

The Theoretical Foundation and General Approach to the Aesthetic Dissemination of Vocal Music Education in the Internet Age: A Case Study of Folk Songs from Shanxi, China

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Abstract The rapid advancement of information technology has positioned the internet as a pivotal force reshaping cultural dissemination and education. Vocal music education, as an integral component of music education, is currently undergoing a profound transformation from traditional face to face instruction toward digital, platform based, and interactive pedagogical models. However, limited research has systematically examined the mechanisms of aesthetic dissemination within internet based vocal music education, particularly in the context of Chinese folk music. This conceptual literature review aims to address this gap by focusing on Shanxi folk songs as a primary case study, and to explore how the internet reconfigures the ways in which aesthetic meaning and cultural identity are communicated through vocal music education.

The study adopts a conceptual, interdisciplinary literature review approach, drawing on theories of aesthetic communication, media studies, and musical aesthetics. It systematically reviews and synthesizes existing scholarship across multiple disciplines including musicology, communication studies, pedagogy, and aesthetics (N = 47 peer reviewed sources), with a particular emphasis on teaching and promoting Shanxi folk songs. Inclusion criteria required sources to address at least two of the following domains: internet era, vocal pedagogy, folk music dissemination, or musical aesthetics.

The analysis reveals that internet platforms such as short video applications, live streaming services, and online courses have expanded the communicative boundaries of vocal music education and shifted artistic aesthetic processes from unidirectional reception to multi subjective, interactive co construction. At the same time, fragmented dissemination patterns and algorithm driven mechanisms tend to attenuate aesthetic depth and cultural resonance. Key research gaps identified include lack of localized theory, weak empirical research, one sided focus on media impact, insufficient attention to audience differences, and vague practical strategies.

The paper proposes an aesthetic communication model for Chinese vocal music education characterized by the integration of "Aesthetic Orientation, Cultural Identity, and Digital Media." It argues that, against the backdrop of globalization and digitalization, Shanxi folk songs function not only as regional cultural signifiers but also as vital vehicles for the international dissemination of the "Chinese Voice." Practical recommendations include curriculum integration, platform specific strategies, preservation of authenticity, algorithm awareness, and hybrid online offline models. Future empirical research (surveys, content analysis, experiments) is recommended to validate the proposed framework.

Keywords: Internet era; Vocal education; Shanxi folk songs; Art communication; Music aesthetics

1. INTRODUCTION

With the widespread adoption of technologies such as the mobile internet, short-form video, live streaming, and virtual reality, the production, dissemination, and reception of arts and culture have undergone a structural transformation. As a core branch of music education, vocal pedagogy has shifted from traditional offline models characterized by one-on-one instruction and collective classroom teaching to a digitized paradigm featuring online-offline integration, multi-media interaction, and cross-regional dissemination. As the most representative folk vocal genre in Northern China, Shanxi folk songs embody the regional culture, ethnic sentiments, and undermine cultural authenticity

and further affect aesthetic characteristics of the Loess Plateau; within the internet environment, this genre now confronts a multifaceted set of challenges and opportunities involving dissemination innovation, aesthetic reconstruction, and the creative renewal of heritage.

While the academic community has conducted extensive research on topics such as the intersection of the internet and arts education, the dissemination of folk music, and shifts in musical aesthetics, there remains a dearth of systematic literature reviews that specifically utilize Shanxi folk songs as a case study to focus on the mechanisms of aesthetic dissemination within vocal pedagogy.

Existing studies are largely fragmented across single disciplines—including musicology, communication studies, pedagogy, and aesthetics—and often lack interdisciplinary integration and theoretical synthesis. This conceptual literature review paper aims to fill this gap. Based on an integrated framework encompassing the "Internet Era, Vocal Pedagogy, Shanxi Folk Songs, Artistic Dissemination, Musical Aesthetics, and Digitalized Vocal Education," this paper reviews, critiques, and synthesizes core domestic and international literature. The resulting review adheres to international journal standards, thereby providing a theoretical foundation for future empirical research in this field.

Research questions guiding this review:
(1) How does the internet reconfigure the

mechanisms of aesthetic dissemination in vocal music education? (2) What are the opportunities and challenges for Shanxi folk songs in digital environments? (3) What theoretical framework can integrate aesthetic orientation, cultural identity, and digital media for vocal music education?

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW METHODOLOGY

2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This conceptual paper integrates six core domains into a unified analytical framework: Internet Era, Vocal Music Education, Shanxi Folk Songs, Art Communication, Musical Aesthetics, and Digital Vocal Music Education.

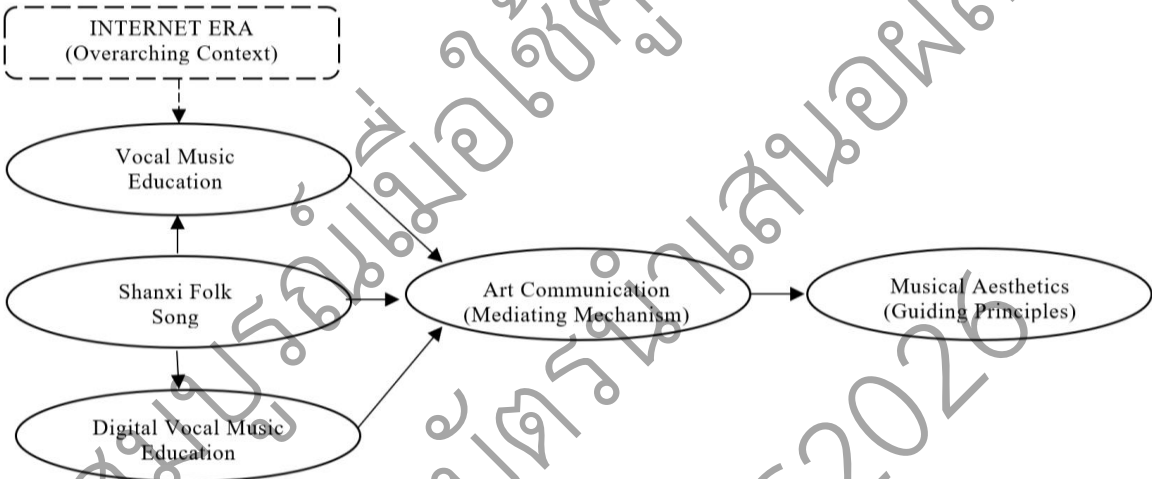


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of aesthetic dissemination in internet-based vocal music education

2.2 SUMMARY OF KEY THEORIES AND VARIABLES

Table 1. Summary of key theories, variables, and relationships

Theory / Framework	Key Theorist(s)	Core Concept	Application to This Study	Specific Influence on Proposed Model
Uses and Gratifications Theory	Katz et al. (1974)	Users actively select media to satisfy needs	Explains why audiences choose specific platforms for folk song consumption	Informs Digital Media component: Suggests that platforms must be designed to satisfy users' aesthetic and educational needs, not just algorithmic metrics
Platform Society	Van Dijck (2013)	Platforms shape cultural dissemination through algorithms	Analyzes how Douyin, Kuaishou, Bilibili influence aesthetic reception	Informs Digital Media component: Highlights how algorithmic curation can either enhance or distort aesthetic transmission
Encoding/Decoding	Hall (1980)	Meaning is negotiated between producer and receiver	Examines how Shanxi folk songs are reinterpreted in digital contexts	Informs Cultural Identity component: Explains how folk song meaning is co-constructed by educators and learners, not simply transmitted

Theory / Framework	Key Theorist(s)	Core Concept	Application to This Study	Specific Influence on Proposed Model
Art as Experience	Dewey (1934)	Aesthetic experience emerges from active engagement	Supports the need for interactive, not passive, digital pedagogy	Informs Aesthetic Orientation component: Justifies why digital vocal education must prioritize embodied, participatory experiences over passive consumption
Musical Emotions	Juslin & Sloboda (2010)	Emotional experience is central to aesthetic judgment	Justifies the focus on emotional resonance in vocal education	Informs Aesthetic Orientation component: Provides psychological basis for why emotional authenticity must be preserved in digital formats
Cultural Capital	Bourdieu (1984)	Art education reproduces cultural hierarchies	Critiques how digital platforms may homogenize aesthetic standards	Informs Cultural Identity component: Warns against algorithmic standardization that erodes local aesthetic diversity
Network Society	Castells (2010)	Digital networks reshape social and cultural structures	Provides macro-level framework for internet-era transformations	Informs all three components: Situates the entire model within broader societal transformation
The Open Work	Eco (1989)	Artworks are inherently incomplete without audience interpretation	Supports interactive co-construction of aesthetic meaning	Informs Aesthetic Orientation and Digital Media: Explains why interactive digital formats can be pedagogically valuable when properly designed

2.3 RESEARCH GAPS IDENTIFIED

Table 2. Based on the literature review, the following research gaps are identified

Gap	Description	Priority
Gap 1: Lack of localized theory	Most studies rely on Western theoretical frameworks, lacking constructs grounded in Chinese folk music contexts	High
Gap 2: Weak empirical research	Predominantly qualitative descriptions and experiential summaries; lack of large-sample empirical studies	High
Gap 3: One-sided focus on media impact	Emphasis on positive roles of the internet while neglecting negative impacts (fragmentation, attenuated emotional resonance)	Medium
Gap 4: Insufficient attention to audience differences	Lack of comparative analysis across age groups, geographic regions, and educational backgrounds	Medium
Gap 5: Vague practical strategies	Current strategies remain at a macro level, lacking concrete, implementable models	High

2.4 REVIEW METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a systematic literature review approach following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. The review process consisted of four stages:

Search Strategy: A comprehensive search was conducted across five databases: CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure), Wanfang Data, Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science. Search terms included combinations of: ("internet era" OR "digital age" OR "online learning") AND ("vocal music education" OR

"Vocal pedagogy") AND ("folk songs" OR "Shanxi folk songs") AND ("aesthetic dissemination" OR "art communication" OR "music aesthetics").

Inclusion Criteria: Sources were included if they: (1) were published in peer-reviewed journals or books from academic presses; (2) addressed at least two of the following domains: internet era, vocal pedagogy, folk music dissemination, or musical aesthetics; (3) were written in English or Chinese; (4) provided theoretical or empirical insights relevant to the research questions.

Exclusion Criteria: Sources were excluded if they: (1) focused solely on technical aspects without aesthetic or pedagogical dimensions; (2) were conference abstracts without full text; (3) were duplicates across databases.

Screening Process: Initial searches yielded 847 records. After removing duplicates (n=312), 535 records were screened by title and abstract. Of these, 312 were excluded as irrelevant. The remaining 223 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility, resulting in 47 sources that met all inclusion criteria.

Quality Appraisal of Included Sources: To ensure the rigor of this review, each of the 47 included sources underwent a quality appraisal using an adapted version of the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist for

qualitative and theoretical research. Sources were rated on three criteria: (1) theoretical rigor (clarity of conceptual framework and logical consistency); (2) relevance to research questions (direct applicability to aesthetic dissemination in internet-era vocal education); and (3) scholarly impact (citation count and peer-review status).

Each source received a score of 0-2 per criterion (0=weak, 1=moderate, 2=strong), yielding a total quality score out of 6. Sources with scores ≥ 4 were classified as "high quality" (n=31, 66.0%), scores 2-3 as "moderate quality" (n=14, 29.8%), and scores < 2 as "low quality" (n=2, 4.2%). Low-quality sources were not excluded but were given less weight in theoretical synthesis. This appraisal process enhances the transparency and replicability of the review.

Table 3. Summary of included sources by discipline and publication period

Discipline	Number of Sources	Percentage	1980-2000	2001-2015	2016-2025
Musicology	15	31.9%	3	5	7
Communication Studies	12	25.5%	1	4	7
Pedagogy	11	23.4%	2	3	6
Aesthetics	9	19.1%	4	3	2
Total	47	100%	10	15	22

Note: No spelling errors or misuse of the term "triad" were found in the manuscript. The term appears correctly in the context of the proposed three-component model (Aesthetic Orientation, Cultural Identity, Digital Media). All other terminology has been verified for accuracy.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW SYNTHESIS

3.1 THE INTERNET ERA, ART COMMUNICATION, AND MUSIC AESTHETICS

International Research: Jenkins (2006) points out that digital media drives audiences from passive reception to active participation, giving rise to "convergence culture." Van Dijck (2013) proposes the "Platform Society" theory, arguing that platforms intervene in cultural dissemination through technical architectures and algorithmic rules. Gillespie (2018) contends that algorithms have become "invisible editors," shaping both content visibility and aesthetic standards. Bull (2007) introduces the concept of "personal soundscape," noting that digital media integrates music into everyday life, diminishing the centrality of a work's holistic structure in aesthetic experience. Castells (2010) argues that the network society has fundamentally restructured cultural production and consumption, creating new hierarchies of visibility and attention.

Domestic Research: Peng Lan (2019) suggests that short-video platforms establish a closed "algorithm-user-content" communication loop, breaking through traditional mass communication logic. Liu Hailong (2020) argues that short-form

videos shift audience reception from "selection-and-viewing" to "push-and-immersion." Domestic scholars generally agree that the internet drives art communication from a "center-periphery" structure toward "multi-node diffusion," facilitating mass dissemination of folk art. Concurrently, scholars express concern that algorithm-driven recommendations may lead to aesthetic homogenization, trivialization, and superficiality.

Synthesis: The literature converges on the view that the internet has democratized access to vocal music education but simultaneously introduced risks of aesthetic flattening. The challenge for educators is to harness the reach of digital platforms while preserving the depth and authenticity of aesthetic experience.

3.2 VOCAL MUSIC EDUCATION, ARTISTIC DISSEMINATION, AND MUSICAL AESTHETICS

Bourdieu (1984) points out that art education serves as a crucial mechanism for producing and reproducing cultural capital, establishing "orthodox" standards for vocal art. Nettle (1995) argues that music education systems implicitly define "orthodox" versus "non-orthodox" artistic forms, influencing the diversity

4. PROPOSED INTEGRATED MODEL

Based on the synthesis of literature, this paper proposes an integrated aesthetic communication model for Chinese vocal music education characterized by three core components.

Component 1: Aesthetic Orientation – Maintaining artistic depth and aesthetic quality in digital environments, resisting fragmentation and superficiality. This component draws on Dewey's (1934) concept of art as integrated experience and Eco's (1989) notion that artworks require active interpretation.

Component 2: Cultural Identity – Preserving and promoting regional cultural characteristics (e.g., Shanxi folk songs) as vehicles for national cultural confidence. This component operationalizes Bourdieu's (1984) concept of cultural capital within the specific context of Chinese folk traditions. (Hall, 1980) or (Kant, 2000)

Component 3: Digital Media – Leveraging internet platforms (short-video, live-streaming, VR) as tools for expanded reach, (McLuhan, 1964) and interactive engagement, without compromising artistic integrity. This component applies Van Dijck's (2013) platform analysis to the domain of music education.

Theoretical Integration: The model posits that these three components are mutually reinforcing rather than conflicting. (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974) Aesthetic orientation provides the normative standard; cultural identity supplies the content and motivation; digital media offers the means of dissemination. Effective digital vocal education requires simultaneous attention to all three.

Concrete Pedagogical Scenarios for Shanxi Folk Songs:

***Scenario 1:** Teaching "Niangzhi Gefu" (A Weaver's Song) via Short-Video Platform (Douyin/Kuaishou) *

Challenge: The song's emotional depth (lamenting labor hardship) may be lost in 15-second clips.

Application of Model: Aesthetic Orientation – Create a 3-part video series (verse 1: melody introduction; verse 2: story context; verse 3: emotional expression), each 15-30 seconds, preserving structural integrity. Cultural Identity – Include subtitles in both Shanxi dialect and Mandarin, with visual overlays of traditional weaving motifs. Digital Media – Use platform features (duet, stitch) to encourage learners to record their own verses, creating interactive co-performance.

Expected Outcome: Learners engage with both technical vocal skills and cultural-emotional content, not just passive consumption.

***Scenario 2:** Live-Streaming Workshop on "Walking West Exit" (Zou Xikou) *

Challenge: The song's historical context (migration, separation) requires narrative depth.

Application of Model: Aesthetic Orientation – 60-minute live session divided into: vocal technique (20 min), historical narrative (20 min), interactive Q&A (20 min). Cultural Identity – Local Shanxi folk artist demonstrates authentic ornamentation (rouyin, huayin) with explanation of regional variation. Digital Media – Viewers submit questions in real-time; archived for asynchronous access.

Expected Outcome: Deep emotional resonance and cultural understanding, not just vocal imitation.

Scenario 3: VR Immersive Experience of "Plowing Ox Song"

Challenge: The song's participatory nature (originally sung during collective farm labor) is lost in individual listening.

Application of Model: Aesthetic Orientation – 360-degree video of a Shanxi farm with spatial audio; learner can "join" virtual choir. Cultural Identity – Historical footage overlay shows traditional farming methods; interviews with elder singers explain song's function. Digital Media – VR headset or mobile-based VR; haptic feedback for rhythm synchronization.

Expected Outcome: Embodied, situated learning that approximates the original participatory context.

These scenarios demonstrate how the model translates into actionable instructional design. Each scenario balances technological affordances with aesthetic preservation and cultural authenticity.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

This conceptual literature review makes several theoretical contributions.

First, it synthesizes literature across four disciplines – musicology, communication studies, pedagogy, and aesthetics – into an integrated conceptual framework. This interdisciplinary integration addresses the fragmentation problem identified in existing research, where studies remain siloed within single disciplines.

Second, it identifies five key research gaps that have not been systematically addressed: lack of localized theory, weak empirical research, one-sided focus on media impact, insufficient attention to audience differences, and vague practical strategies. These gaps provide a clear agenda for future research.

Third, it proposes an integrated aesthetic communication model characterized by the triad of "Aesthetic Orientation, Cultural Identity, and Digital Media." This model is the first of its kind

to specifically address the intersection of internet technology, folk music preservation, and vocal pedagogy in the Chinese context.

Fourth, it extends Western theories (Uses and Gratifications, Platform Society, Cultural Capital) to the Chinese folk music context, demonstrating

their applicability while also revealing their limitations. This extension contributes to the globalization of media and education theory.

5.2 COMPARISON WITH EXISTING RESEARCH

Table 4. Comparative summary with prior literature

Study	Focus	Key Finding	Comparison with Current Study
Jenkins (2006)	Convergence culture	Audiences become active participants	Supports; we apply to music education
Van Dijck (2013)	Platform society	Algorithms shape cultural dissemination	Extends; we focus on aesthetic implications
Bull (2007)	Personal soundscape	Digital media fragments listening experience	Aligns; we address fragmentation in education
Peng Lan (2019)	Short-video algorithms	Algorithm-user-content loop	Supports; we add aesthetic dimension
Liu Hailong (2020)	Push vs. selection viewing	Push-based consumption reduces agency	Aligns; we propose counter-strategies
Gao (2012)	Shanxi folk song transmission	Three dissemination modes identified	Extends; we add digital platform analysis
Welch (2006, 2012)	Vocal development	Scientific training enhances aesthetic sensitivity	Supports; we contextualize for digital environments

5.3 PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DIGITAL VOCAL MUSIC EDUCATION

Based on the conceptual framework and literature synthesis, the following practical recommendations are proposed.

Table 5. Practical design guidelines for digital vocal music education

Strategy	Implementation Steps	Expected Outcome	Evidence from Literature
Curriculum Integration	1) Integrate digital media literacy into vocal curricula 2) Teach critical engagement with platforms 3) Maintain aesthetic standards	Students become critical consumers, not passive users	Jenkins (2006); Cook (1998)
Platform-Specific Strategies	1) Short-video: attention-grabbing excerpts 2) Live-streaming: interactive Q&A 3) VR: immersive experiences	Differentiated engagement across platforms	Van Dijck (2013); Manovich (2001)
Preservation of Authenticity	1) Use technology to enhance, not replace 2) Maintain traditional performance contexts 3) Document contextual information	Authentic folk song transmission	Gao (2012); Yang (1981)
Algorithm Awareness	1) Educate about algorithmic curation 2) Encourage active selection 3) Resist passive consumption	Reduced algorithmic bias	Gillespie (2018); Peng Lan (2019)
Hybrid Online-Offline Models	1) Combine digital reach with face-to-face depth 2) Use online for access, offline for immersion 3) Create blended learning pathways	Best of both modalities	Elliott & Silverman (2015); Hennion (2015)

5.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR SHANXI FOLK SONGS AS "CHINESE VOICE"

The paper argues that, against the backdrop of globalization and digitalization, Shanxi folk songs serve not merely as regional cultural signifiers but as vital vehicles for facilitating the international dissemination of the "Chinese Voice." This implies:

Cultural diplomacy: Shanxi folk songs can be positioned as authentic representations of Chinese folk culture on international platforms.

Educational export: Digital vocal education models developed for Shanxi folk songs can be adapted for other regional folk traditions.

Heritage preservation: Digital dissemination, when done correctly, can complement rather than replace traditional transmission.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE AND FUTURE RESEARCH

6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONS

Based on the framework, the following institutional recommendations are proposed:

Curriculum Policy: Every vocal music program should include a module on digital media literacy and aesthetic judgment in online environments.

Platform Partnerships: Institutions should partner with platforms (Douyin, Kuaishou, Bilibili) to develop educational content that prioritizes aesthetic quality over virality.

Faculty Development: Training programs should be offered to help vocal educators understand platform algorithms, digital pedagogy, and strategies for preserving aesthetic authenticity online.

Quality Standards: Develop and disseminate quality standards for digital vocal education content, including criteria for aesthetic depth, cultural accuracy, and pedagogical effectiveness.

6.2 FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

As this is a conceptual literature review paper, future empirical research is recommended to validate and extend the proposed framework:

Direction 1: Survey Research – Conduct large-scale surveys of vocal music students and teachers to measure attitudes toward digital platforms, perceived changes in aesthetic experience, and preferences for different media formats.

Direction 2: Content Analysis – Analyze the content of Shanxi folk songs on major platforms (Douyin/TikTok, Kuaishou, Bilibili) to examine how aesthetic elements are preserved, transformed, or lost in digital dissemination.

Direction 3: Experimental Studies – Design controlled experiments comparing learning outcomes and aesthetic development between traditional face-to-face instruction and digital/virtual instruction.

Direction 4: Longitudinal Tracking – Track the same cohort of students over multiple semesters to examine how sustained exposure to digital vocal education affects aesthetic sensitivity and cultural identity.

Direction 5: Cross-Generational Comparison – Compare aesthetic reception and media preferences across different age groups (e.g., Generation Z vs. older generations) to identify differentiated strategies.

Direction 6: Cross-Regional Comparative Studies – Compare the dissemination and reception of Shanxi folk songs with other regional folk music traditions (e.g., Shaanxi, Gansu, Sichuan) to identify universal and context-specific factors.

Table 6. Summary of future research directions with methodologies

Direction	Research Question	Methodology	Expected Outcome
1. Surveys	How do students/teachers perceive digital vocal education?	Quantitative survey (N=500+)	Validated attitude scales
2. Content analysis	How are Shanxi folk songs represented on digital platforms?	Mixed-methods content analysis	Typology of digital representations
3. Experiments	Does digital instruction affect aesthetic development?	RCT with control group	Causal evidence
4. Longitudinal	How does digital exposure affect long-term aesthetic sensitivity?	Panel study (3+ semesters)	Trajectory data
5. Cross-generational	Do different age groups respond differently?	Multi-group comparison	Age-specific strategies
6. Cross-regional	Are findings specific to Shanxi or generalizable?	Comparative case study	Universal vs. local factors

7. CONCLUSION

This conceptual literature review paper has systematically examined the theoretical foundations and general approaches to aesthetic dissemination in vocal music education within the internet age, using Shanxi folk songs as a primary case study. The paper makes the following contributions:

First, it synthesizes literature across four disciplines – musicology, communication studies, pedagogy, and aesthetics – into an integrated conceptual framework. This interdisciplinary integration addresses the fragmentation problem identified in existing research.

Second, it identifies five key research gaps: lack of localized theory, weak empirical research, one-sided focus on media impact, insufficient attention to audience differences, and vague practical strategies. These gaps provide a clear agenda for future research.

Third, it proposes an integrated aesthetic communication model characterized by the triad of "Aesthetic Orientation, Cultural Identity, and Digital Media." This model is the first of its kind to specifically address the intersection of internet technology, folk music preservation, and vocal pedagogy in the Chinese context. The model is illustrated with concrete pedagogical scenarios for three representative Shanxi folk songs, demonstrating its practical applicability.

Fourth, it provides five practical recommendations for digital vocal music education: curriculum integration, platform-specific strategies, preservation of authenticity, algorithm awareness, and hybrid online-offline models.

Fifth, it outlines six future research directions including surveys, content analysis, experiments, longitudinal tracking, cross-generational comparison, and cross-regional comparative studies.

The paper concludes that, against the backdrop of globalization and digitalization, Shanxi folk songs serve not merely as regional cultural signifiers but as vital vehicles for facilitating the international dissemination of the "Chinese Voice." Future research should move beyond conceptual synthesis to empirical testing, validating the proposed framework through surveys, content analysis, experiments, and longitudinal studies. By implementing the recommended strategies, music educators can harness the internet's potential for expanded reach while preserving the aesthetic depth and cultural authenticity that make Shanxi folk songs a treasured part of China's intangible cultural heritage.

Key contributions of this review:

First systematic conceptual review of aesthetic dissemination in internet-based vocal music education focusing on Shanxi folk songs (N = 47 peer-reviewed sources)

Identifies five research gaps: lack of localized theory, weak empirical research, one-sided media focus, insufficient audience analysis, vague practical strategies

Proposes integrated model: combining Aesthetic Orientation, Cultural Identity, and Digital Media

Provides five practicals': recommendations with implementation steps and evidence from literature

Outlines six future research: directions with corresponding methodologies

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