30	0.00	0.16	0.00
Subtotal of cash outflows from investing activities	35.58	16.98	12.74	10.70	8.20
Net cash flows from investing activities	-35.54	-9.83	-11.82	-10.33	-5.15

**Source:** Yunnan Aluminum 2019-2023 Annual Report

Yunnan Aluminum's cash flow from investment activities continued to be negative during the period of 2019-2023, indicating that the company has invested heavily in capital expenditures. Although the investment cash flow has improved in 2023, the overall return on investment is unstable, especially in 2023, when only short-term cash flow is obtained through the sale of non-core assets. The company made large-scale investments in 2019, and then gradually reduced capital expenditures to 733 million yuan in 2023, reflecting the adjustment of its investment strategy. Overall, the company's investment returns are low and the capital return is slow, and it needs to optimize investment management to improve the efficiency of capital use.

#### 4.2.3 Construction of Yunnan Aluminum's Financial Risk Early Warning System

Preliminarily screened 14 financial indicators are from four aspects: profitability, operation, financing and development.

**Table 5** Description of the Preliminary Selection Indicators

First Level Indicator	Early Warning Indicators	Calculation formula
Profitability Indicators	Return on net assets (%)	Net asset return rate = net profit / average owner's equity $\times$ 100% Average owner's equity = (total owner's equity at the beginning of the year + total owner's equity at the end of the year) / 2
	Operating income profit margin (%)	Operating income profit margin = operating profit / total operating income $\times$ 100%
	Return on total assets (%)	Return on total assets = EBIT/average total assets $\times$ 100% Average total assets = (total assets at the beginning of the year + total assets at the end of the year) / 2
	Surplus cash protection multiple	Surplus cash protection ratio = Net cash flow from operating activities / Net profit
Operational Capacity Indicators	Total asset turnover rate (times)	Total asset turnover rate = total operating income / average total assets
	Accounts receivable turnover rate (times)	Accounts receivable turnover rate = total operating income / average accounts receivable balance Average accounts receivable balance = (accounts receivable balance at the beginning of the year + accounts receivable balance at the end of the year) / 2 Accounts receivable balance = accounts receivable + bad debt provision for accounts receivable
	Current assets turnover rate (times)	Current asset turnover rate = total operating income / average current asset balance Average total current assets = (current assets at the beginning of the year + current assets at the end of the year) / 2
Fundraising Ability Indicators	Current ratio (%)	Current ratio = current assets/current liabilities $\times$ 100%
	Debt-to-asset ratio (%)	Debt-to-asset ratio = total liabilities/total assets $\times$ 100%
	Cash flow to debt ratio (%)	Cash flow to debt ratio = Net cash flow from operating activities / Current liabilities $\times$ 100%
Development Capacity Indicators	Operating income growth rate (%)	Operating income growth rate = (current year's operating income - previous year's operating income) / previous year's operating income
	Capital preservation and appreciation rate (%)	Capital preservation and appreciation rate = shareholders' equity at the end of the period / shareholders' equity at the beginning of the period $\times$ 100%
	Operating profit growth rate (%)	Operating profit growth rate = current period profit growth / previous period operating profit total $\times$ 100%
	Total assets growth rate (%)	Total assets growth rate = total assets growth / total assets at the beginning of the period $\times$ 100%

According to the annual report of Yunnan Aluminum Company, the original data of the preliminarily selected financial risk warning indicators were sorted out. The actual values of the preliminarily selected warning indicators from 2019 to 2023 are as follows:

**Table 6** List of Actual Values of Preliminary Selected Financial Risk Warning Indicators

First Level Indicator	Early Warning Indicators	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Profitability	Return on net assets (%)	1.25	2.34	6.10	5.70	4.33
	Operating income profit margin (%)	2.40	4.63	11.35	12.19	12.99
	Return on total assets (%)	1.55	3.37	11.89	15.36	14.15
	Surplus cash protection multiple	6.76	4.04	1.65	1.31	1.24
Operational Capacity	Total asset turnover rate (times)	0.68	0.73	1.06	1.26	1.09
	Accounts receivable turnover rate (times)	88.95	147.13	421.73	97.32	76.06
	Current assets turnover rate (times)	2.57	3.91	7.32	7.12	4.71
Fundraising Ability	Current ratio (%)	44.20	34.87	54.50	91.15	126.06
	Debt-to-asset ratio (%)	68.23	66.46	44.74	35.29	25.60
	Cash flow to debt ratio (%)	17.96	28.70	70.78	76.43	96.47
Development Capabilities	Operating income growth rate (%)	11.97	21.78	41.18	16.08	-11.96
	Capital preservation and appreciation rate (%)	173.74	118.08	139.22	107.58	120.75
	Operating profit growth rate (%)	-133.20	127.30	245.47	26.00	-6.15
	Total assets growth rate (%)	5.49	3.64	-8.41	3.23	0.64

The preliminary selected financial risk warning indicators of Yunnan Aluminum were screened through entropy method and correlation analysis. SPSS data statistical analysis software was used to conduct correlation analysis on the financial risk warning indicators of Yunnan Aluminum, and the correlation coefficients between the indicators were obtained. The entropy value and weight of each indicator were calculated using the entropy method, and the importance of each indicator was compared. The indicators were ranked according to their importance, and choices were made to screen out appropriate financial risk warning indicators. The indicators finally screened optimized the effectiveness and stability of the model and more accurately reflected the company's development capabilities. The final screened warning indicators are as follows:

**Table 7** Analysis of Weights of Financial Risk Warning Indicators of Yunnan Aluminum

First Level Indicator	Variable	Early Warning Indicators	Information Entropy Value e	Information Utility Value d	Weight (%)
Profitability	X1	Return on net assets (%)	0.792	0.208	7.115
	X2	Return on total assets (%)	0.764	0.236	8.057
	X3	Surplus cash protection multiple	0.521	0.479	16.386
Operational Capacity	X4	Total asset turnover rate (times)	0.742	0.258	8.805
	X5	Accounts receivable turnover rate (times)	0.460	0.540	18.460
Fundraising ability	X6	Current ratio (%)	0.687	0.313	10.710
	X7	Cash flow to debt ratio (%)	0.767	0.233	7.963
Development Capabilities	X8	Operating income growth rate (%)	0.831	0.169	5.779
	X9	Capital preservation and appreciation rate (%)	0.705	0.295	10.105
	X10	Operating profit growth rate (%)	0.806	0.194	6.620

In the process of constructing and studying the financial risk early warning system of Yunnan Aluminum, the entropy value and weight of the alternative early warning indicators were accurately calculated through correlation analysis and entropy weight method, thus constructing a complete early warning indicator system.

Taking into account various factors, this paper uses the functional coefficient method to calculate the financial risk warning score of Yunnan Aluminum.

**Table 8** Standard Values for Performance Evaluation of Large Industrial Enterprises in 2023

Index	Excellent Value	Good Value	Average Value	Lower Value	Poor Value
Return on net assets (%)	13.80	9.90	6.10	1.10	-5.60
Return on total assets (%)	8.40	5.70	4.00	0.20	-5.30
Surplus cash protection multiple	5.00	3.00	1.10	0.00	-2.10
Total asset turnover rate (times)	1.10	0.80	0.50	0.30	0.10
Accounts receivable turnover rate (times)	22.40	14.90	7.40	3.70	1.30
Current ratio (%)	1.40	1.10	0.80	0.60	0.40
Cash flow to debt ratio (%)	26.40	17.60	9.90	1.20	-12.90
Operating income growth rate (%)	26.70	19.90	9.70	-1.20	-10.40
Capital preservation and appreciation rate	110.00	106.20	104.00	98.70	93.80
Operating profit growth rate	23.0	11.20	-2.40	-16.50	-25.90



This article refers to the "Standard Values for Enterprise Performance Evaluation" and the "Implementation Rules for Comprehensive Performance Evaluation of Central Enterprises", and combines the financial characteristics and industry environment of Yunnan Aluminum to divide the financial risk warning intervals and set corresponding risk levels for each interval to help enterprises better identify and respond to financial risks.

**Table 9** Financial Risk Warning Interval of Yunnan Aluminum

Interval	Risk Status	Risk Level Description
[0.9, 1]	No Police	The financial situation is healthy, all indicators are good, and there is basically no financial risk. The company's profitability, debt repayment ability and operating capacity are all in an ideal state, and its finances are sound.
[0.7,0.9)	Light Police	The overall financial situation is stable, but some individual financial indicators fluctuate slightly, and the risk is relatively low. At this time, we should pay attention to monitoring to ensure that it does not deteriorate further.
[0.5,0.7)	Central Police	The financial situation is at medium risk, and some key financial indicators have become abnormal. Enterprises need to strengthen internal management and external financing to avoid further expansion of risks.
[0.3,0.5)	Heavy Police	The financial situation is poor, and many financial indicators are abnormal, indicating great financial pressure and potential risks. At this time, the company faces a high debt repayment risk and needs to adjust its financial strategy in time.
[0,0.3)	Giant Police	The financial situation is dire, with major anomalies in almost all financial indicators. The company may be on the verge of bankruptcy and must take immediate emergency measures to avoid a more serious financial crisis.

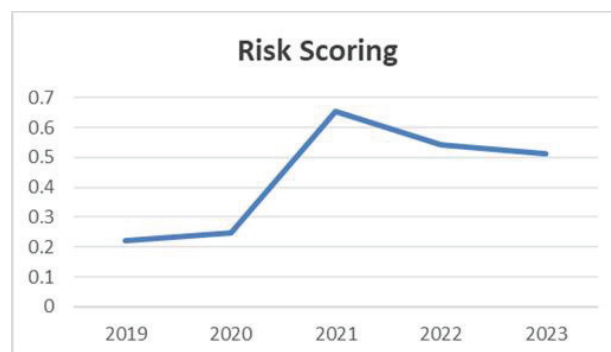
The financial risk score of Yunnan Aluminum is calculated according to the functional coefficient method. First, the original data is standardized.



**Table 10** Standardized Data of Financial Risk Indicators

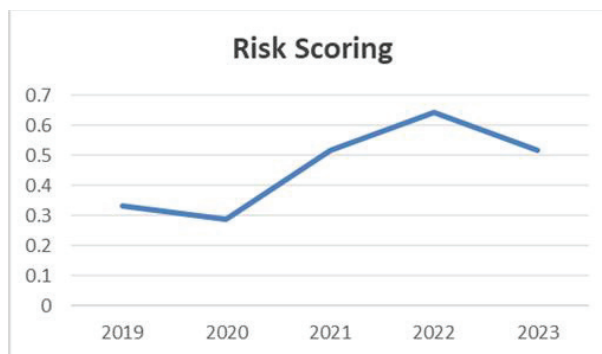
First Level Indicator	Variable	Early Warning Indicators	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Profitability	X1	Return on net assets (%)	0.000	0.225	1.000	0.918	0.635
	X2	Return on total assets (%)	0.000	0.132	0.479	1.000	0.912
	X3	Surplus cash protection multiple	1.000	0.507	0.074	0.013	0.000
Operational Capacity	X4	Total asset turnover rate (times)	0.000	0.086	0.655	1.000	0.707
	X5	Accounts receivable turnover rate (times)	0.037	0.206	1.000	0.062	0.000
Fundraising Ability	X6	Current ratio (%)	0.102	0.000	0.215	0.617	1.000
	X7	Cash flow to debt ratio (%)	0.000	0.137	0.673	0.745	1.000
Development Capabilities	X8	Operating income growth rate (%)	0.450	0.635	1.000	0.528	0.000
	X9	Capital preservation and appreciation rate (%)	1.000	0.159	0.478	0.000	0.199
	X10	Operating profit growth rate (%)	0.000	0.688	1.000	0.420	0.336

Then the data is calculated using the functional coefficient method. According to the calculation steps of the functional coefficient method, based on the actual data of financial indicators from 2018 to 2022, the comprehensive evaluation value of Yunnan Aluminum from 2018 to 2022 is calculated as shown in the following figure :



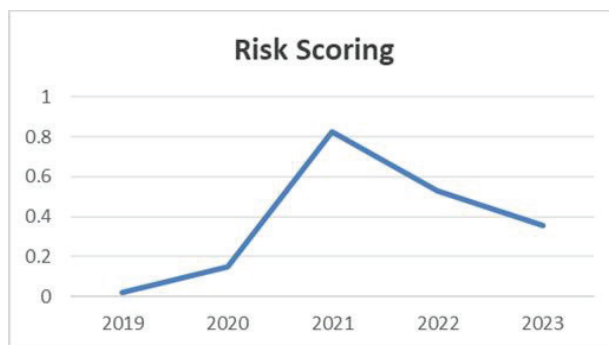
**Figure 1** Risk Assessment Score Chart for 2019-2023

As can be seen from the above figure, the financial risk scores of Yunnan Aluminum in the past five years from 2019 to 2023 are: 0.221 points, 0.249 points, 0.654 points, 0.543 points, and 0.512 points, and the corresponding risk levels are: Ju Jing, Ju Jing, Medium Jing, Medium Jing, and Medium Jing. Overall, the financial risk score of Yunnan Aluminum shows a fluctuating trend. The specific financial risk analysis at each level is as follows:



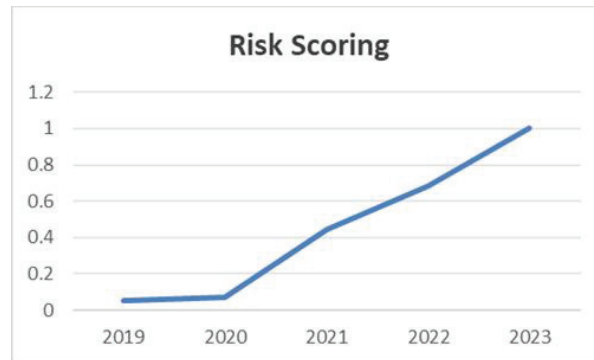
**Figure 2** Profitability Risk Assessment Score Chart from 2019 to 2023

Yunnan Aluminum's profitability fluctuated greatly between 2019 and 2023, with a financial risk score ranging from 0.288 to 0.644. The score was low from 2019 to 2020, with weak profitability, affected by the market environment and aluminum price fluctuations; it improved in 2021 and peaked in 2022, thanks to rising aluminum prices and improved operational efficiency; it fell slightly in 2023, affected by aluminum price fluctuations and unstable demand, and although the overall profitability improved, it faced instability risks.



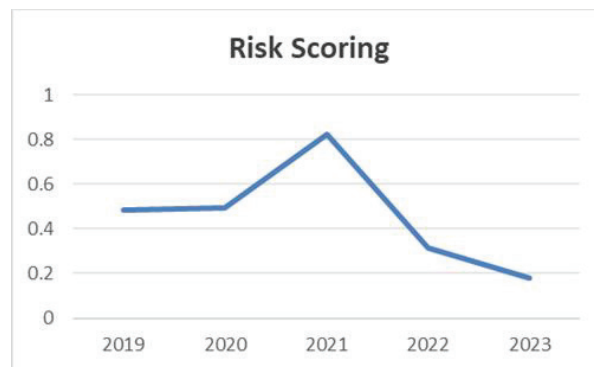
**Figure 3** 2019-2023 Operational Capacity Risk Assessment Score Chart

Yunnan Aluminum's operating capacity fluctuated greatly between 2019 and 2023. The low scores in 2019 and 2020 indicated poor asset utilization and poor receivables collection; the scores increased in 2021, indicating operational improvement; but the scores decreased in 2022 and 2023, reflecting the company's market volatility and management issues, and the need to optimize asset utilization and capital turnover.



**Figure 4** Fundraising Capacity Risk Assessment Score Chart 2019-2023

Yunnan Aluminum's financing ability has improved year by year between 2019 and 2023, and its financing risk has gradually decreased. Starting from 0.051 in 2019 and 0.0685 in 2020, the score rose to 0.444 in 2021, 0.681 in 2022, and reached 1.000 in 2023, indicating that the company's capital structure and debt-paying ability have been gradually optimized, and the financing risk has been reduced to the minimum.



**Figure 5** 2019-2023 Development Capacity Risk Assessment Score Chart

Yunnan Aluminum's development capability financial risk score fluctuated between 2019 and 2023, reaching 0.826 in 2021, and then dropped to 0.316 in 2022 and 0.178 in 2023, reflecting the company's declining development capability, which may be affected by market fluctuations, business bottlenecks or weakened capital appreciation capabilities. In summary, Yunnan Aluminum's financial risks showed a fluctuating trend between 2019 and 2023. Although its development capability improved in 2021, it declined significantly in 2022 and 2023. The company needs to strengthen risk management in response to market fluctuations and business expansion.

#### 4.3 Summary of the Results

The analysis of Yunnan Aluminum's financial data from 2019 to 2023 reveals a fluctuating yet gradually improving financial risk profile. The comprehensive risk scores calculated using the functional coefficient method indicate that the company experienced high financial risk levels in 2019 and 2020, categorized as "Giant Police," with scores of 0.221 and 0.249 respectively. These years were marked by weak profitability, heavy capital expenditures, and a heavy reliance on debt

financing. However, from 2021 onward, Yunnan Aluminum's financial performance improved, with risk scores entering the "Central Police" level, scoring 0.654 in 2021, 0.543 in 2022, and 0.512 in 2023. This indicates a reduction in financial risk, though moderate risk still persists. In terms of profitability, the company showed significant improvement in 2021 and 2022 due to rising aluminum prices and enhanced operational efficiency, but this trend slightly reversed in 2023 as market demand weakened. Operational capacity also saw a temporary peak in 2021, followed by a decline in 2022 and 2023, mainly due to reduced asset utilization and slower accounts receivable turnover. Meanwhile, financing ability consistently improved throughout the five-year period, as evidenced by better liquidity ratios and reduced reliance on external debt, culminating in a full score of 1.000 in 2023. Conversely, development capability, which reflects future growth potential, showed a worrisome downward trend after 2021, suggesting declining capital appreciation and profitability growth amid a more uncertain external environment. Overall, while Yunnan Aluminum made notable progress in optimizing its financial structure and improving its short-term liquidity and profitability, challenges remain in operational efficiency and long-term growth sustainability. These findings highlight the importance of continuous monitoring, strategic investment planning, and operational reforms to mitigate financial risks and support stable development. The early warning model developed in this study has proven effective in capturing shifts in financial risk and offers a reliable tool for proactive financial management.

## **5. Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendation**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

From 2019 to 2023, Yunnan Aluminum experienced fluctuating financial risks, primarily reflected in sustained negative cash flow from investment activities, inconsistent returns on investment, and limited gains from asset disposals. Despite a reduction in capital expenditures during the period, these investments continued to tie up significant financial resources, suggesting inefficiencies in capital utilization and shortcomings in investment decision-making. While some operational adjustments were made, the company's financial risk profile indicates an urgent need for systematic improvements in financial management. The findings of this study confirm that internal weaknesses, particularly in investment and cash flow management, are critical contributors to Yunnan Aluminum's financial vulnerability. Therefore, building a comprehensive and data-driven early warning system is vital for enhancing financial stability and supporting long-term strategic development.

### **5.2 Discussion**

In order to mitigate financial risk and enhance financial resilience, Yunnan Aluminum should take a multi-pronged approach focusing on financing, operations, and investment management. From a financing perspective, the company should reduce reliance on short-term debt, which poses liquidity risk, and shift toward long-term financing arrangements to better align debt maturity with capital usage. Optimizing financing costs and implementing a dynamic cash flow monitoring mechanism are essential for maintaining sufficient working capital and responding quickly to market changes. Operationally, improving the management of accounts receivable and inventories, enhancing asset utilization, and increasing capital turnover can strengthen the company's liquidity. Measures such as accelerating receivables collection, adopting lean production principles, and optimizing resource allocation will further improve operational efficiency. In the area of investment, stricter control over capital expenditures is needed. Yunnan Aluminum should prioritize high-yield projects, focus on core business profitability, and reinforce investments in technological upgrades

and innovation to boost long-term competitiveness and returns. This holistic strategy not only addresses existing weaknesses but also lays the groundwork for sustainable growth under increasingly volatile market conditions.

### 5.3 Recommendation

To improve its financial position and reduce risk exposure, Yunnan Aluminum should adopt the following recommendations. First, restructure the company's debt portfolio by increasing the share of long-term financing and minimizing short-term borrowing to ease repayment pressure and stabilize liquidity. Second, establish a real-time cash flow monitoring system and enhance treasury functions to maintain optimal working capital levels. Third, refine operational processes by strengthening accounts receivable control, accelerating turnover of inventories, and increasing efficiency in asset utilization. Fourth, re-evaluate capital investment strategies by focusing on projects with clearly defined returns and alignment with long-term strategic goals, while avoiding low-yield or redundant capital deployments. Lastly, institutionalize a financial risk early warning system based on dynamic indicators and data-driven models, ensuring the company can proactively detect, evaluate, and respond to financial threats. Through these integrated financial, operational, and strategic adjustments, Yunnan Aluminum can build a more robust financial foundation and better navigate uncertainties in the business environment.

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**A Study on the Impact and Mechanism of Tourism  
Destination Image Contrast on Tourists' Travel Intentions,  
based on the Mediating Role of Psychological Perception**

by

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### **Abstract**

Destination image plays a central role in shaping tourist behavior and influencing travel decisions. While much of the extant literature has focused on the cognitive and affective dimensions of destination image, this study introduces the novel concept of image disparity, the psychological gap between a tourist's perception of a destination and their place of origin. Specifically, it investigates two types of image disparity: climate image disparity and cultural image disparity, and how these contrasts affect travel intention. Drawing on dual-pathway psychological mechanisms, novelty and threat, the study employs a series of experiments to examine how image disparity influences tourist motivation and decision-making. A two-phase experimental design was implemented. In Experiment 1, climate image contrast was manipulated, and novelty perception was assessed as a mediating variable. Results revealed that destinations with high climate image contrast significantly increased tourists' travel intentions through enhanced perceptions of novelty. In Experiment 2, cultural image contrast was manipulated, and threat perception was introduced as a mediator. Findings showed that high cultural image contrast significantly decreased travel intentions, with threat perception acting as a negative mediator. Across both experiments, tourist involvement served as a moderating variable. High-involvement tourists responded more favorably to climate contrast and managed cultural threats more effectively, whereas low-involvement tourists exhibited stronger threat perceptions and weaker novelty responses. This research advances theoretical understanding of destination image by demonstrating that image contrast is not inherently positive or negative. Its influence is shaped by the type of contrast, the psychological pathways it activates, and individual levels of involvement. Practical implications include the need for segmented marketing strategies tailored to audience involvement and contrast type. Climate-different destinations should emphasize novelty and adventure, while culturally distinct destinations must reduce perceived risk through reassurance and cultural preparation. The study concludes by recommending future research into other dimensions of image disparity and their implications for travel behavior and destination loyalty.

**Keywords:** Image Disparity, Climate Image Contrast, Cultural Image Contrast, Travel Intention, Tourist Involvement

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background and Importance of the Problem

Destination selection plays a critical role in shaping tourist behavior, directly affecting decisions related to transportation, accommodation, budgeting, and overall travel planning (Song et al., 2016). While much of the existing research has examined destination image through its cognitive and affective dimensions, relatively little attention has been paid to the potential mismatch between a tourist's expectations and their perception of the destination, what this study refers to as "Image Disparity." This concept highlights the psychological dissonance that may occur when there is a significant gap between how a destination is imagined and how it is experienced or perceived in contrast to the tourist's place of origin. By focusing specifically on climate image disparity and cultural image disparity, this study aims to explore how such mismatches influence travel decision-making, a topic that remains underexplored in the literature. Addressing this gap is essential for both theoretical development and the creation of more effective destination marketing strategies.

### 1.2 Research Question

This study seeks to answer the following primary research questions:

- 1) How does a significant disparity in climate or cultural image between a tourist destination and the tourist's place of residence influence travel intention?
- 2) Do these effects occur through mediating perceptions, such as novelty or threat?
- 3) Does the level of tourist involvement moderate the influence of image disparity on travel intention?

### 1.3 Research Objective

The objective of this research is to investigate the psychological and behavioral mechanisms through which climate and cultural image disparities impact tourists' travel intentions. Specifically, the study aims to:

- 1) Introduce and define the concept of image disparity within the context of destination image perception.
- 2) Examine whether perceptions of novelty or threat mediate the relationship between image disparity and travel intention.
- 3) Determine whether tourist involvement moderates the effects of image disparity on travel intention.

By achieving these objectives, the study contributes to the theoretical understanding of destination image and offers practical insights for more targeted and effective destination marketing.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Related Concepts and Theories

#### 2.1.1 Tourism Destination Image Perception

Tourism destination image perception refers to the overall impression tourists form about a destination, shaped not only by objective facts but also by subjective psychological representations influenced by individual cognition, emotions, and values (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993). Early research primarily focused on the cognitive dimension, emphasizing perceptions of tangible attributes like geography, climate, and infrastructure (Hunt, 1971). However, subsequent studies acknowledged the importance of emotions in image formation. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) proposed the well-known cognitive-affective model, which includes cognitive image (beliefs about attributes), affective image (emotional responses), and the overall image. Further developments integrated factors such as existing knowledge, information sources, and personal preferences (Gallarza et al., 2002). Additional dimensions like social, environmental, and cultural images were later introduced (Stylidis et al., 2017), and researchers identified significant links between destination image and tourist satisfaction, loyalty, and word-of-mouth (Han et al., 2015).

#### 2.1.2 Tourism Destination Image Disparity

Image disparity refers to the significant difference between tourists' expectations and their perceived image of a destination (Kozak, 2002; Prayag et al., 2013). This disparity can manifest in both cognitive and affective dimensions, such as climate and culture (Zhang et al., 2012; Liu, 2013). Notably, climate image disparity involves perceptions of temperature, precipitation, and seasonal comfort (Yang, 2020), while cultural image disparity reflects differences in lifestyles, customs, and values (Zhang, 2012; Wang et al., 2021).

#### 2.1.3 Novelty Perception

Novelty perception refers to the psychological excitement of encountering unfamiliar experiences, often marked by curiosity and exploration (Berlyne, 1960). In tourism, it serves as a key motivator for travel behavior (Cohen, 1972). According to the optimal arousal theory, individuals seek stimulation through novel experiences (Zuckerman, 1964), and unfamiliar destinations can enhance travel intention through perceived novelty (Zhou et al., 2015; Wang, 2020).

#### 2.1.4 Threat Perception

Threat perception involves the recognition and evaluation of potential dangers, combining both cognitive and emotional responses (Fischhoff et al., 2011). In tourism, it reflects concerns about unfamiliar environments, including cultural and safety-related risks (Renfro et al., 2006; Yang, 2016). Such perceptions may suppress travel intentions, especially among risk-averse tourists (Meng et al., 2012; Gui et al., 2011).

#### 2.1.5 Tourist Involvement

Tourist involvement describes the personal relevance and cognitive-emotional investment that tourists allocate to travel decisions (Zaichkowsky, 1985). It encompasses cognitive, affective, and behavioral components (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985), as well as product, situational, and enduring

involvement (Richins & Bloch, 1986). Higher involvement leads to deeper evaluation of destinations, affecting how tourists process image disparity (Liu, 2019; Yuan, 2022).

## 2.2 Literature Surveys

### 2.2.1 Climate Image Disparity and Travel Intention

Climate is a critical factor influencing tourist decision-making and destination preference. Climate image disparity refers to the perceived gap between the climatic conditions of a tourist's origin and those of the destination. According to Yang (2020), comfort is a major pursuit in leisure travel, and climate differences, such as temperature, humidity, and sunlight, can significantly influence tourists' intentions. Tourists often seek destinations with contrasting climates to escape extreme conditions at home, such as traveling to warm places in winter or cooler areas in summer (Jang, Morrison, & O'Leary, 2006; Li, 2015). This contrast creates a sense of novelty and desire for different experiences. However, extreme climatic differences may also cause discomfort or anxiety, negatively affecting the travel decision. Therefore, the influence of climate image disparity on travel intention can be twofold, either positive or negative, depending on the tourist's expectations and preferences.

### 2.2.2 Cultural Image Disparity and Travel Intention

Culture is another key dimension of a destination's image and plays an essential role in motivating travel. Cultural image disparity refers to the difference between the cultural elements of a destination and a tourist's home culture, including language, customs, religion, and social norms. Tourists often seek exposure to different cultures to satisfy curiosity and cultural enrichment needs (Peng et al., 2022; Tang et al., 2018). The concept of "cultural distance" is commonly used to quantify such differences (Wang et al., 2021). However, as Lepp et al. (2011) noted, large cultural differences can also heighten tourists' perceptions of risk, including unfamiliarity and uncertainty, which may discourage travel. High cultural image disparity may lead to increased psychological resistance (Lu et al., 2017; Han et al., 2015). Therefore, while cultural contrast can generate interest, it can also serve as a psychological barrier, particularly among risk-averse tourists.

### 2.2.3 The Mediating Role of Novelty Perception

Novelty perception is a psychological response to new and unfamiliar stimuli, often associated with curiosity, exploration, and excitement (Berlyne, 1960). In the tourism context, novelty is a primary motivation driving individuals to choose new destinations and experiences (Cohen, 1972). The Optimal Arousal Theory supports the idea that tourists seek a moderate level of arousal, which can be achieved through exposure to novel environments (Zuckerman, 1964). Research by Zhou et al. (2015) shows that destinations with high image contrast can arouse a strong sense of novelty, especially among adventure-seeking tourists. Wang (2020) further demonstrated that perceived differences between expectation and actual experience stimulate novelty perception, which can significantly boost travel intention. Therefore, novelty perception acts as a positive mediator between climate image disparity and travel intention.

### 2.2.4 The Mediating Role of Threat Perception

In contrast to novelty, threat perception reflects a negative psychological response to perceived risks, often caused by unfamiliar or unsafe conditions (Fischhoff et al., 2011). In tourism, this can include concerns about political stability, language barriers, or cultural misunderstanding.

Tourists generally prefer safe and predictable environments. When cultural differences are large, tourists may experience threat perception stemming from fears of social rejection, discrimination, or cultural faux pas (Renfro et al., 2006; Yang, 2016). Sirakaya et al. (1996) pointed out that lack of trust in a destination's cultural or political environment can reduce tourists' willingness to visit. Therefore, threat perception is a negative mediator between cultural image disparity and travel intention.

### *2.2.5 The Moderating Role of Tourist Involvement*

Tourist involvement refers to the level of personal relevance and psychological engagement in tourism decision-making (Zaichkowsky, 1985). High-involvement tourists tend to invest more time in researching destinations and are more motivated by novelty (Lee & Crompton, 1992). Liu and Yuan (2022) found that these tourists are more receptive to image disparities and are capable of managing perceived risks more rationally. Conversely, low-involvement tourists often rely on basic information and exhibit less willingness to tolerate uncertainty. Liu et al. (2021) showed that high-involvement tourists mitigate threat perception through proactive information seeking, while low-involvement tourists tend to react emotionally. Therefore, tourist involvement moderates both the positive influence of novelty and the negative influence of threat perception on travel intention.

## **2.3 Conceptual Framework**

Based on prior literature and theoretical insights, this study constructs a conceptual framework to explain how tourism destination image disparities, specifically in climate and culture, affect tourists' travel intentions. The framework integrates image perception, novelty perception, threat perception, and tourist involvement to analyze the psychological mechanisms driving tourism behavior.

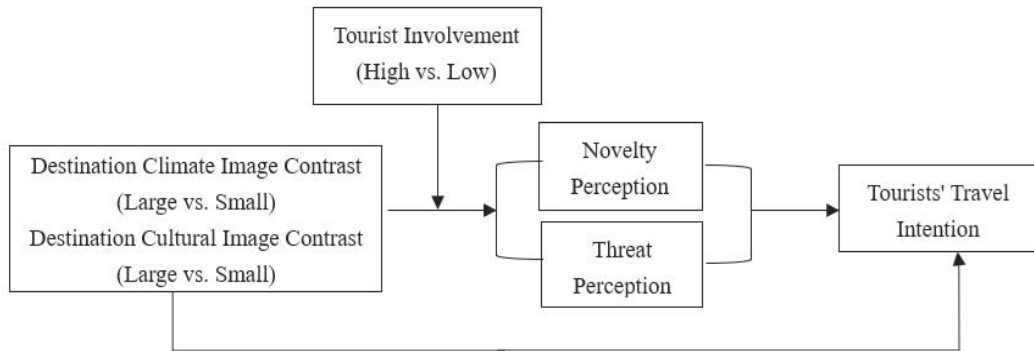
First, climate image disparity refers to the perceived contrast between the climate of a tourist's origin and that of the destination. Research shows that such contrast may positively influence travel intention by evoking novelty perception (Yang, 2020; Wang, 2020). Conversely, cultural image disparity refers to perceived cultural differences, which may increase threat perception and negatively affect travel intention (Wang et al., 2021; Yang, 2016).

Second, novelty perception functions as a positive mediator between climate image disparity and travel intention. Tourists are often driven by the desire to explore new environments and experiences (Cohen, 1972; Zuckerman, 1964). When tourists perceive a destination's climate to be significantly different, they may feel more excited and curious, increasing their intention to visit.

Third, threat perception acts as a negative mediator between cultural image disparity and travel intention. Tourists may perceive high cultural differences as risky or uncomfortable, especially when they lack prior knowledge or adaptive skills (Fischhoff et al., 2011; Renfro et al., 2006).

Lastly, tourist involvement is proposed as a moderator in the model. Tourists with high involvement, who actively seek information and critically evaluate options, are more likely to respond positively to novelty and to manage cultural threats rationally (Zaichkowsky, 1985; Liu & Yuan, 2022). Low-involvement tourists, on the other hand, are more sensitive to risk and less stimulated by novelty.

In summary, the overall research framework for this study is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1** Conceptual Framework

## 2.4 Research Hypothesis

In alignment with the conceptual framework, the following hypotheses are proposed:

### H1: Direct Effect of Image Disparity on Travel Intention

- H1a: Compared to destinations with smaller climate image disparity, destinations with greater climate image disparity will positively influence tourists' travel intention.
- H1b: Compared to destinations with smaller cultural image disparity, destinations with greater cultural image disparity will significantly reduce tourists' travel intention.

### Mediating Role of Novelty Perception

H2: Novelty perception mediates the relationship between climate image disparity and tourists' travel intention.

- H2a: Novelty perception positively promotes tourists' travel intention.
- H2b: Compared to small climate image disparity, large climate image disparity is more likely to enhance tourists' novelty perception.

### Mediating Role of Threat Perception

H3: Threat perception mediates the relationship between cultural image disparity and tourists' travel intention.

- H3a: Threat perception negatively affects tourists' travel intention.
- H3b: A greater cultural image disparity in the tourism destination will enhance tourists' threat perception compared to a smaller cultural image disparity.

### Moderating Role of Tourist Involvement

H4: Tourist involvement moderates the relationship between destination image disparity and tourist perception.

- H4a: When tourist involvement is high, the greater the climate image disparity, the more it strengthens tourists' novelty perception; this moderating effect is less significant when involvement is low.
- H4b: When tourist involvement is high, the greater the cultural image disparity, the more it weakens tourists' threat perception; when involvement is low, the greater the cultural image disparity, the more it enhances threat perception.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study adopts a quantitative research design utilizing a cross-sectional survey method to investigate the relationship between image disparity and tourists' travel intentions. The design integrates both causal and correlational approaches to explore how climate and cultural image disparities influence travel decisions through psychological mechanisms. By employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), the study can examine complex relationships among variables, including direct, mediating, and moderating effects. This approach ensures a robust analytical framework capable of testing the theoretical propositions presented in the research objectives.

#### **3.2 Population and Sample**

The population targeted in this study includes international tourists aged 18 and older who have previously engaged in overseas travel or plan to travel internationally within the next 12 months. To ensure that respondents can meaningfully evaluate differences between their place of residence and travel destinations, purposive sampling is applied. A sample size of 400 respondents is determined based on the recommended minimum for SEM, which requires at least 10 respondents per estimated parameter. This sample size provides sufficient statistical power to generalize the findings across diverse demographic and geographic groups of international tourists.

#### **3.3 Research Instruments**

The main research instrument is a structured questionnaire divided into five key sections. The first section collects demographic data such as age, gender, country of origin, and travel experience. The second section measures perceived climate and cultural image disparity using Likert-scale items adapted from previous studies on destination image. The third section assesses perceptions of novelty and threat, serving as mediators in the study. The fourth section evaluates tourist involvement using the Personal Involvement Inventory (PII). The final section measures travel intention using items based on the Theory of Planned Behavior. To ensure content validity, tourism and marketing experts will review the instrument, and a pilot test with 30 participants will be conducted to confirm internal consistency with a target Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 or higher.

#### **3.4 Data Collection**

Data will be collected through online surveys distributed via travel-related forums, social media platforms, and international tourism networks. Platforms such as Qualtrics and Google Forms will be used for ease of access and data management. The survey will be promoted to attract participants from both Western and Asian countries to ensure cultural diversity and representation. The data collection period will span approximately six weeks, allowing sufficient time to gather responses and monitor data quality. Participation will be voluntary, and anonymity will be maintained to adhere to ethical research standards.

#### **3.5 Statistics Used for Data Analysis**

The data analysis process will begin with descriptive statistics to summarize participant demographics and key variable distributions, including means, standard deviations, and frequency percentages. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) will be conducted to assess the validity and reliability of measurement constructs. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will then be employed to



test the hypothesized relationships among image disparity, mediating perceptions (novelty and threat), and travel intention. Moderated mediation analysis will also be conducted using tools such as the PROCESS macro in SPSS or SmartPLS to examine the moderating role of tourist involvement. All analyses will be performed with a significance level of 0.05 to ensure the reliability and robustness of the results.

## 4. Data Analysis and Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis and findings of the study, which was conducted in three main stages: a pre-experiment for manipulation validation, followed by two formal experiments examining the psychological mechanisms through which climate and cultural image contrasts influence tourists' travel intentions. The core aim of the analysis is to test the hypothesized relationships involving image contrast, mediating perceptions (novelty and threat), and the moderating role of tourist involvement. In the pre-experimental stage, the focus was on verifying whether the manipulated stimuli successfully evoked distinct perceptions of climate and cultural image contrast. This stage ensured that the experimental materials were valid and reliable for use in the formal experiments. Experiment 1 explored the influence of climate image contrast and tourist involvement on novelty perception and travel intention, using a 2×2 between-subjects design. Statistical analyses including reliability and validity tests, manipulation checks, direct effect tests, mediation analysis, and moderation tests were performed to validate the proposed hypotheses. Experiment 2 replicated the structure of Experiment 1 but replaced climate image contrast with cultural image contrast, and novelty perception with threat perception as the mediating variable. This experiment also applied a 2×2 between-subjects design and examined the direct, mediating, and moderating effects in the context of cultural image disparity. Through these experiments, the study provides empirical evidence supporting the concept of image disparity and its psychological consequences in travel decision-making. The results offer theoretical insights into how destination image contrast shapes tourist perceptions and behavioral intentions, as well as practical implications for destination marketers aiming to manage tourist expectations and tailor marketing strategies based on visitor involvement levels.

### 4.2 Data Analysis of the Quantitative Data

#### 4.2.1 Pre-Experimental Design and Testing

In the pre-experimental phase, approximately 100 initial questionnaires were distributed, with 50 participants randomly assigned to each group, high contrast and low contrast. In the high contrast group, 26 males (52%) and 24 females (48%) participated, while in the low contrast group, 25 males (50%) and 25 females (50%) participated. Participants in both groups first read the manipulated materials regarding climate and cultural image contrast, and then completed the relevant image perception questionnaires.

1) Pre-Experimental Item Analysis: The manipulation check items for destination image contrast showed significant results at the  $p < 0.001$  level, indicating statistical significance. Furthermore, the average scores for the high contrast group were higher than those for the low contrast group, satisfying the requirements for item analysis.



2) Reliability and Validity Testing: The overall reliability for the climate image contrast variable was  $\alpha = 0.816$ , with the CAID  $< 0.816$ , which is not higher than the corresponding variable's reliability. The overall reliability for the cultural image contrast variable was  $\alpha = 0.800$ , with the CAID  $< 0.800$ , also not higher than the corresponding variable's reliability. The overall KMO for the scale was  $0.818 (> 0.7)$ , and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant at  $p < 0.001$ , indicating that the items are significantly related to the variables. The overall reliability of the questionnaire met the requirements for analysis, and the scale was highly suitable for factor analysis.

3) Pre-Experimental Manipulation Check: The high contrast experimental group had higher perceived climate contrast ( $M = 4.97$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ,  $T = 3.835$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ) compared to the low contrast group ( $M = 4.23$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ). Similarly, the high contrast experimental group had higher perceived cultural contrast ( $M = 5.41$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ,  $T = 5.372$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ) compared to the low contrast group ( $M = 4.48$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ). Therefore, the experimental materials in this study demonstrate good discriminative power and are capable of reflecting different levels of experimental manipulation.

The results of the pre-experiment indicate that after operationalizing the climate and cultural image contrast of tourism destinations, participants demonstrated good differentiation across the items in the questionnaire. The reliability of the survey results was satisfactory, and the experimental materials effectively produced valid manipulation outcomes, making them suitable for use in subsequent formal experimental stages.

#### 4.2.2 Experiment 1

##### Experimental Design and Procedure

To further examine the impact of the interaction between high (low) climate image contrast and high (low) involvement on travel intention, the formal experiment employed a 2 (High Climate Image Contrast vs. Low Climate Image Contrast) \* 2 (High Involvement vs. Low Involvement) between-subjects experimental design. Participants were recruited through a paid recruitment platform, and a total of 200 valid samples were obtained, with a 100% response rate. Of the participants, 98 were male (49%) and 102 were female (51%). The participants were randomly assigned to one of four groups. In Experiment 1, the climate image contrast stimuli from the pre-experiment were selected. The experimental scenario and process were consistent with the pre-experiment, with the following differences in the questionnaire:

Involvement Manipulation Check: This manipulation was based on Zaichkowsky's (1985) PII Scale and Dwarika's (2012) Shopping Involvement Scale. The PII Scale, based on involvement theory in psychology, measures consumer involvement with specific products, brands, or situations. The Shopping Involvement Scale, based on the multidimensional theory of shopping involvement, recognizes that shopping behavior involves not only emotions and interest but also planning, time investment, and information search. The items in this study were slightly modified from the original scales: 1. "You have carefully read the above material and believe in its authenticity." 2. "You are willing to spend time learning more related information." 3. "You feel that a drastically different travel experience better reflects your personality." 4. "You would actively seek information on available alternative options."

Novelty Perception and Travel Intention: Novelty perception was measured using a tool adapted from Lee & Crompton (1992), based on motivation theory and tourism behavior research, which views novelty as a significant motivation driving tourism choices. Items were adjusted as follows: 1. "The destination in the material makes you feel intrigued." 2. "You are curious to experience this different climate." Travel intention was assessed using common items: 1. "You would

like to try a travel experience different from your place of residence."2."You would recommend this destination to family or friends."3."You are willing to visit this destination."4."You are willing to visit this destination within the next 12 months."All items used a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated strong disagreement and 7 indicated strong agreement.

### Experimental Results and Analysis

#### 1) Reliability and Validity Analysis

Reliability tests were conducted on the survey results from Experiment 1. The reliability coefficients were as follows: Involvement ( $\alpha = 0.916$ ), Climate Image Contrast ( $\alpha = 0.871$ ), Novelty Perception ( $\alpha = 0.894$ ), and Travel Intention ( $\alpha = 0.798$ ). All values were higher than the reliability coefficients obtained after deleting the corresponding items (CAID), indicating that the items in the questionnaire met the reliability requirements. The overall KMO value for the survey results was 0.833 ( $> 0.7$ ), and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant at  $p < 0.001$ . The cumulative variance explained by the four factor components reached 76.931%, which represents the majority of the variance, and the validity test results met the analytical requirements.

#### 2) Experimental Manipulation Check

A 2 (High Involvement vs. Low Involvement) \* 2 (High Climate Image Contrast vs. Low Climate Image Contrast) between-subjects interaction experimental design was implemented, and an independent samples t-test was used to compare the means of the different levels of the two variables. The results showed that the mean for the High Involvement group ( $M = 4.89$ ) was significantly higher than that of the Low Involvement group ( $M = 3.81$ ,  $t = -7.271$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). Similarly, the mean for the High Climate Image Contrast group ( $M = 5.21$ ) was significantly higher than that of the Low Climate Image Contrast group ( $M = 3.83$ ,  $t = -9.230$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). These results indicate that the experimental manipulation was effective and successfully evoked different perceptions of the experimental materials among the participants.

**Table 1** Variable Manipulation Check

Variable	Experimental Manipulation	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	p
Involvement	Low Involvement	3.81	1.14	-7.271	<0.001
	High Involvement	4.89	0.97		
Climate Image Contrast	Low Contrast	3.83	1.01	-9.230	<0.001
	High Contrast	5.21	1.10		

#### 3) Direct Effect Test

In the Climate Image Contrast groups, under manipulation, the High Contrast group had significantly higher travel intention scores than the Low Contrast group ( $M$  High Contrast =  $5.03 \pm 0.71$ ,  $M$  Low Contrast =  $4.42 \pm 0.83$ ,  $t = -5.535$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Therefore, compared to a low climate image contrast, a high climate image contrast significantly increases tourists' travel intention, supporting the original hypothesis H1 and H1a.

The High Contrast group had higher novelty perception scores than the Low Contrast group ( $M$  High Contrast =  $5.01 \pm 1.17$ ,  $M$  Low Contrast =  $4.45 \pm 1.33$ ,  $t = -3.156$ ,  $p = 0.002 < 0.01$ ). Thus, compared to a low climate image contrast, a high climate image contrast significantly increases tourists' perception of novelty, supporting the original hypothesis H2b.

In the analysis of the impact of novelty perception on travel intention, the standardized regression coefficient was  $\beta = 0.425$ , with significance results showing  $p < 0.001$  and  $R^2 = 0.204$ .

This indicates that novelty perception has a significant positive effect on travel intention, supporting the original hypothesis H2a.

**Table 2** The Impact of Different Levels of Contrast on Perceived Novelty and Travel Intention

Variable	Experimental Manipulation	Mean	StandardDeviation	t	p
Travel Intention	Low Contrast	4.42	0.83	-5.535	<0.001
	High Contrast	5.03	0.71		
Perceived Novelty	Low Contrast	4.45	1.33	-3.156	0.002
	High Contrast	5.01	1.17		

#### 4) Mediation Effect Test

In examining the relationship between climate image contrast and travel intention, a stepwise regression analysis method was used. According to the results, in the combined effect of image contrast levels and perceived novelty on travel intention, the direct effect of climate image contrast was significant ( $\beta = 0.284$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and the effect of novelty perception on travel intention was also significant ( $\beta = 0.362$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The second part of the path coefficient is significant, indicating a notable mediation effect.

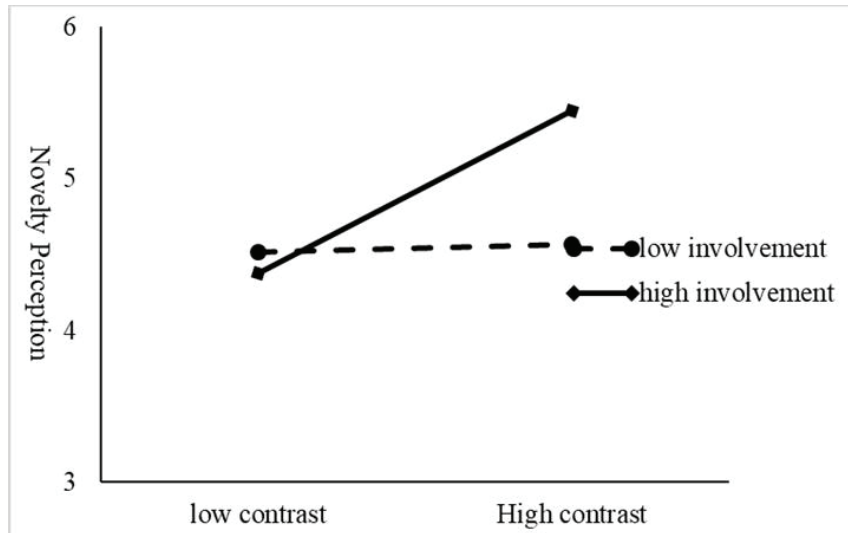
A bootstrap method with 5,000 samples was used to calculate the magnitude of each effect in the model. The total effect was  $\beta = 0.600$ , the direct effect was  $\beta = 0.469$ , and the indirect effect was  $\beta = 0.131$ , with a 95% confidence interval. Therefore, the mediation hypothesis is supported, and the original hypothesis H2 is confirmed.

**Table 3** Mediation Effect Test of Perceived Novelty in the Impact of Image Contrast on Travel Intention

Effect Decomposition	Relationship	Effect Size	SE	95% Lower Bound	95% Upper Bound
Total Effect	Image Contrast → Travel Intention	0.600	0.109	0.385	0.814
Direct Effect	Image Contrast → Travel Intention	0.469	0.104	0.265	0.673
Mediation Effect	Image Contrast → Perceived Novelty → Travel Intention	0.131	0.050	0.044	0.242

#### 5) Moderation Effect Test

A 2\*2 two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the interactive effects of different levels of involvement and contrast on perceived novelty, in order to test the moderating effect of involvement. After controlling for variables such as gender, age, and monthly income, the main effects of involvement ( $F = 4.822$ ,  $p = 0.029 < 0.05$ ) and image contrast ( $F = 10.561$ ,  $p = 0.001 < 0.01$ ) were found to be significant, while their interaction effect was also significant ( $F = 8.994$ ,  $p = 0.003 < 0.01$ ), confirming the moderating effect. According to the simple slope results in Figure 1, when tourist involvement is high, a greater contrast in climate image strengthens the perception of novelty compared to a low contrast destination. However, for low involvement, the difference in perceived novelty between high and low contrast destinations is not significant. Thus, hypothesis H4a is supported.



**Figure 2** Simple Slopes Analysis of Interaction Effect

#### Experimental Summary

The findings from Experiment 1 reveal that, compared to destinations with low climate image contrast, destinations with high climate image contrast positively influence tourists' travel intention, with novelty perception serving as a partial mediator. When tourists' involvement is high, compared to destinations with low climate image contrast, destinations with high climate image contrast further enhance tourists' perception of novelty, while the moderating effect of low involvement is not significant.

#### 4.2.3 Experiment 2

##### Experimental Design and Procedure

Experiment 2, similar to Experiment 1, adopted a 2 (cultural image contrast: high vs. low) \* 2 (high involvement vs. low involvement) between-subjects experimental design. Participants were recruited through a paid recruitment process on the Jianshu platform, with a total of 200 valid samples, achieving a 100% effective response rate. Among the participants, 99 were male (49%) and 101 were female (51%). Participants were randomly assigned to one of four groups.

In Experiment 2, cultural image contrast materials from the pre-test were selected as stimuli. The moderating variable remained involvement, while the mediating variable was changed to threat perception. We employed a threat perception scale suitable for tourism contexts, primarily based on the research of Moutinho, L. (1987), which includes two items: 1. Does the language communication of the tourism destination in the material make you feel concerned? 2. Are you concerned about encountering unfriendly treatment during your travel? Both items used a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating strongly disagrees and 7 indicating strongly agree. The scenario design, experimental process, and manipulation items for tourism destination cultural image perception were similar to those used in the pre-test and will not be described again here.

## Experimental Results and Analysis

### 1) Reliability and Validity Analysis

After conducting reliability testing on the survey results of Experiment 2, it was found that the reliability coefficients for involvement ( $\alpha = 0.921$ ), cultural image contrast ( $\alpha = 0.865$ ), threat perception ( $\alpha = 0.920$ ), and travel intention ( $\alpha = 0.822$ ) all exceed the standard threshold of 0.7, indicating good stability of the survey results. The overall KMO value for the survey is 0.778, which is greater than 0.7, and the Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant at  $p < 0.001$ . The cumulative variance explained by the four factors reaches 78.611%. The factor loadings matrix after rotation shows that the classification of items aligns perfectly with the theoretical categorization. The validity test results meet the requirements for analysis.

### 2) Experimental Manipulation Check

The results of the manipulation check for Experiment 2 show that the mean score for the high involvement group is significantly higher than that of the low involvement group (high involvement  $M = 4.95$ , low involvement  $M = 3.87$ ,  $t = -6.911$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Similarly, there is a significant difference in mean scores for the cultural image contrast types (high contrast  $M = 5.22$ , low contrast  $M = 3.96$ ,  $t = -8.501$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The manipulation in Experiment 2 was effective, successfully eliciting different perceptions of the experimental materials from the participants.

**Table 4** Manipulation Check of Variables

Variable	Experimental Manipulation	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	p
Involvement	Low Involvement	3.87	1.20	-6.911	<0.001
	High Involvement	4.95	0.99		
Cultural Image Contrast	Low Contrast	3.96	0.99	-8.501	<0.001
	High Contrast	5.22	1.10		

### 3) Direct Effects Test

The independent samples t-test results show that in the impact of different levels of cultural image contrast on travel intention, the low contrast group had a mean of  $M = 3.69 \pm 0.83$ , and the high contrast group had a mean of  $M = 3.00 \pm 0.78$ , with a t-value of 6.088 and  $p < 0.001$ . This indicates a significant difference between the two groups. Therefore, compared to a tourism destination with low cultural image contrast, a destination with high cultural image contrast significantly reduces tourists' travel intention, supporting the original hypothesis H1c.

Regarding the impact of different cultural image contrast levels on perceived threat, the low contrast group had a mean of  $M = 3.79 \pm 1.33$ , and the high contrast group had a mean of  $M = 4.34 \pm 1.11$ , with a t-value of -3.146 and  $p = 0.002 < 0.01$ . This shows a significant difference between the two groups. Therefore, compared to a destination with low cultural image contrast, a destination with high cultural image contrast significantly increases tourists' perceived threat level, supporting the original hypothesis H3b.

**Table 5** Impact of Different Contrast Levels on Perceived Threat and Travel Intention

Variable	Experimental Manipulation	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	p
Travel Intention	Low Contrast	3.69	0.83	6.088	<0.001
	High Contrast	3.00	0.78		
Perceived Threat	Low Contrast	3.79	1.33	-3.146	0.002
	High Contrast	4.34	1.11		

The test results of the relationship between perceived threat and travel intention show a standardized regression coefficient of  $\beta = -0.376$ , with a significance test result of  $p < 0.001$ . This indicates a significant negative effect of perceived threat on travel intention, thus confirming the null hypothesis H3a.

#### 4) Mediation Effect Test

A stepwise regression analysis was conducted to test the mediating effect of threat perception in the relationship between destination cultural image contrast and travel intention. The first half of the path effect on threat perception has already been verified in Table 3. According to the results, in the comprehensive influence of image contrast level and threat perception on travel intention, the standardized regression coefficient for cultural image contrast is  $\beta = -0.330$ , with a significance level of  $p < 0.001$ . The path coefficient for the second half of the mediation relationship is confirmed.

Using the bootstrap method with 5,000 samples and a 95% confidence interval that does not include 0, the total effect size and direct effect size are -0.693 and -0.578, respectively. The indirect effect size of threat perception on travel intention is -0.116. Therefore, the mediation hypothesis is supported, and the original hypothesis H3 is validated.

**Table 6** Mediating Effect of Perceived Threat in the Relationship between Image Contrast and Travel Intention

Effect Decomposition	Relationship	Effect Size	SE	95% Lower Bound	95% Upper Bound
Total Effect	Image Contrast → Travel Intention	-0.693	0.112	-0.914	-0.473
Direct Effect	Image Contrast → Travel Intention	-0.578	0.108	-0.791	-0.364
Mediating Effect	Image Contrast → Perceived Threat → Travel Intention	-0.116	0.046	-0.215	-0.036

#### 5) Moderating Effect Test

A 2\*2 factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine the interactive effects of different levels of involvement and contrast on perceived threat, thereby testing the moderating role of involvement. The results of the ANOVA show that after controlling for variables such as gender, age, and monthly income, the main effect of image contrast ( $F = 12.046$ ,  $p = 0.001 < 0.01$ ) is significant, and the interaction effect between involvement and image contrast is also significant ( $F = 42.054$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Therefore, the moderating effect is confirmed.

According to the simple slope results in Figure 2, when visitors have a high level of involvement, a high contrast in cultural image significantly reduces their perceived threat compared to a low contrast in cultural image. However, when visitors have a low level of involvement, a high contrast in cultural image significantly increases their perceived threat compared to a low contrast in



cultural image. Hypothesis H4c is supported.

#### Experimental Summary

Experiment 2 verified that a large contrast in the cultural image of a tourist destination negatively impacts tourists' travel intentions. Threat perception plays a partial mediating role in the model. Under the interaction of destination cultural image contrast and involvement level, compared to a small cultural image contrast, high involvement reduces tourists' threat perception of the destination, while low involvement enhances their threat perception when the cultural image contrast is large.

### **4.3 Summary of the Results**

The results of this study demonstrate the significant influence of image disparity, specifically climate and cultural image contrast, on tourists' travel intentions, and highlight the psychological mechanisms through which these effects occur. Both pre-experimental and formal experimental findings support the validity and reliability of the manipulated materials and survey instruments used throughout the research. In the pre-experiment, the manipulated materials for both climate and cultural image contrast were shown to be effective. The results confirmed significant differences between high and low contrast groups in terms of perceived image disparity. Reliability and validity measures met all required thresholds, supporting the use of these materials in subsequent experiments. In Experiment 1, which focused on climate image contrast, the results indicated that a high contrast between a tourist's origin and the destination significantly increased travel intention. Additionally, this effect was partially mediated by novelty perception, confirming that climate image contrast enhances the sense of novelty, which in turn positively influences travel intention. The findings also revealed a moderating effect of tourist involvement: when involvement was high, the impact of climate image contrast on novelty perception was significantly stronger. In contrast, under low involvement, this effect was minimal or non-significant. In Experiment 2, which examined cultural image contrast, the results showed an opposite effect: a high level of cultural image contrast significantly reduced travel intention, with threat perception acting as a partial mediator. This means that large cultural differences triggered heightened feelings of risk or discomfort, which in turn negatively influenced the desire to travel. Importantly, the moderating role of involvement was again confirmed: highly involved tourists perceived lower threat from culturally contrasting destinations, while low-involvement tourists experienced increased threat, reinforcing the psychological barrier to travel. In summary, the study confirms that both novelty and threat perceptions mediate the relationship between image contrast and travel intention, but the direction of influence depends on the type of contrast, positive in the case of climate contrast and negative in the case of cultural contrast. Additionally, tourist involvement plays a crucial moderating role, either amplifying or mitigating these psychological effects. These results provide strong empirical support for the newly introduced concept of image disparity, offering both theoretical contributions and practical implications for tourism marketing and destination image management.

## **5. Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendation**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

This study confirms that image contrast, specifically climate and cultural image disparities between a tourist's place of residence and a destination, plays a critical role in influencing travel intentions. Destinations with high climate image contrast tend to enhance tourists' sense of novelty, thereby positively increasing their travel motivation. In contrast, destinations with high cultural

image contrast tend to elevate tourists' perceived threat, leading to decreased travel intention. Furthermore, tourist involvement significantly moderates these effects. High-involvement tourists exhibit stronger novelty responses to climate contrasts and are more capable of managing cultural threats, while low-involvement tourists are more susceptible to negative perceptions. These findings offer empirical support for the theoretical model of image disparity and contribute new insight into the psychological mechanisms shaping destination decision-making.

## 5.2 Discussion

The research highlights the dual psychological pathways, novelty and threat, through which image disparity operates. Novelty perception, consistent with previous tourism motivation theories, explains why tourists are attracted to destinations that differ significantly in climate. The unfamiliarity is perceived as refreshing and exciting, particularly for highly involved tourists who actively seek new experiences. On the other hand, cultural image disparity introduces unfamiliar norms, language barriers, or perceived hostility, which can trigger discomfort and uncertainty. Threat perception, therefore, emerges as a psychological deterrent, especially among tourists with low involvement, who may lack the confidence, resources, or motivation to adapt to culturally unfamiliar environments. Importantly, the moderating role of involvement suggests that individual psychological traits significantly influence how tourists interpret and react to image disparities. These findings enrich the theoretical discourse by showing that image contrast is not inherently positive or negative; its impact depends on the type of contrast and the tourist's psychological engagement.

## 5.3 Recommendation

For tourism marketers and destination managers, these findings underscore the importance of tailoring promotional strategies based on both destination characteristics and target audience profiles. Destinations with strong climate differences should highlight themes of novelty, adventure, and transformation to attract high-involvement tourists who value unique experiences. For destinations with significant cultural differences, messaging should focus on cultural preparation, safety assurances, and the availability of support services (e.g., multilingual guides or familiar amenities), particularly to reduce threat perception among low-involvement tourists. It is also recommended that marketers segment audiences based on involvement levels and customize content accordingly, using immersive storytelling and experiential previews for high-involvement tourists, and reassurance and familiarity for low-involvement segments. Finally, future research should explore other dimensions of image disparity (e.g., political or economic contrasts) and examine their influence on post-travel satisfaction and destination loyalty.

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