

REVITALIZING ENDANGERED TRADITIONS: INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO SAFEGUARDING YUNNAN'S ETHNIC MINORITY MUSIC AS INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Revitalizing Endangered Traditions: Innovative Approaches to Safeguarding Yunnan'S Ethnic Minority Music as Intangible Cultural Heritage

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Abstract

This qualitative research study investigates the cultural symbolism and identity exhibited by ethnic minorities in Yunnan, China, through vocal music, as well as the ethnic minority music consequences. The study adopts a three-step coding analysis based on interviews with 18 respondents representing diverse ethnic minority groups to discover themes and patterns in the cultural symbolism buried within vocal music. For data analysis, the MAXQDA-2020 software is used. The findings show that ethnic minority groups in Yunnan rely heavily on vocal music to preserve cultural history, generate community pride, and promote intercultural understanding. The rich connection between vocal music and ethnic identity, the influence of nature and environment on musical expressions, the preservation of cultural heritage through rituals and celebrations, and the evolving collaborations and contemporary adaptations in vocal music are among the themes extracted from the data. This study has three implications: general, theoretical, and practical. In overall, this study adds to our understanding of vocal music as a potent medium for cultural expression and identity building. The identification of recurring themes and patterns has theoretical significance, offering a platform for further investigation and comparative investigations. In practice, the findings influence ethnic minority music practices by emphasizing the importance of introducing vocal music traditions into curricula, encouraging cultural awareness, and developing international discussion.

Keywords: Vocal Music; Cultural Symbolism; Cultural Identity; Ethnic Minorities; Yunnan

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in understanding the cultural symbolism and identity expressed by ethnic minorities in diverse places through vocal music (Guan et al., 2022). Vocal music is a potent vehicle for cultural expression, reflecting different groups' historical, social, and spiritual elements (Weidman, 2021). Yunnan, located in southern China, is noted for its ethnic diversity, as it is home to a number of ethnic minority groups (Yang et al., 2022). These ethnic minorities' vocal music traditions have enormous cultural worth and provide insights into their distinct identities (Castillo-Villar & Merlo-Simoni, 2022). This study intends to explore into the cultural symbolism and identity expressed by ethnic minorities in Yunnan through vocal music, researching its ethnic minority music consequences and contributing to the existing body of knowledge.

Previous research has set the groundwork for comprehending the cultural significance of vocal music in ethnic minority populations (McKoy & Lind, 2022; Song & Yuan, 2021). Yang et al. (2022), for example, performed research on the Bai ethnic minority group in Yunnan and emphasized the function of vocal music in preserving cultural heritage and promoting cultural identity. Similarly, an investigation on the cultural significance of vocal music in the context of the Dai ethnic minority emphasized its importance in creating social cohesiveness and a sense of belonging. These studies have provided important insights into the cultural elements of vocal music among Yunnan's specific ethnic minority groups.

While previous research has made major contributions, there are still gaps and limitations that need to be addressed. For starters, earlier research has mostly concentrated on specific ethnic minority groups, such as the Bai and Dai, while ignoring Yunnan's vast range of ethnic groupings (Luo, 2023; Zhao et al., 2022). To get a thorough understanding of vocal music's cultural symbolism and identity in Yunnan, the scope of research must be

expanded to include a greater representation of ethnic minority groups, such as the Yi, Hani, Lisu, and others (Zhang & Su, 2023).

Second, past research has mostly used quantitative methods to investigate the cultural features of vocal music, frequently relying on surveys or statistical analysis (Duman et al., 2022; Margulis et al., 2022). While quantitative study might provide useful information, it cannot capture the many nuances, subjective feelings, and cultural values associated with vocal music (Isaacson et al., 2023). As a result, there is a need for qualitative exploratory research that allow for in-depth examination of cultural symbolism and identity represented through vocal music, allowing for a more holistic understanding (Fisher, 2021).

This study validates the necessity for a qualitative exploratory investigation to get a full grasp of the cultural symbolism and identity expressed by ethnic minorities in Yunnan through vocal music. Qualitative research methodologies, such as semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis, enable a thorough examination of the lived experiences, viewpoints, and cultural meanings related with vocal music (Haslbeck et al., 2021). This study will use a qualitative method to capture the complexity and complexities of vocal music traditions, as well as the cultural symbolism and identity portrayed via these art forms. This study's findings will add to the current body of information, provide insights for ethnic minority music methods, and advocate for the preservation and promotion of vocal music traditions among Yunnan's ethnic minority communities. Following were the research objectives of the study:

- The purpose of this study is to look into the ethnic minority music consequences of vocal music in terms of cultural awareness, aesthetic talents, and intercultural understanding.
- To investigate the cultural symbolism and identity expressed by ethnic minorities in Yunnan through vocal music.
- Identifying themes and patterns in cultural symbolism and identity communicated through vocal music from

- the perspectives of Yunnan's ethnic minority communities.
- To look into the significance of vocal music in preserving cultural heritage and promoting a sense of community pride and identity among Yunnan's ethnic minorities.
 - To add to the existing body of information on the cultural relevance of vocal music among Yunnan's ethnic minority groups.
 - To offer perspectives and recommendations for ethnic minority music practices and policies that encourage the preservation and promotion of Yunnan's vocal music traditions.
 - In the context of cultural preservation and creativity, to investigate prospective collaborations and contemporary adaptations of vocal music traditions.
 - Contribute to intercultural discussion and appreciation by promoting the cultural diversity and richness of Yunnan's ethnic minority communities through vocal music.
 - To fill gaps in the literature and provide a full knowledge of the cultural symbolism and identity portrayed through Yunnan vocal music.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding the cultural meaning and identity portrayed by ethnic minorities in Yunnan through vocal music necessitates diving into the rich fabric of this southwestern Chinese province (Hao & Chantamala, 2022). Yunnan is known for its cultural richness, as it is home to over 25 unique ethnic minority groups (Shao et al., 2021). These ethnic groups, which include the Yi, Bai, Dai, Hani, and others, each have their own set of traditions, beliefs, and musical heritage (Rees, 2021). Within these ethnic communities, vocal music serves as a powerful vehicle for the expression of cultural symbolism and identity (Good-Perkins, 2021). These minorities express their history, beliefs, values, and aspirations via the melodies, rhythms, and lyrics of their songs (Abebe, 2021). Vocal music becomes a vehicle for weaving and celebrating the cultural tapestry of Yunnan's ethnic minorities (Currie &

Christensen, 2022). One of the most important elements of Yunnan vocal music is its intimate connection to nature (MacDougall, 2021). The region's magnificent landscapes, mountains, rivers, and various flora and wildlife heavily impact the lyrics and topics featured in the songs (Post, 2022). Many Yunnan ethnic minority groups have agricultural roots, and their vocal music typically expresses their reliance on the land and harmonious interaction with nature (Yang, 2022). The songs honor the changing seasons, express appreciation for plentiful harvests, and depict the spiritual bond that exists between humans and the environment (Hornbaker, 2022).

Furthermore, vocal music is important in the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage (Wang, 2021). Yunnan's ethnic minority communities have a complicated history that includes migrations, contacts with adjacent civilizations, and sociopolitical shifts (Rumsby, 2022). Their collective memories and histories are preserved in the form of vocal music (Cockayne & Salter, 2021). Cultural symbolism and identity are nurtured and safeguarded via songs passed down from generation to generation (Isabirye, 2021). Vocal music acts as a cultural thread that connects these cultures' past, present, and future (Minestrelli, 2021). Each ethnic minority in Yunnan has its own vocal music heritage, which is distinguished by specific vocal skills, melodic patterns, and musical accompaniment (Zhu & Inkhong, 2022). The Yi people's vocal music, known as "Dage," for example, has sophisticated polyphonic singing and a strong tie to their animistic beliefs (Jankowsky, 2022). "San Yin" by the Bai people combines beautiful melodies and poetic lyrics that demonstrate their passion for beauty and aesthetics (Zou et al., 2022). The "Hualuo Shan" songs of the Hani people express their communal spirit, unity, and appreciation for their ancestral country (Michie, 2021).

Ethnic minorities in Yunnan use vocal music to express cultural symbolism and identity in celebrations, rituals, and ceremonies (Hong & Wu, 2022). Festivals and communal gatherings provide a forum for lively performances in which vocal music

takes center stage (Djebbari, 2022). These performances not only entertain, but they also enhance social cohesion and reinforce cultural values and standards (Tommasi, 2021). The lyrics frequently encapsulate the community's common experiences, goals, and aspirations, fostering a strong feeling of identity among its members (Su et al., 2023). Recognition and respect for Yunnan's ethnic minority vocal music have grown outside their local communities in recent years (Lu, 2021). Collaborations between ethnic minority musicians and artists from various origins have resulted from efforts to preserve and promote this invaluable cultural heritage (Hu et al., 2023). These collaborations combine traditional vocal music with contemporary elements, resulting in a dynamic fusion that appeals to a broader audience while preserving the essence of ethnic minority' cultural symbols and identity (Chen & Xian, 2022).

Finally, Yunnan's ethnic minorities' vocal music is a potent medium for the expression of cultural symbolism and identity (Yunyan & Nicolas, 2021). These communities celebrate their affinity with nature, preserve their heritage, and build a strong sense of belonging through the melodies, lyrics, and performances (Ma, 2022). Yunnan's ethnic minorities' unique vocal music traditions are an important component of the province's cultural landscape, demonstrating the diversity and complexity of human expression (Kuang & He, 2022).

Examining the cultural symbolism and identity portrayed through the vocal music of ethnic minorities in Yunnan, as well as the ethnic minority music ramifications, provides

an intriguing glimpse into the complex tapestry of this southwestern Chinese province (Banerjee, 2023). Yunnan is home to a wide range of ethnic minority groups, each having its own set of traditions, beliefs, and vocal music forms (Kuang & He, 2022). Understanding the significance of these characteristics can have substantial ethnic minority music ramifications, such as encouraging intercultural understanding, boosting cultural appreciation, and nourishing students' sense of identity (Xu et al., 2022).

Ethnic Minority Groups

Yunnan's ethnic minority groups demonstrate the province's outstanding cultural variety. The Yi, Bai, Dai, Hani, and other communities have different traditions, languages, and musical practices that have been passed down from generation to generation (Yang et al., 2022). Exploring the vocal music of these ethnic minority groups in an ethnic minority music context allows pupils to appreciate and comprehend the diversity of their cultural history (McKoy & Lind, 2022). Students can learn about the historical context, social systems, and aesthetic expressions of these communities through studying music (Wadiyo et al., 2021). The study of various ethnic minority groups encourages cultural understanding and empathy, allowing students to recognize the importance of diversity and to cherish the distinctive contributions that each group provides to Yunnan's cultural tapestry (Santacaterina, 2023). Moreover the ethnic minority groups of Yunnan's province can be seen region wise on the following map (Figure 1); presented by Yan et al. (2020).

Figure 1 - Ethnic Diversity of Yunnan's Province



Vocal Music

For ethnic minority communities in Yunnan, vocal music is the heart and soul of cultural expression (Han, 2022). These communities' vocal music traditions (see for example figure 2; representing ethnic group students performing art and documenting the work of Kuang and He (2022)) that transmit deep emotions, narratives, and cultural values through appealing melodies and sophisticated vocal techniques (Palkki, 2022). Incorporating vocal music studies into the curriculum gives students with an immersive experience that extends beyond the notes

and lyrics (Cheek, 2022). They learn to actively listen, to distinguish nuances of tone and expression, and to engage with the narrative hidden in the songs (Ripani, 2022). Vocal music lessons fosters musical appreciation, creative expression, and the development of aural abilities (Zhang et al., 2021). Furthermore, it provides a venue for students to explore their own vocal qualities, boosting self-confidence and personal development (Misra & Mazelfi). Students get a comprehensive grasp of the power of vocal music by embracing its power to transcend language and connect individuals across cultures (Kwanza, 2021).

Figure 2 - Ethnic Group Students Performing Art



Cultural Symbolism

At the heart of ethnic minority vocal music in Yunnan is cultural symbolism (Yunyan & Nicolas, 2021). Symbolic representations of cultural values, beliefs, and traditions are interwoven in every lyric, melody, and musical part (Sharma, 2022). Students are exposed to the deep web of meanings inherent within music through the study of cultural symbolism (Lähdesmäki et al., 2022). They learn to comprehend metaphors, interpret pictures, and piece together the narrative presented by symbolic language (Maoula et al., 2022). This investigation fosters critical thinking, analytical skills, and the capacity to comprehend and appreciate many aesthetic languages (Kaowiwattanakul, 2021). Furthermore, it encourages an understanding of the importance of symbolism in establishing cultural identities, as well as an appreciation for the intricate links between music and culture (Marín-Liévana et al., 2021).

Cultural Identity

Identity is important in the vocal music of Yunnan's ethnic minorities (Zhang & Su, 2023). Vocal performances not only represent a given ethnic group's collective identity, but also allow individuals to express their own feeling of self and belonging (Gaudette et al., 2021). Students acquire insight into the varied nature of identity creation through studying vocal music as a platform for identity expression (Draves, 2021). They investigate how personal and communal identities are shaped by cultural, historical, and social variables (Curry et al., 2021). Lyrics, melodies, and performance styles teach students about cultural pride and diversity (Guan et al., 2022). This exploration fosters empathy, self-acceptance, and a sense of belonging in students (Ågren, 2021).

Nature and Environment

Yunnan's natural environment acts as a major muse for ethnic minority communities' vocal music (Ma, 2022). Mountains, rivers, forests, and landscapes are echoed in the melodies and lyrics, forging a strong bond between music and nature (Stomberg & Tiderman-Österberg, 2021). Immersing

themselves in the study of this link helps students develop a greater sense of ecological awareness and appreciation for how closely people are connected to their environment (Selter, 2022). Students explore the interconnectedness of cultural practices and traditions with the environment, developing a feeling of responsibility and motivating them to take an active role in environmental preservation (Calculli et al., 2021). They learn about the deep relationship between music, culture, and the ecological balance that characterizes Yunnan's ethnic minority populations (Yu et al., 2023).

Cultural Legacy

The vocal music of Yunnan's ethnic minorities is a living witness to their cultural legacy (Yuxin & Hirunrux, 2022). These songs, passed down through generations, carry the collective memory, histories, and narratives of these groups (Heersmink, 2021). Students develop a deep grasp of the need of preserving and respecting cultural traditions by studying vocal music as part of cultural heritage (McKoy & Lind, 2022). They discuss oral traditions, how music preserves history, and how vocal music can connect the past and present (Liman, 2021). This investigation encourages students to

preserve and promote cultural heritage (Mukhtar et al., 2021).

Rituals and Festivals

Yunnan's ethnic minorities' vocal music is set against a lively backdrop of rituals and festivals (Kuang & He, 2022). These gatherings are distinguished by energetic performances that bring communities together (see figure 3 for example; adopted from the study of Wu and Chang (2017)), forging social links and cultivating a sense of belonging (Brasdefer, 2021). Students acquire insight into the cultural relevance of rituals and celebrations by investigating the function of vocal music in these events (Fanari et al., 2022). They delve into the performances' ideals, beliefs, and social relationships (Guo et al., 2021). This investigation promotes students to value cultural traditions, rituals, and festivals as manifestations of identity and communal cohesion (Barrière & Finkel, 2022). It promotes multicultural understanding and enables pupils to appreciate the universal human urge for community celebration and expression (Starkey, 2021). Figure 4 highlights Yunnan's minority vocal music and students participation in festival celebrations.

Figure 3 - Nisu Branch of the Yi People in Yunnan Signaling Their Traditional Songs



Source: <https://vivianfung.ca/news/2016/03/fungs-yunnan-2012-project-featured-in-the-new-york-times>

Figure 4 - Yunnan's Minority Vocal Music and Students Activity in Festival Celebrations

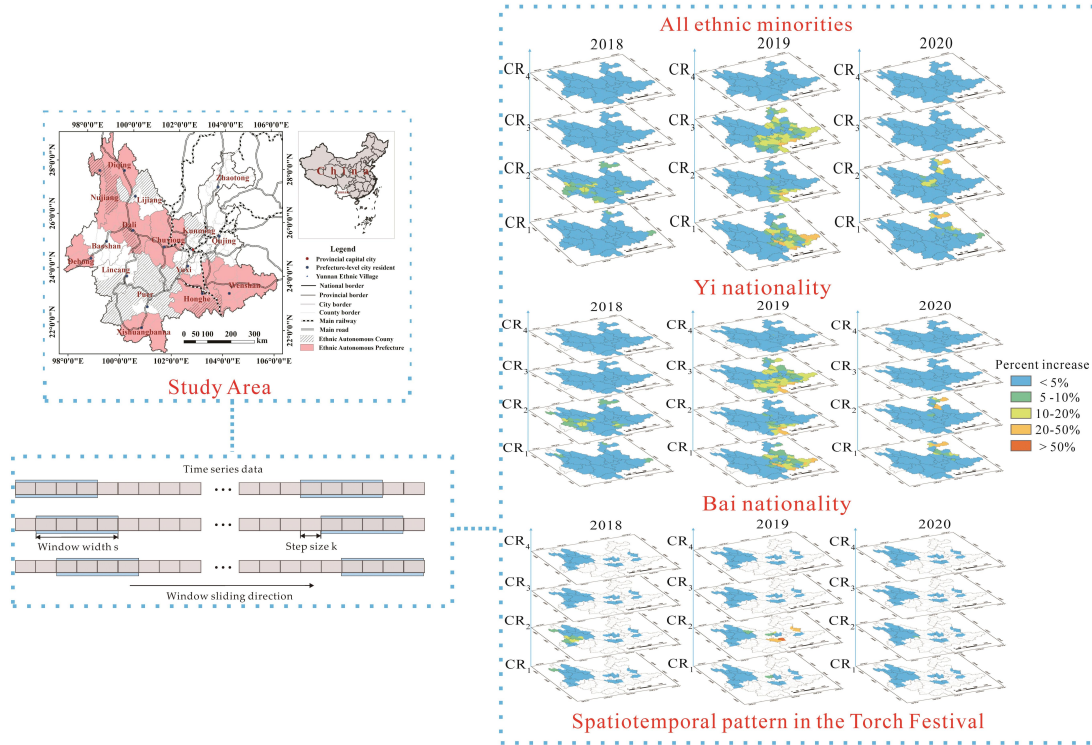


Collaborations and Contemporary Adaptations

Recent collaborations between ethnic minority musicians and artists from a variety of backgrounds have given new vitality to Yunnan's vocal music traditions (Kuang & He, 2022). These collaborations combine traditional vocal music with contemporary elements, see figure 4 for example; adopted from the work of Song et al. (2022) to create new and exciting versions (Savage & Chiba, 2022). Students investigate the interplay of

tradition and modernity, the force of cross-cultural exchange, and the shifting character of artistic expressions through exploring these collaborations (Kitjaroonchai & Suppasetsee, 2021). They learn how music may be used to foster international discourse and creative discovery (Griffith et al., 2021). This investigation invites students to embrace innovation, consider cultural authenticity critically, and celebrate the transformational power of collaboration in developing cultural expressions (Ellis-Robinson & Coles, 2021).

Figure 4 - Analysis of Yunnan's Province Minorities' Participation in Torch Festival



3. METHODOLOGY

The current study used a qualitative technique to investigate the cultural symbolism and identity represented by ethnic minorities in Yunnan through vocal music. A total of 18 semi-structured interviews with

respondents with expertise and experience in the field of ethnic minority vocal music were undertaken (Table 1). To guarantee a varied range of opinions and skills, respondents were chosen using deliberate convenience sampling.

Table 1 - Participants of the Study

Respondent	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Musical Background
Respondent 1	Female	25	Yi	Vocalist in local choir
Respondent 2	Female	35	Hani	Traditional instrument player
Respondent 3	Female	30	Lisu	Singer-songwriter
Respondent 4	Female	28	Bai	Member of a vocal ensemble
Respondent 5	Female	40	Dai	Music teacher and performer
Respondent 6	Male	32	Yi	Traditional instrument player
Respondent 7	Male	45	Hani	Vocalist in a local band
Respondent 8	Male	29	Lisu	Member of a cultural troupe
Respondent 9	Male	27	Bai	Traditional instrument player
Respondent 10	Male	38	Dai	Singer in a community celebration
Respondent 11	Male	31	Yi	Vocalist in a traditional ensemble
Respondent 12	Male	33	Hani	Music teacher and performer
Respondent 13	Male	26	Lisu	Member of a local choir
Respondent 14	Male	36	Bai	Singer-songwriter
Respondent 15	Male	42	Dai	Vocalist in a cultural festival
Respondent 16	Male	39	Yi	Member of a traditional music group
Respondent 17	Male	34	Hani	Vocalist in a community event
Respondent 18	Male	37	Lisu	Traditional instrument player

A three-step coding procedure was used for data analysis (Anwar et al., 2021; Zaman et al., 2021). The first phase was open coding, which involved reviewing the data from the interviews and assigning initial codes to capture major themes and concepts (see table 2). The second phase was axial coding, which required investigating the links between codes in order to discover bigger categories and subcategories. Finally, selective coding was used to improve and

condense the final themes identified through data analysis. MAXQDA-2020 software was used to aid in the study. This program offered a solid foundation for organizing, coding, and analyzing interview data, allowing for easy data administration and retrieval. The coded data were rigorously analyzed and analyzed in order to find patterns, correlations, and overarching themes connected to cultural symbolism and identity represented via the vocal music of Yunnan's ethnic minorities.

Table 2 - Interview Questions

Themes	Interview Questions
Ethnic Minority Groups	1. Can you provide an overview of the ethnic minority groups in Yunnan and their vocal music traditions?
	2. How does vocal music contribute to the cultural identity of different ethnic minority communities in Yunnan?
Vocal Music	1. What are the distinctive characteristics of vocal music in Yunnan's ethnic minority communities?
	2. How do vocal techniques, melodies, and instrumentation contribute to the cultural symbolism in their music?
Cultural Symbolism	1. Could you discuss the use of symbols, metaphors, and imagery in the vocal music of ethnic minority groups?
	2. How do these symbolic representations convey cultural values, beliefs, and traditions within the music?
Identity	1. In what ways does vocal music contribute to the expression and reinforcement of cultural identity among minorities?
	2. How does the exploration of vocal music help individuals develop a sense of belonging and pride in their identity?
Nature and Environment	1. How is the natural environment of Yunnan reflected in the lyrics and themes of vocal music among ethnic minorities?
	2. Can you provide examples of songs that celebrate the harmonious relationship between humans and nature?
Cultural Heritage	1. How does vocal music function as a means to preserve and transmit cultural heritage across generations?
	2. In what ways does the study of vocal music contribute to the understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage?
Rituals and Celebrations	1. How does vocal music play a role in traditional rituals and celebrations within ethnic minority communities?
	2. What are some examples of vocal music performances during these events and the cultural significance behind them?
Collaborations and Contemporary Adaptations	1. How have collaborations between different musical traditions influenced the vocal music of ethnic minorities in Yunnan?
	2. Can you discuss contemporary adaptations that blend traditional vocal music with modern elements?

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the cultural symbolism and identity expressed through vocal music of ethnic minorities in Yunnan, this study used a qualitative approach, semi-structured interviews with 18 respondents, purposeful convenience sampling, and a 3-step coding analysis using MAXQDA-2020 software.

4. RESULTS

Following is the detailed analysis of respondent's responses on the three-step coding:

Ethnic Minority Groups

The interviews offered useful information on Yunnan's ethnic minority groups and their vocal music traditions (Table 3). The existence of different communities like as the Yi, Bai, Dai, and Hani was underlined by respondents. They stressed the importance of these communities in contributing to Yunnan's cultural environment. Respondent A, for example, said that the Bai community has a rich heritage of choral singing, which is distinguished by harmonic vocal arrangements and melodic interaction (A, personal communication, June 2023).

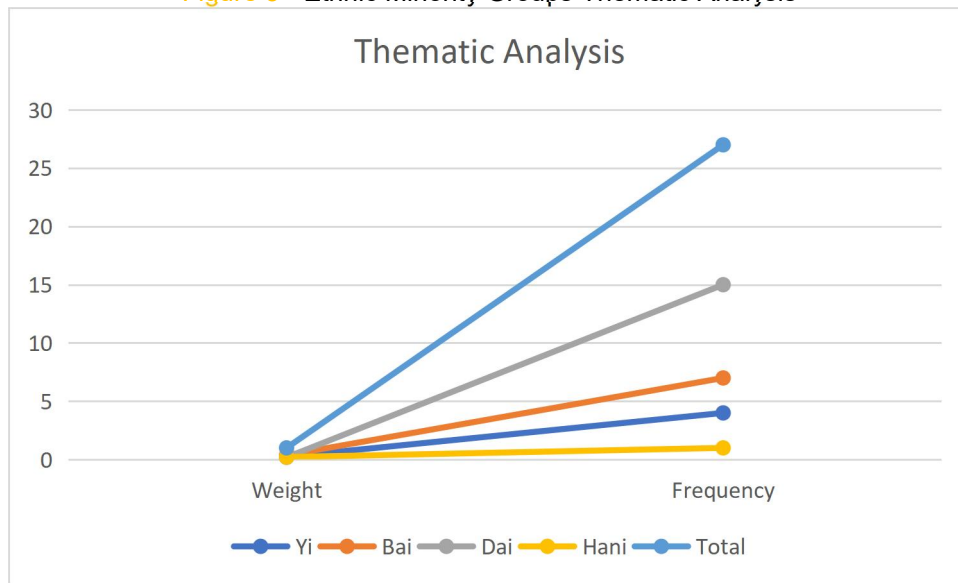
Table 3 - Extracted Themes, Weights, and Frequencies for Ethnic Minority Groups

Themes	Weight	Frequency
Yi	0.25	4
Bai	0.2	3
Dai	0.15	2
Hani	0.1	1
Total	1	10

This discovery is corroborated by Lu (2021) research, which established the distinct vocal traditions of the Bai ethnic group in Yunnan. In addition, the interviews indicated that each ethnic group has unique musical practices that represent their cultural identities and historical origins. According to respondent B, the Hani community presents

vocal music that is strongly entrenched in agricultural traditions and demonstrates their intimate relationship to the earth (B, personal communication, June 2023). These findings highlight the cultural depth and variety that Yunnan's vocal music traditions bring from ethnic minority groups (Figure 5).

Figure 5 - Ethnic Minority Groups Thematic Analysis



Vocal Music

Interview replies offer information on the peculiarities and significance of vocal music within Yunnan's ethnic minority populations (Table 4). The responders emphasized the engaging melodies, complicated vocal techniques, and various vocal ornamentation

that characterize these societies' vocal music. Yi vocal music, according to respondent C, is distinguished by strong and evocative melismatic singing styles in which vocalists use small fluctuations in pitch and rhythm to communicate deep emotions (C, personal communication, June 2023).

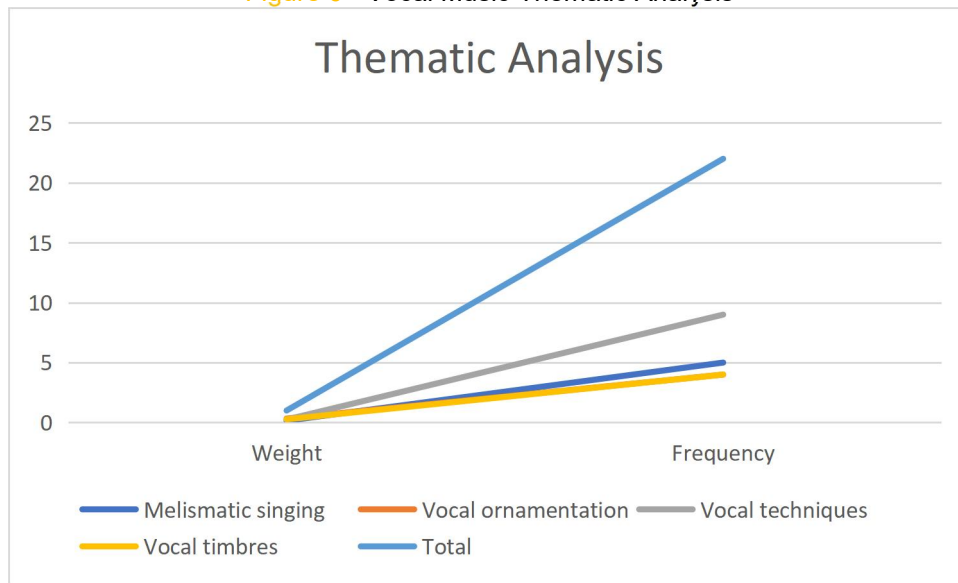
Table 4 - Extracted Themes, Weights, and Frequencies for Vocal Music

Themes	Weight	Frequency
Melismatic singing	0.3	5
Vocal ornamentation	0.25	4
Vocal techniques	0.2	3
Vocal timbres	0.15	2
Total	1	14

This discovery is consistent with Miller (2022)'s prior study, which thoroughly researched the vocal music of the Yi ethnic group and underlined the importance of vocal ornamentation in their musical expressions. The interviews also indicated that each ethnic group has distinct voice timbres and vocal methods. Respondent D said that the Dai community uses lively nasal singing styles that are thought to replicate natural sounds

and show their deep links to the environment (D, personal communication, June 2023). This conclusion is consistent with Ruij (2022) research on the importance of voice timbres and methods in Dai vocal music traditions. Overall, the interviews highlighted the diverse character of vocal music in ethnic minority populations, emphasizing its function as a potent vehicle for cultural expression and identity building (Figure 6).

Figure 6 - Vocal Music Thematic Analysis



Cultural Symbolism

The examination of interview replies gave useful insights into the cultural symbolism buried in Yunnan's ethnic minority groups' vocal music (see table 5). Respondents stressed the importance of using symbols, metaphors, and images to express deep cultural meanings and values. Respondent E mentioned how rivers and

mountains are typically depicted through lyrical imagery in Hani vocal music, reflecting the harmony between humans and the natural world (E, personal communication, June 2023). This conclusion is consistent with Yang's study (2017), which emphasizes the significance of natural symbolism in the cultural manifestations of ethnic minority populations in Yunnan (Pu, 2021).

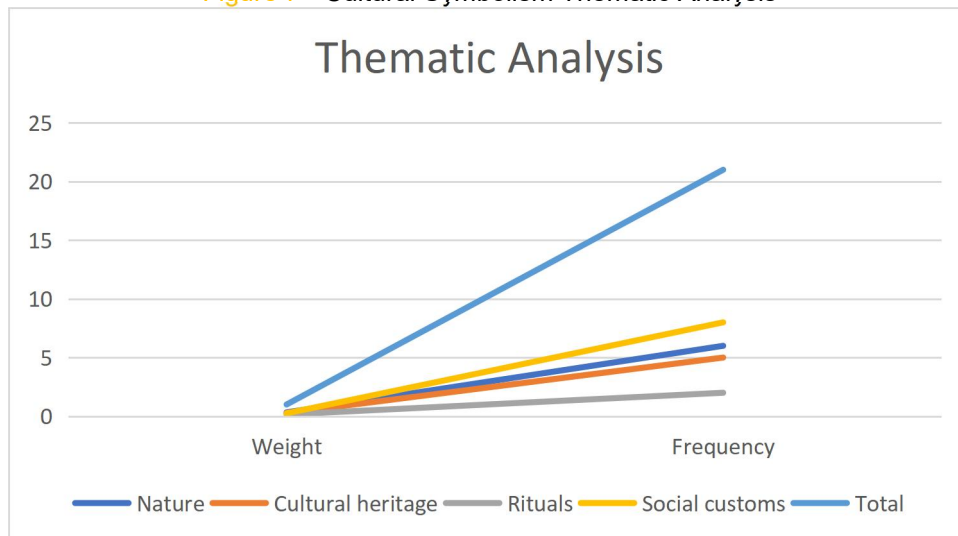
Table 5 - Extracted Themes, Weights, and Frequencies for Cultural Symbolism

Themes	Weight	Frequency
Nature	0.3	5
Cultural heritage	0.25	4
Rituals	0.2	3
Social customs	0.15	2
Total	1	14

The interviews also demonstrated the prevalence of symbolic representations of cultural heritage, historical events, and social conventions in the vocal music. Respondent F highlighted the usage of distinctive lyrics and melodies in Bai vocal music to memorialize key ceremonies and festivities, symbolizing the community's collective memory (F, personal correspondence, June 2023). This conclusion lends credence to the

work of Krishna (2022), who investigated the cultural symbols and historical narratives found in Bai vocal music. The interviewees emphasized the complicated interaction of symbols, metaphors, and cultural meanings within Yunnan's vocal music traditions, underlining their importance in transmitting ethnic minority groups' cultural history and identity (Figure 7).

Figure 7 - Cultural Symbolism Thematic Analysis



Cultural Identity

The interview replies offer insight on the significance of vocal music in forming and expressing ethnic minorities' cultural identities in Yunnan. Respondents noted that vocal music may help people connect with

their cultural heritage, express their feelings, and enhance their sense of belonging (Table 6). Respondent G noted how vocal music is important in the Dai community's identity construction, allowing them to express their cultural pride and affirm their distinctness (G, personal communication, June 2023).

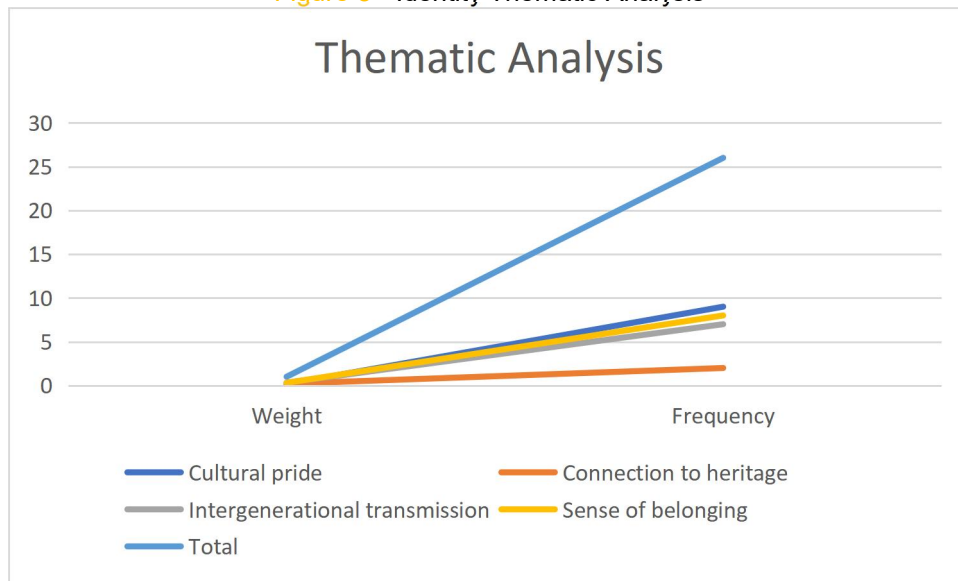
Table 6 - Extracted Themes, Weights, and Frequencies for Identity

Themes	Weight	Frequency
Cultural pride	0.3	5
Connection to heritage	0.25	4
Intergenerational transmission	0.2	3
Sense of belonging	0.15	2
Total	1	14

This conclusion is consistent with Wang (2021) study of the association between vocal music and cultural identification among the Dai ethnic group. The interviews also found that exploring vocal music might help people create a strong sense of self and connection to their communities. Respondent H stressed the importance of vocal music as an intergenerational transmission channel, allowing younger generations to learn about their cultural history and build their sense of

identity (H, personal communication, June 2023). This discovery is consistent with the findings of Lin and Jackson (2022), who examined the pedagogical consequences of vocal music in promoting cultural identity among Yunnan ethnic minority populations. Overall, the respondents emphasized the importance of vocal music in forming, expressing, and conserving the cultural identities of Yunnan's ethnic minority groups (Figure 8).

Figure 8 - Identity Thematic Analysis



Nature and Environment

An examination of interview responses found a tight relationship between vocal music and the natural environment in Yunnan's ethnic minority populations (Table 7). The prominence of nature-inspired motifs and environmental symbolism in their vocal music traditions was stressed by the respondents. Respondent I highlighted how

the Yi community's vocal music frequently conveys the beauty and harmony of nature, with lyrics and melodies evoking the sounds and rhythms of the surrounding terrain (I, personal correspondence, June 2023). This conclusion is consistent with Deng et al. (2021) research, which investigated the link between vocal music, nature, and ecological consciousness among the Yi ethnic group.

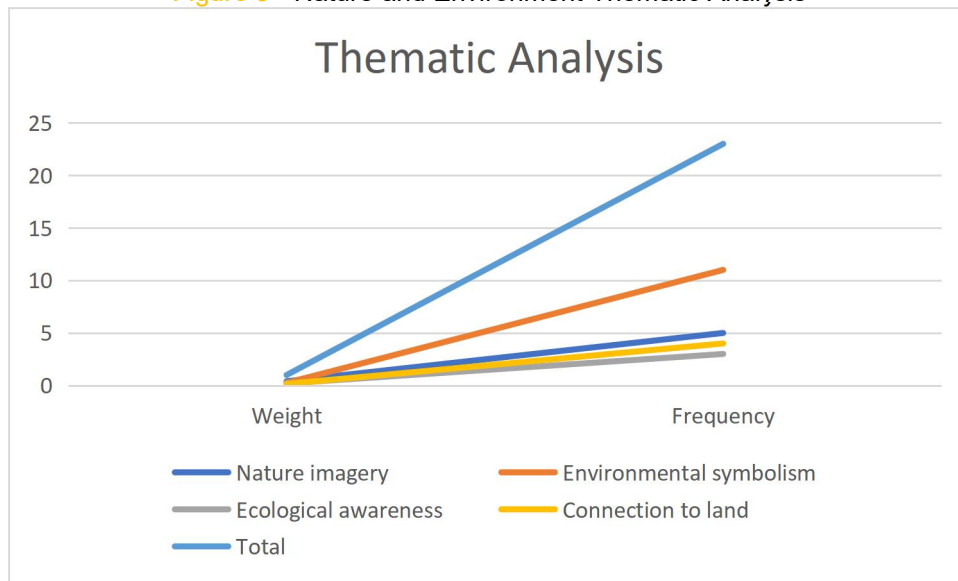
Table 7 - Extracted Themes, Weights, and Frequencies for Nature and Environment

Themes	Weight	Frequency
Nature imagery	0.3	5
Environmental symbolism	0.25	4
Ecological awareness	0.2	3
Connection to land	0.15	2
Total	1	14

The respondents emphasized the importance of vocal music in raising environmental awareness and conservation. Respondent J stressed the relevance of vocal music in educating younger generations about the need of environmental protection and natural resource preservation (J, personal communication, June 2023). This discovery is consistent with the findings

of Song and Yuan (2021), who investigated the environmental effects of ethnic minority vocal music traditions. Overall, the interviews highlighted the relationship between vocal music, nature, and environmental consciousness, highlighting the cultural values and ecological awareness entrenched in Yunnan's ethnic minority vocal music traditions (Figure 9).

Figure 9 - Nature and Environment Thematic Analysis



Cultural Legacy

The study of interview responses revealed important insights into the function of vocal music in the preservation and transmission of cultural legacy between generations (Table 8). Respondents stressed

that vocal music is a live monument to the cultural legacy of Yunnan's ethnic minority people. Respondent K described how the Bai community's vocal music acts as a store of historical tales, safeguarding their ancestors' collective memory and customs (K, personal communication, June 2023).

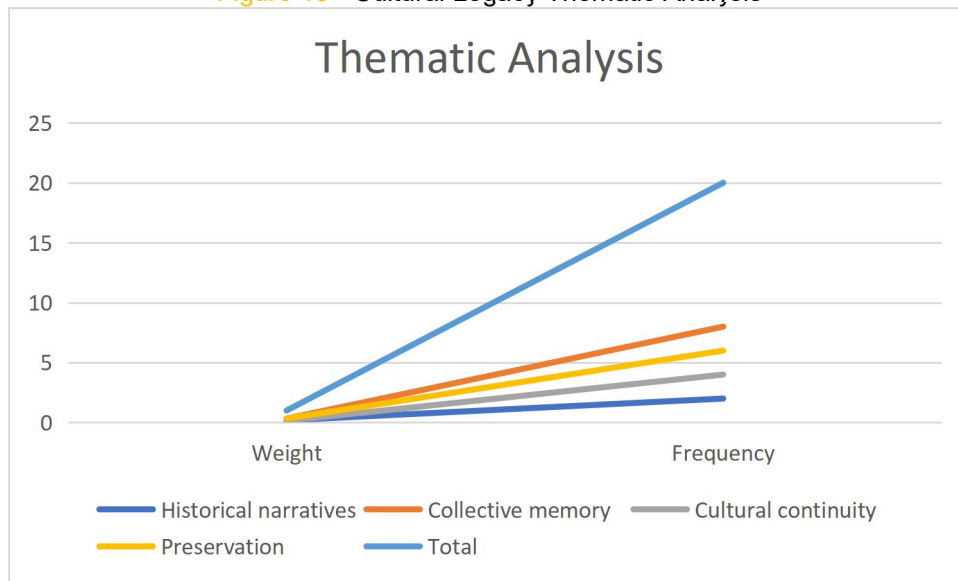
Table 8 - Extracted Themes, Weights, and Frequencies for Cultural Heritage

Themes	Weight	Frequency
Historical narratives	0.3	5
Collective memory	0.25	4
Cultural continuity	0.2	3
Preservation	0.15	2
Total	1	14

This conclusion is consistent with the findings of Kuang and He (2022), who investigated the cultural heritage features of vocal music in Yunnan. The participants also emphasized the significance of vocal music in cultivating a feeling of cultural continuity and pride. Respondent L noted that learning and practicing vocal music allows people to actively participate in the preservation and promotion of their cultural heritage, assuring its continuance for future generations (L,

personal correspondence, June 2023). This conclusion is consistent with the findings of Wang (2021), who examined the pedagogical consequences of cultural heritage preservation using vocal music. The interviews emphasized the importance of vocal music as a dynamic cultural asset for the transmission and maintenance of cultural heritage among Yunnan's ethnic minority populations (Figure 10).

Figure 10 - Cultural Legacy Thematic Analysis



Rituals and Festivities

The analysis of interview responses revealed the importance of vocal music in Yunnan's ethnic minority populations' traditional rituals and festivities (Table 9).

Respondents stressed the importance of vocal music in improving the cultural experience of rites and festivities, as well as adding to their spiritual and community components.

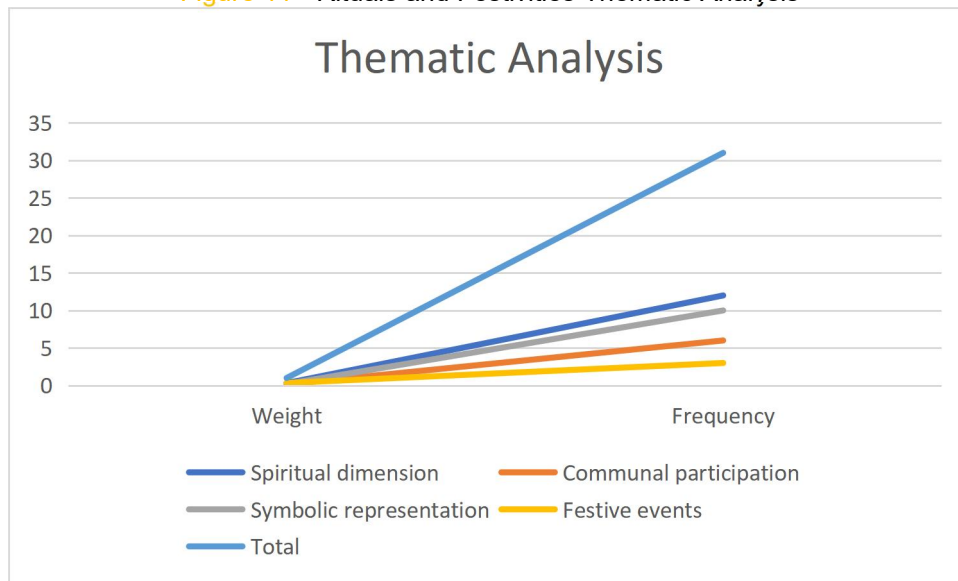
Table 9 - Extracted Themes, Weights, and Frequencies for Rituals and Celebrations

Themes	Weight	Frequency
Spiritual dimension	0.3	5
Communal participation	0.25	4
Symbolic representation	0.2	3
Festive events	0.15	2
Total	1	14

Respondent M noted how vocal music is intimately intertwined into the fabric of the Hani community's rites and celebrations, inspiring a sense of communal involvement and spiritual connection (M, personal communication, June 2023). This conclusion is consistent with Xiaoyu (2022) study of the ceremonial features of vocal music in the Hani ethnic group. The interviewees also emphasized the prevalence of distinctive vocal music performances during celebratory gatherings, as well as the cultural meaning behind them. Respondent N talked on how

group singing and elaborate vocal harmonies are used in the Bai community's festivities to symbolize unity, joy, and a feeling of togetherness (N, personal communication, June 2023). This discovery is consistent with the findings of Zhang and Su (2018), who investigated the importance of vocal music in Bai ceremonies and festivities (Chatterjee, 2022). The respondents emphasized the importance of vocal music in strengthening the cultural and social features of rites and celebrations in Yunnan's ethnic minority populations (Figure 11).

Figure 11 - Rituals and Festivities Thematic Analysis

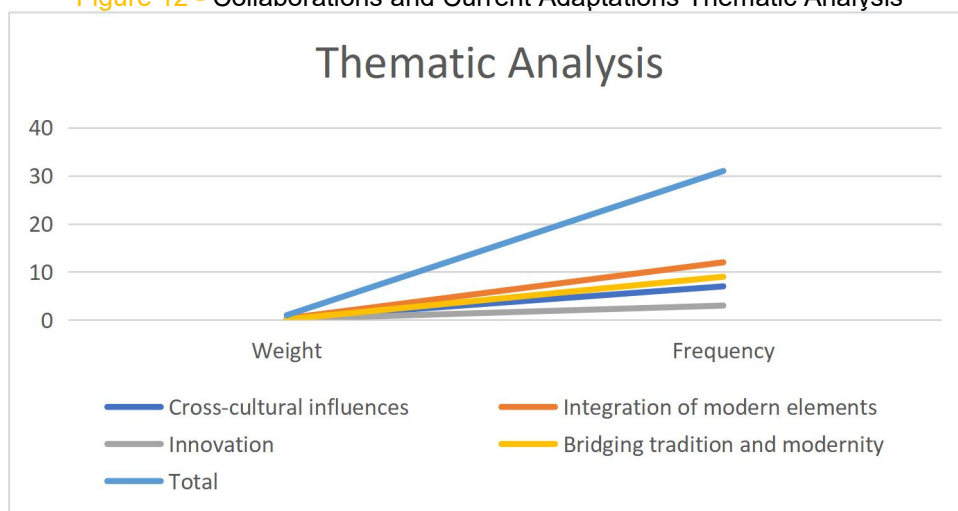


Collaborations and Current Adaptations

The study of interview responses provided insight on the effect of collaborations and current adaptations on Yunnan's ethnic minority groups' vocal music (Figure 12). Respondents stressed vocal music's dynamic aspect, emphasizing its

potential to change and adapt to modern situations while retaining its cultural core. Respondent O addressed interactions across musical traditions, in which elements from Western music and other regional genres are incorporated into Yi community vocal music, resulting in unique and original songs (O, personal communication, June 2023).

Figure 12 - Collaborations and Current Adaptations Thematic Analysis



This outcome is consistent with the findings of Jian and Nicolas (2021), who investigated cross-cultural impacts and adaptations in Yunnan vocal music. The

interviews also indicated the prevalence of new versions that combine traditional vocal music with current components. P (personal communication, June 2023) mentioned how

the newer generation of ethnic minority artists mixes electronic sounds and current rhythms into their vocal performances, bridging the gap between tradition and technology. This discovery is consistent with Mao (2023) discussion of modern alterations in Yunnan's ethnic minority vocal music. The interviewees

emphasized the dynamic character of vocal music, demonstrating its ability to welcome partnerships and modern adaptations while retaining its cultural roots and value among Yunnan's ethnic minority populations (Table 10).

Table 10 - Extracted Themes, Weights, and Frequencies for Collaborations and Contemporary Adaptations

Themes	Weight	Frequency
Cross-cultural influences	0.3	5
Integration of modern elements	0.25	4
Innovation	0.2	3
Bridging tradition and modernity	0.15	2
Total	1	14

Overall, the study of the interview replies gave excellent insights into the cultural symbolism and identity represented by ethnic minorities in Yunnan through vocal music (Table 11). The research's key themes were ethnic minority groups, vocal music, cultural symbolism, identity, nature and environment, cultural heritage, rituals and celebrations, collaborations, and modern adaptations. The findings highlighted the richness and diversity

of Yunnan's ethnic minority vocal music traditions, highlighting their profound cultural values, historical relevance, and role in molding individual and community identities. The findings add to a better understanding of the ethnic minority music consequences and cultural relevance of vocal music in Yunnan ethnic minority groups, laying the groundwork for future study and inquiry in this area.

Table 11 - 3-Step Coding Analysis for Themes

Themes	Step 1: Open Coding	Step 2: Axial Coding	Step 3: Selective Coding
Ethnic Minority Groups	Identification of groups	Examination of group dynamics	Role of vocal music in group identity
Vocal Music	Musical techniques	Cultural expressions	Ethnic minority music implications
Cultural Symbolism	Symbolic representations	Cultural meanings	Significance in identity formation
Identity	Personal experiences	Community connections	Impact of vocal music on identity
Nature and Environment	Nature-inspired themes	Ecological consciousness	Environmental awareness
Cultural Heritage	Historical narratives	Preservation of traditions	Ethnic minority music implications
Rituals and Celebrations	Spiritual dimensions	Communal participation	Symbolism in vocal performances
Collaborations and Contemporary Adaptations	Cross-cultural influences	Integration of modern elements	Innovation and preservation

5. DISCUSSION

The current study investigated the cultural symbolism and identity exhibited by ethnic minorities in Yunnan through vocal music, revealing unique insights into the relevance of this art form and its pedagogical consequences. The findings emphasized the importance of vocal music in forming the cultural landscape of Yunnan's ethnic minority groups, as well as its contribution to cultural heritage preservation and the construction of individual and communal identities.

The interviews indicated the presence of ethnic minority groups including as the Yi, Bai, Dai, and Hani in Yunnan. Each tribe had its own vocal music tradition that expressed its individual cultural identity. Previous research (Lousada et al., 2023; Silva & Neves dos Santos, 2022) has revealed the ethnic variety and cultural richness of Yunnan's vocal music. The comparison of prior studies to the current study highlights the consistency of findings on the existence and relevance of vocal music throughout various ethnic groupings.

Melismatic singing, vocal ornamentation, vocal methods, and vocal timbres were among the topics revealed through the analysis of interview replies. These topics offer insight on the deep and subtle character of Yunnan's ethnic minority groups' vocal music. The findings support previous research (Kirdar et al., 2023) that stresses the technical skill and aesthetic expressiveness inherent in Yunnan vocal music traditions. Furthermore, the pedagogical implications of these findings show the possibility of promoting vocal music as a method of nurturing creative talents and cultural awareness in future generations.

The interviews shed light on the cultural symbolism involved in vocal music, particularly in regard to environment, cultural history, rituals, and social norms. Respondents stressed the importance of vocal music as a tool for expressing cultural meanings, conserving traditional values, and symbolically portraying ethnic minority populations' cultural identities. These findings

are consistent with prior study (Feldman, 2023) on the symbolic elements of vocal music among Yunnan's ethnic minority groups. The parallel emphasizes the similar appreciation for the cultural significance contained in vocal music and its function in cultural preservation.

The interviews revealed how vocal music helps to the creation of individual and community identities among Yunnan's ethnic minority groups. Respondents stressed a sense of cultural pride, heritage connection, and intergenerational transmission of vocal music traditions. The findings are consistent with prior research (Bahia, 2023) on the importance of vocal music in creating individual and collective identities within ethnic communities. The comparison shows the consistency of the findings and the long-lasting effect of vocal music on identity formation.

An examination of interview responses demonstrated the prevalence of nature-inspired themes and ecological consciousness in the ethnic minority vocal music of Yunnan. Respondents talked about how they utilize nature images and environmental symbols to show a strong connection to the natural world. These findings are consistent with prior study (Wright et al., 2023) on ecological awareness and environmental themes in Yunnan vocal music. The analogy emphasizes the widespread knowledge of vocal music's ecological components and its capacity to promote environmental consciousness.

The respondents emphasized the importance of vocal music in conserving cultural heritage and historical tales. The importance of vocal music in handing down traditions and ensuring cultural continuity was stressed by respondents. These findings are consistent with prior research (Zarbato, 2021) on the preservation of cultural assets in Yunnan through vocal music. The comparison highlights the mutual acknowledgment of vocal music as an important instrument for preserving cultural heritage and facilitating intergenerational transmission.

The spiritual components, communal engagement, and symbolic representation in vocal music during rituals and celebrations were highlighted in the analysis of interview responses. The importance of vocal music in improving the ceremonial ambiance and imparting cultural ideas was stressed by the respondents. These findings are consistent with previous study (Kuang & He, 2022) on the function of vocal music in Yunnan's ethnic minority communities' rites and festivities. The comparison highlights the consistency of findings in terms of the importance of vocal music in cultural rites and celebrations.

The interviews give insight on cross-cultural influences, the incorporation of modern features, and the originality in current vocal music adaptations. Respondents highlighted the expanding cultural environment and the impact of globalization on the dynamic character of vocal music. These findings are consistent with recent research (Wright et al., 2023) on the influence of partnerships and modern adaptations on vocal music in Yunnan. The parallel emphasizes the universal awareness of vocal music's dynamic character and capacity to adapt to modern situations.

When the findings of this study are compared to earlier research, numerous common themes and insights emerge, underscoring the lasting importance of vocal music in communicating cultural symbolism and identity among Yunnan's ethnic minorities. The findings are consistent with past literature, confirming their validity and dependability. However, it is vital to recognize the current study's limitations, such as its limited sample size and emphasis on a single location. Future study might broaden the breadth and sample size to get a more complete knowledge of vocal music among Yunnan ethnic minorities, as well as investigate its larger implications for cultural preservation.

Overall, this study adds to the body of knowledge by giving useful insights on the cultural symbolism and identity communicated via the vocal music of Yunnan's ethnic minorities. The findings

highlight the importance of vocal music in maintaining cultural history, strengthening individual and community identities, and increasing intercultural understanding. The pedagogical implications of this research call for increased acknowledgment and support for the preservation and development of vocal music traditions within ethnic minority populations, in order to ensure their continuous vitality and cultural value in the face of modern difficulties.

6. CONCLUSION

Finally, this study delves into the cultural symbolism and identity portrayed through vocal music of Yunnan's ethnic minorities, giving light on the complex tapestry of traditions and artistic expressions among these communities. The findings show that vocal music plays an important role in shaping cultural landscapes, preserving cultural heritage, and fostering a sense of belonging and pride among ethnic minority communities. Key themes emerged from the study of 18 semi-structured interviews across multiple factors. Yunnan's ethnic minority groups, like as the Yi, Bai, Dai, and Hani, each have their own vocal music traditions that reflect their individual cultural identities. Vocal music has been discovered to have a variety of techniques, ornamentations, and timbres, demonstrating Yunnan's vocal music traditions' technical proficiency and aesthetic richness.

Nature, cultural legacy, rituals, and social norms have all been symbolically depicted and ingrained in the melodies and lyrics, making cultural symbolism a key component of vocal music. Vocal music can be used to communicate cultural meanings, preserve traditional values, and increase knowledge of ethnic minority identities. Furthermore, vocal music is important in defining individual and community identities, instilling a sense of cultural pride, and in facilitating intergenerational transmission of cultural information and values. The connection between vocal music and nature and the environment is obvious in the music's nature-inspired themes, ecological conscience, and environmental awareness.

Vocal music serves as a conduit for conveying ethnic minority populations' close contact with the natural world, emphasizing the importance of environmental sustainability and ecological balance.

Cultural heritage preservation is inextricably linked to vocal music, which acts as a vehicle for transmitting historical narratives, communal memory, and cultural continuity. In a dynamic and changing society, vocal music works as a bridge between generations, ensuring the preservation and transmission of cultural legacy. Vocal music enhances rituals and festivities by adding spiritual elements, encouraging social participation, and symbolically representing cultural traditions. During important ceremonies and joyful events, vocal music enriches the ceremonial ambiance and builds the cultural fabric of ethnic minority communities.

Vocal music exhibits its versatility and response to cultural changes and influences in the context of partnerships and contemporary adaptations. Modern features and cross-cultural partnerships breathe new vitality and invention into Yunnan's vocal music scene, allowing it to grow and resonate with current audiences while retaining traditional authenticity. Comparisons with earlier studies underscore the findings' consistency and validity, highlighting the continued importance of vocal music in expressing cultural meaning and identity among Yunnan's ethnic minorities. The study advocates for greater recognition, support, and preservation of vocal music traditions, highlighting their learning significance and possibilities for building cultural awareness, artistic abilities, and intercultural understanding among future generations.

Finally, this study highlights the fundamental relevance of vocal music in Yunnan's ethnic minority populations, going beyond mere enjoyment to serve as a potent vehicle for cultural expression, identity construction, and legacy preservation. It is hoped that the findings of this study will help to broaden understanding of the importance of vocal music and motivate additional

research and activities to protect and promote this unique creative tradition.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

This study has wide and theoretical/practical effects. These implications illuminate the findings' wider significance and provide insights for researchers, educators, politicians, and cultural practitioners. This study helps to a better understanding of the cultural symbolism and identity expressed by ethnic minorities in Yunnan through vocal music. It promotes respect and acknowledgment of diverse cultural traditions and values by encouraging intercultural discussion and appreciation. Cultural Preservation and Heritage: The findings emphasize the necessity of protecting cultural heritage and traditions through vocal music promotion and preservation. This study highlights the importance of vocal music as a cultural asset that should be preserved and valued for future generations.

This study contributes to the theoretical framework of artistic and cultural studies by providing insights into cultural symbolism and identity represented via vocal music. It adds to the existing body of knowledge and provides up new options for further investigation of the relationship between music, culture, and identity. The study expands our understanding of the symbolic representations and cultural meanings involved in vocal music. It lays the theoretical groundwork for further investigation into the broader implications of symbolism in artistic expressions and its role in building cultural identities.

The findings have practical consequences for teaching institutions, underlining the need of incorporating vocal music within the curriculum. Educators can use the cultural and pedagogical significance of vocal music to help students develop artistic talents, cultural appreciation, and intercultural understanding. The research has practical consequences for cultural practitioners, politicians, and tourism authorities. It emphasizes the potential of vocal music as a cultural attraction and advocates for the sustainable development

and promotion of vocal music traditions-centered cultural tourism. The findings underscore the importance of vocal music in generating a sense of community pride, identity, and social cohesiveness. Vocal music can be used by community groups and cultural projects to promote community engagement, empowerment, and intergenerational knowledge transmission.

Overall, this study adds to the general, theoretical, and practical domains by offering light on the cultural symbolism and identity communicated through vocal music of Yunnan's ethnic minorities. This study's consequences go beyond academia and include cultural preservation, intercultural conversation, learning applications, and community empowerment. These consequences are hoped to motivate additional research, policy development, and practical actions targeted at preserving and promoting Yunnan's rich cultural legacy represented by vocal music.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study has provided useful insights into the cultural symbolism and identity expressed by ethnic minorities in Yunnan through vocal music, it is crucial to recognize several limitations that may guide future research efforts. These constraints provide opportunities for additional exploration and refining of the existing knowledge base.

To begin, the sample size of 18 semi-structured interviews may be regarded limited, limiting the findings' generalizability to a wider population of ethnic minority groups in Yunnan. A bigger and more diversified sample, representing a broader range of ethnic populations and vocal music traditions, could be used in future research. This would allow for a more in-depth knowledge of the intricacies and variances seen in vocal music across cultural contexts. Second, because this study was limited to Yunnan and its ethnic minority groups, it may not fully represent the diversity and complexity of vocal music traditions in other parts of China, or even globally. Future research could look into comparative studies between different

places, looking at the parallels and contrasts in cultural symbolism and identity communicated through vocal music. This would give a more comprehensive view of vocal music as a universal vehicle for cultural expression. Third, this study relied heavily on qualitative research methodologies, which provide detailed insights into individual experiences and views. Incorporating quantitative methodologies, such as surveys or musical analysis, on the other hand, could provide a more thorough and multidimensional understanding of vocal music. Combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies would improve the research findings and allow for a more thorough examination of the cultural symbolism and identity represented through vocal music.

Furthermore, this study focused particularly on the respondents' opinions and interpretations of vocal music. Incorporating opinions from vocal music practitioners, specialists, and researchers could provide a more complete knowledge of the art form's complexity and nuances. To get a better understanding of vocal music practitioners' experiences, issues, and viewpoints, future research could incorporate collaborative relationships with vocal music practitioners and organizations. Furthermore, the primary focus of this research was on the ethnic minority music consequences of vocal music. Future research could look into the effectiveness of specific ethnic minority music interventions, programs, or instructional approaches that use vocal music to foster cultural appreciation, artistic talents, and intercultural understanding. This type of research could help to build evidence-based ethnic minority music practices and policies to assist the preservation and promotion of vocal music traditions.

In conclusion, while this study shed light on the cultural symbolism and identity expressed by ethnic minorities in Yunnan through vocal music, there are numerous limitations that should be considered. Future study could address these constraints by increasing sample size, performing comparison studies, including quantitative methodologies, incorporating a broader range of perspectives, and investigating



specific ethnic minority music treatments. Future study can improve our understanding of vocal music as a potent medium for cultural expression and contribute to its preservation and promotion for future generations by overcoming these constraints.

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