



Narrative review on the development and challenges of pipa education in China

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Abstract As a traditional Chinese folk instrument with a history of 2,000 years, the pipa has been valued by the Chinese government and favored by the Chinese people for its unique sound and rich expressive power. However, the development lineage and current status of pipa education in China have rarely been clarified, especially the current status of pipa education. This study used narrative review techniques to organize and analyze the history and current status of pipa education. This paper reviews the history of pipa education in China, focusing on the current development of pipa education, including teaching institutions, representative figures, target students, and teaching models. The study revealed that contemporary Chinese pipa education has achieved remarkable accomplishments. China's eleven conservatories serve as the primary institutions for imparting contemporary pipa education. Representative figures such as Lin Shicheng, Wang Fangdi, and Liu Dehai have made substantial contributions to the advancement of contemporary pipa education. However, pipa instruction is primarily targeted toward children and university students, with limited emphasis on elderly people and special children. Individual and group lessons in traditional pipa instruction possess their respective merits and drawbacks. Nonetheless, further exploration is warranted regarding integrated teaching models and the application of contemporary information technology in innovative teaching models to facilitate the advancement of modern pipa education.

Keywords: pipa education, traditional music education, innovative teaching, conservatory roles, traditional educational evolution

1. Introduction

Music instrumental learning is beneficial for bringing joy and shaping morals and good personalities (Demirgen & Esin, 2016) as well as promoting the development of memory (Jäncke, 2019), hearing (Baylor University. Robbins College of Health and Human Sciences, 2019), and reading skills (Sofologi et al., 2022). The Chinese Government considers music education to be significant in developing people's aesthetic and humanistic qualities. Between 2015 and 2020, the government called for the strengthening and improvement of music education in schools, including the promotion of ethnic music as a fundamental principle of music curriculum standards and the emphasis on incorporating traditional music from all ethnic groups in China into the teaching content (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2021).

The pipa has a long history and deep cultural heritage; as one of China's national musical instruments, it plays a vital role in traditional Chinese culture. After entering China around the 4th century AD, the pipa was introduced to China from Persia via Tianzhu (Yuan, 2016). At this time, the pipa had a curved head, four strings, four ledges and a pear-shaped body. The earliest known written record of the pipa is *The Interpretation of Names and Interpretation of Musical Instruments*, which states that the pipa was named after the two techniques of playing the pipa, "pi" (when the hand is played forward) and "pa" (Zhang & Wu, 2021). It was played with the left hand, held horizontally or diagonally downward, and the right hand played with a wooden plectrum. The pipa was introduced to China and became popular among the nobility of the Tang court. In 765 AD, Emperor Tang Ming Huang composed a solo piece for the pipa, *The Music and Dance of Wearing Rainbow-Colored and Feathered Costumes* (Yuan, 2016).

By the Song Dynasty, the government promoted Literal, and it became popular to compose Song lyrics. Song lyrics mostly describe the inner feelings of individuals. At this time, most pipa pieces relied on Song lyrics, and the melodies were gentler and soft to align with the Song style. Meanwhile, the way the pipa was played began to change. When a passionate piece of music was to be played, the plectrum was used; when a softer piece of music was to be played, the fingers were used (Gao, 2016; Yuan, 2016).

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the head of the pipa changed from curved to straight, and ten frets were added to the body of the instrument (Yu, 2011). The pipa was played with the left hand held vertically, and the right hand was played with the fingers instead of the plectrum. The modern pipa followed the shape and playing posture of the Ming and Qing dynasties (Gao, 2016). However, to increase the expressiveness of the pipa, the body of the pipa has increased from four ledges



and ten frets to six ledges and twenty-four frets, and twelve equal temperament tunings have been adopted. Plastic synthetic nails were used instead of natural nails, and the strings of the pipa were replaced with steel from nylon.

1.1. Problem statement

Over the past decade, pipa education has received much attention from the Chinese government and pipa scholars. A search of CNKI, China's most significant academic literature database, revealed at least 3,000 publications on pipa teaching during the past decade. However, a search of CNKI as of 5 November 2023 revealed no literature review of one pipa education article. Contemporary pipa education is supposedly a music education activity that combines theoretical knowledge and practical experience; however, the implementation of contemporary pipa education remains scarce in the current literature review. It is necessary to organize and summarize the current status and challenges of pipa teaching for pipa researchers and educators to rethink and reshape the future direction of pipa education and to improve its quality.

1.2. Research objectives

This study aims to provide a clear image of current pipa education through a brief overview of the historical development of pipa education, which will enable a better understanding of the development of pipa education today. This study describes the current status of pipa teaching institutions, representative figures, teaching targets and teaching models to identify the challenges that exist in current pipa education and aims to promote the development of pipa education in China in the form of recommendations.

1.3. Research questions

Although previous studies have organized the history of pipa education, no research has been conducted to clarify the current state of pipa education. Therefore, this study aims to answer the following questions:

- a) How did pipa education develop historically?
- b) What is the current status of pipa education?

2. Method

This study adopts Ferrari's (2015) methodology to conduct a narrative review. To obtain appropriate literature, the keyword combinations used in this paper were "pipa + education", "pipa + teaching" and "pipa + course". Searches were conducted in the Chinese databases CNKI, Wanfang, Wipu and Pub Scholar. The inclusion criteria were studies on pipa teaching published in Chinese between 2013 and 2023, including journals, books, theses and newspapers.

Initially, 3648 articles appeared in the first round of the search, with a large number of studies cross-referenced in multiple databases at the same time. As CNKI is the largest academic literature database in China, the authors decided to use mainly data from CNKI in the second round of the search. The abstracts of each paper included for consideration were initially screened according to the research questions of this study. The exclusion criteria were unavailability of the full text, noncompliance with the research question and non-Chinese literature. This paper highlights 37 studies that met the search criteria and had high journal quality (Chinese provincial journals and master's theses and above) or high citation counts.

3. Development of Pipa Education

From the end of the Han Dynasty (circa 550 AD) until the beginning of the Song Dynasty (circa 960 AD), pipa playing was mainly for the court or upper classes; thus, pipa education relied heavily on the musical institutions established within the court, such as the School for Court Musicians and the Pear Gardens Government (Yuan, 2016). The School for Court Musicians (Encyclopaedia of China, 2023a) and the Pear Gardens Government (Encyclopaedia of China, 2023b) were institutes established in the Tang Dynasty to train musicians and were later used in the Song Dynasty.

There were few solo pipa compositions during the Tang Dynasty, and the pipa was mostly used as a leading instrument or for accompanying dances in the court Yan music (Wu, 2017). By the middle of the Song Dynasty (circa 1020 AD), the economy of the Song Dynasty was prosperous, the middle class was growing, and people were satisfied with their material life and began to pursue spiritual enjoyment.

The Song Dynasty saw the emergence of a place specializing in entertainment, the Golan Washe. Golan Washe, an entertainment venue for performing theatre and various performing arts during the Song and Yuan dynasties (Encyclopaedia of China, 2023c). The number of folk music artists gradually increased, and the pipa gradually entered the folklore. The Song Literal popularly wrote Song lyrics, and the pipa also became the main accompanying instrument for Song lyrics. The prosperous development of music culture in the folk in the Song Dynasty is a sign of China's ancient music culture moving from powerful to ordinary people and from palace to folk (Zhang, 2015).

The pipa players of the Tang and Song dynasties accumulated a wealth of performance experience and repertoire, which played an essential role in promoting the maturity and development of the art of pipa solo performance. With the gradual

increase in solo pipa pieces and pipa performance techniques around the 19th century, folk musicians and folk class organizations began to teach the pipa. Pipa education began as a teacher-apprentice relationship (Yuan, 2016). Moreover, the pipa was divided into southern and northern genres of performance (Han, 2014). The southern genre was represented by Chen Mufu, while the northern genre was represented by Wang Junxiao. However, for unknown reasons, the northern genre of pipa declined, while the southern genre flourished. Due to the limitations of transport, economy and communication at the time, the southern genre gradually developed into several schools, namely, Wuxi, Pinghu, Chongming, Pudong and Wang (Feng, 2022; Yuan, 2016). Most of the schools have published their specific pipa scores or special performance techniques.

The Wuxi School is the first branch of the Southern genre. The founder of this school was Hua Qiuping (Shi, 2019). He studied with two masters of the Northern and Southern genres, Wang Junxiao and Chen Mufu, and thus, his playing style combines the strength of the Northern genre with the turns of the Southern genre (Shi, 2019; Wan, 2004). He then returned to Wuxi to compile *True Transmission of the Secret Pipa Scores of the North and South Genres* with Hua Yingshan, Hua Zitong, Zhu Youquan, Xue Yuquan and others in 1819. The material consists of 3 volumes of 62 minor pieces and 6 sets of major pieces for the pipas of both the Northern and Southern genres. A minor piece is a short musical piece, and a major piece is a composition with multiple minor pieces (Shi, 2019; Yuan, 2016).

Afterwards, the Pinghu School was founded with Li Tingsen and Li Fangyuan as representatives. Pinghu is simple, subtle and natural, with an emphasis on the communication of moods and emotions. The *New Pipa Scores for the Thirteen Great Songs of the Northern and Southern Genres* were written by Li Fangyuan in 1895. This material retains five pieces from Hua Qiuping (1819) and another eight new pieces (Chen & Gao, 2023). In this material, he introduced many special techniques of the Pinghu School, such as Jiao (the left hand intertwines strings, right hand playing) and Sha (left hand nails against the strings, right hand playing). Second, he also adapted some of the minor pieces into divertimento. Finally, to help the performer grasp the music, he added titles to the pieces (Shi, 2016).

The Chongming School is represented by Shen Zhaozhou and Liu Tianhua (Feng, 2022). In 1916, Shen Zhaozhou compiled the book *Yingzhou Ancient Tune*. It consists of 3 volumes, with a total of 44 smaller pieces divided by tempo into 22 largo, 17 allegro, 5 free rhythm, and 1 major piece. Most of these minor pieces are derived from Song dynasty lyric sheets; therefore, they are of high cultural and historical reference value (Cui, 2021).

The Pudong School is represented by Ju Shilin and his disciples Ju Maotang and Chen Zijing. The Pudong School specializes in the performance of Martial Pieces (Wuqu: narrative pieces, usually bold and vigorous). They pay close attention to the careful handling of music as well as timbre fluctuations, emphasizing the contrast in loudness between strength and weakness (Jiang, 2021). The Pudong School also innovated many performance techniques, such as Zhe (thumb and index finger hook different strings inwards simultaneously), Fen (thumb and index finger play different strings outwards simultaneously), Lun (the index, middle, ring, and pinky fingers of the right hand pluck outwards sequentially, the thumb pick the string) in the right hand and pressing in the left hand. Shen Haochu, a disciple of Chen Zijing, published the *Yang Zhen Xuan Pipa Score* in 1929. The complete score is 3 volumes and contains 14 pipa pieces. For the first time, the material divides the styles of pipa music into Literal Pieces (Wenqu: lyrical and scenic music), Wuqu and major pieces (Gao, 2020; Wu, 2012).

Wang Yuting was originally a disciple of Chen Zijing of the Pudong School, but he later studied with Li Fangyuan and Ni Qingquan and gradually developed his style of playing, which led to the creation of the Wang School (Cui, 2021). Wang Yuting's style of playing is simple and rigid but more contemporary in its approach to music, especially with traditional pieces (Yuan, 2016). At the same time, he was somewhat innovative in his technique for the pipa, creating the Hua (pull the string to another pitch) in the left hand and Feng diantou (the index or middle finger flicks back and forth, the thumb pluck different string) in the right hand. He published the *Wang Yuting Pipa Score* in 1940 with 19 pipa pieces. His many disciples, many of whom have become contemporary pipa players or educators, have had a significant impact on society (Cui & Zhao, 2022).

4. Current Status of Pipa Education

4.1. Teaching institutions

Between 1927 and 1964, nine professional conservatories were established in China. The heirs of various genres entered the conservatories as pipa teachers. For example, Zhu Ying, a disciple of Li Fangyuan, later joined the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, China's first conservatory, to teach pipa (Shi, 2016). In 2013 and 2016, China added two more specialized music colleges. As the number of students has risen sharply, the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China has also opened music majors at numerous universities to meet this demand.

In addition to pipa courses offered by universities, instrumental music training institutions, societies, or private studios also provide pipa courses. For instance, the Xianshun Pipa School in Liaoyuan City, China, is renowned as one of the most esteemed pipa schools, having trained over 3,000 students who have subsequently pursued studies at professional music conservatories since its establishment in 2006 (Chinese Artist, n.d.).

4.2. Representative figures

Contemporary pipa education has mainly been influenced by several prominent pipa school inheritors, such as Lin Shicheng, Wang Fandi and Liu Dehai.

Lin Shicheng is the sixth generation of the Pudong genre. After Lin Shicheng joined the faculty of the Central Conservatory of Music in 1956, he compiled China's first professional pipa syllabus (Wang, 2013). He was deeply influenced by Western music, so in his daily teaching, he paid great attention to his students' basic skills. In his teaching, he found that pipa pieces rarely contain exercises, so he composed 150 exercises for pipas containing Western major and minor keys. He also organized and compiled several traditional pipa scores for the Pudong genre. He pushed pipa performance into the professional teaching stage; thus, he is known as the founder of contemporary professional pipa teaching in China (Yuan, 2016).

The second representative is Wang Fandi, who was a disciple of Li Yansong, a master of the Wang genre. He pays much attention to the right hand's tonal treatment in his playing and teaching. He believes that the speed, strength, and movement of the right hand touching the strings affect the timbre of the performance (Sun, 2019). He divides some pipa playing techniques into points and lines according to the aural effect and emphasizes the combination of points and lines in his performance (Yang, 2018; Wang & Zhang, 2020).

The third representative is Liu Dehai, who was originally a disciple of Lin Shicheng. He also studied pipa performance with Cao Anhe of the Wuxi School, Sun Yude of the Wang School, and Yang Dajun of the Pinghu School. The first pipa concerto, the *Little Sisters of the Prairie*, was composed of Liu Dehai, Wu Zuqiang, and Wang Yanqiao in 1973 and created a new form of pipa performance (Liang, 2021). He loved composing and composed more than 100 pipa solos in his lifetime. He also elevated his compositions to a philosophical level, proposing Liu's theory of emotional ontology, which states that music is an indescribable emotional art that relies on the individual's spiritual world as a vehicle for expression (Li, 2013; Wang, 2022). Dialectical ideas in philosophy are also applied in some of his pipa playing techniques, such as "positive rebound", "upper string tone" and "three-finger wheel". These techniques not only solved the long-standing problems of the inability of the pipa's left thumb to press the strings and the rebound of the right hand but also greatly enriched the pipa's sound and playing techniques (Chen, 2021; Wang, 2022). For Chinese pipa education, he recognizes the value and significance of the existence of traditional pipa schools. However, he believes that genres need to give up competition for genre highs and lows. Moreover, regular communication between genres can promote the development of pipa education in China (Liu, 2021). Therefore, he has been actively promoting exchanges between pipa teachers from various conservatories and pipa teachers from overseas, which has had a positive impact on the development of pipa education in China.

4.3. Target students

The Civil Code promulgated by the Chinese government stipulates that natural persons over 18 years of age are adults and those under 18 years of age are minors (Xinhua News Agency, 2020). Based on this division, students in pipa courses can be categorized into minors and adults.

Most of the research on pipa learning for minors has focused on the elementary school stage. Physiologically, elementary school students are in the developmental stage, and their bones and muscles have yet to fully develop. Fine movements of the hand can have some development potential through training (Zhang, 2022). Psychologically, due to the limitations of life experience, it can be more difficult for them to understand the profound emotions expressed in music (Ding, 2018). In addition, at the same time, their emotions and interests change quickly, and their interest in learning becomes more difficult to maintain for a long time (Liu, 2020). Some pipa teachers have suggested that in the process of teaching elementary school students, they should first cultivate their interest in learning and increase students' motivation by encouraging teaching (Dong & Meng, 2018). Thus, children's musical sensibility should be cultivated through appreciation and listening to music (Xue, 2015). In addition, children's comprehensive quality of music needs to be cultivated (Dong & Meng, 2018). However, focusing on cultivating children's interest in learning the pipa may neglect the training of the basic skills of the pipa, which ultimately affects the presentation of the music (Wang, 2022). Therefore, some teachers believe that children need to lay a good foundation in the prestudy period, so they need to make strict requirements for children's holding posture, playing hand shape, musical rhythm, beat and playing power in teaching. Some teachers even propose the treatment of playing timbre and expressing musicality (Zhang, 2018). Yang (2020) disagreed with this overly harsh approach to training, which she believed would undermine children's self-confidence in learning the pipa. She suggested that the dalcroze method should be used to help children learn music in a holistic way. For example, children should be trained in sight-singing and ear-training in pipa lessons to improve their accuracy, completeness and ability to read music.

Zhang and Shu (2015) described some of the improvements gained by learning pipas for children with autism. The physical and psychological characteristics of autistic children are different from those of ordinary children. The central nervous system in the brains of autistic children affects their personalities, emotions and worldviews, leading to a series of psychological problems. Physically, autistic children often have social communication disorders and stereotypical behaviors. Their study revealed that playing the pipa can aid in the development of the central and motor nerves in children with autism, as the sound of the pipa stimulates their brain centers and enhances their auditory abilities. In addition, playing in a group promotes the development of individuals' nonverbal communication skills and their ability to work together. In nearly a decade of research

on pipa teaching, only Zhang and Shu (2015) focused on this unique group of children. However, this study did not reveal the exact procedure of music therapy for children with autism or the method of data collection.

Research on adult teaching audiences has focused on university students and older adults. Compared with children, university students are physiologically and psychologically mature. They are able to better control the strength of their fingers, arms, and shoulders, but the flexibility of their finger muscles may be lower because their physiological development has ceased. Psychologically, university students have richer emotions and life experiences than children and are able to better understand the emotions expressed in music (Zhang, 2021).

Compared to children, university students have clearer learning goals and are capable of independent thinking. At the same time, most university students have a certain foundation in pipas, and they can freely choose their playing speed and mood according to their playing ability to fit the musical mood of a certain piece. Therefore, in teaching college students, teachers pay more attention to professional skills, such as basic skills, performance techniques, musical performance and artistry, and interpretation of musical work (Xiang, 2019). This training can quickly improve university students' playing skills and stage performance ability. However, it has greater requirements for students' music theory and artistic understanding. They also need to learn more related music knowledge in other ways.

For elderly people, their fingers, hearing, eyesight, memory and other aspects significantly decrease compared with those of adults, and they are more prone to psychological anxiety (K. Zhang, 2016). However, they are more enthusiastic about learning and devote more time to learning. Zhang (2021) argued that by learning pipas, older people can improve finger agility and coordination, which is conducive to exercising older people's brain power and regulating their emotions. There are only four studies on pipa teaching for elderly people. Xu (2021) categorized pipa students in a senior university into three groups based on their age and playing level: beginner, intermediate and advanced. Different learning objectives and learning contents were arranged for each group. K. Zhang (2016) carefully selected favorite songs as learning content to engage older people in learning the pipa. They have the advantage of respecting the interests and individual differences of older people and teaching according to different learning progress and acceptance abilities. Y. Zhang (2016) argued that there is a need to understand the willingness of older adults to learn the pipa before teaching. He believes that not everyone is suitable for learning the pipa and that only older people who are particularly fond of the pipa and have a strong desire to learn it are suitable. Moreover, he believes that older people need to maintain at least two hours of practice every day to acquire a more solid playing technique. It is a good point to determine students' willingness to learn the pipa before teaching. However, enrolling only students who are very interested in the pipa may also turn away some who do not know the pipa. At the same time, each student has his or her own individual differences, and it is not appropriate to use a fixed practice time as a criterion. Zhang (2021) suggested that teaching older people should not be rushed, and she has a clearer plan for the amount of time older people should spend practising each day. For example, 20 minutes were required for the left- and right-hand techniques, 20 minutes for the piece technique, and 20 minutes for the improvisation technique.

4.4. Teaching models

Pipa teaching models are divided into traditional pipa instruction and innovative pipa instruction. Traditional pipa courses are taught in a face-to-face (F2F) form of oral transmission. In other words, the teacher demonstrates and plays, and the students watch carefully and then imitate and practice (Dong, 2019). Traditional pipa instruction is generally taught in individual lessons. In this way, the teacher can understand the learning status of each student and adjust the teaching content and progress according to the actual situation of the students (Yan, 2021).

However, traditional pipa courses often place too much emphasis on technical training, ignoring the diversity and richness of musical culture (Li, 2023). Teachers seldom introduce students to the cultural spirit of the pipa in the classroom, which results in students absorbing one-sided knowledge and mastering performance skills that are not in line with artistic aesthetics in pipa courses (Wang, 2023). At the same time, the traditional pipa course is based on the teacher's verbal narration, which makes it difficult to mobilize students' motivation to learn effectively. It also fails to give full play to the student's subjective position and does not fully respect the student's learning needs; therefore, it dramatically reduces the classroom effect of pipa teaching (Wang, 2021). In addition, too much demonstrative teaching by the teacher can also lead to a lack of thinking, as students remain in a state of imitation throughout the process of learning the pipa (Tang, 2022).

Group lessons are also one of the frequent delivery routes used in traditional pipa teaching. Group lessons are generally conducted by a pipa teacher who provides technical explanations, music theory and movement demonstrations to several students at the same time (Jia, 2014). Increased class numbers favor student interaction and competition as well as a more dynamic learning environment (Liu, 2020). In addition, group lessons are more affordable for parents and more effective for teachers (Dong, 2019). However, to facilitate the management of teaching, teachers mostly use a uniform music repertoire for teaching, which fails to meet students' individual needs (Xue, 2015). Group lessons are often used in formal education, as well as in music clubs or training institutions for nonformal education.

However, Wang (2023) believes that there is a large problem with teaching evaluation in pipa courses. Most teachers still rely on traditional exam-oriented education, and the evaluation of students tends to focus more on scores, paying little attention to students' comprehensive quality. The results of teaching evaluations are too limited, ignoring the process of

evaluation and tracking evaluation. Second, the evaluation methods used by teachers in teaching evaluation are relatively limited, and the subject of evaluation is often the teacher alone, without mobilizing multiple subjects to carry out multiangle evaluation and give students more diversified evaluations, which leads to a lack of comprehensiveness in the evaluation results and reduces the credibility of the evaluation effect. Therefore, an increasing number of pipa teachers have begun to make improvements to traditional pipa teaching.

Some scholars have proposed the use of innovative teaching models to teach the pipa, including integrated music instruction of Orff and Dalcroze, parental involvement from the Suzuki method and a combination of four international music instruction models—Orff, Kodály, Dalcroze and Suzuki—as well as teaching that utilizes electronic information technology. The Orff approach combines music, language and dance. It promotes the holistic development of children through the exploration of rhythm, melody, and grooves. Grounded in play and improvisation, this approach actively engages children in music learning within a pleasant and natural environment. In line with this concept, Wang (2011) recommends that teachers encourage students to independently explore the temporal differences between the various parts of the pipa. Simultaneously, teachers should devise various rhythmic exercises or movements for students to practice, tailored to the distinct timbres of each section of the instrument. This approach can not only enhance students' understanding of the instrument but also improve their rhythmic sensibility.

Dalcroze eurhythmics is a music education system created by the Swiss musician Dalcroze between 1903 and 1910. Its philosophy of music education emphasizes the expression and comprehension of rhythm, melody, and dynamics through bodily movement, underscoring the interaction between the body and music. Through improvisation and experiential learning, students cultivate musical perception and coordination via practice. Zhao (2015) incorporated this musical concept into pipa teaching. He believed that music could be used to relax the hands, shoulders and waist posture of pipa players and to regulate breathing during performance. Ning (2020) argued that students' interest and sense of musicianship can be stimulated through teachers' demonstrations of the piece, which is in line with the philosophy of Dalcroze eurhythmics, both of which are facilitated through physical movement and music. She therefore suggested that teachers should always demonstrate to their students that the expressive power of body movement needs to be fully utilized when playing. When the music is more melancholic, the teacher should create a slight swaying sensation in the body to help the students create a sense of image. In contrast, Li (2016) suggested that teachers devise simple body movements in some pieces for students to follow, as derived from Dalcroze's eurhythmics. The combination of physicality and music enables students to fully experience the music.

Ding (2019) and Li (2016) used concepts from the Suzuki method to suggest that parents listen more to create a musical learning environment for their children. Moreover, several studies have shown that parental involvement provides a number of benefits to children learning about the pipa, such as better performance outcomes (Xi, 2020), better practice habits, more parent-child interactions (Zhou, 2019) and positive emotions (Li, 2016).

Li (2013) combined Orff, Kodály, Dalcroze and Suzuki to teach the pipa. First, Suzuki's methods were used to teach listening and singing music, and Dalcroze's eurhythmics were used to relax the body and teach the fingerings of the pipa. The next step was to use Orff's rhythmic exercises to perceive changes in musical mood. The Kodály method was used to help with the right-hand Lun technique, thus improving the quality of the teaching as a whole. To evaluate the efficacy of this method, she conducted a comparison between two students of equivalent proficiency levels and found that the student who employed her approach acquired mastery of the musical material more rapidly.

Moreover, there are pipa teachers who suggest using modern information technology for teaching, such as flipped classrooms and blended learning for pipa courses for college students. Jin (2023) took the pipa course for music majors at Hubei College of Arts and Sciences as an example and introduced the way teachers used flipped classrooms to teach pipa courses. She uploaded some pipa videos for her students to watch, and they could study on their own time, which helped to develop their independent learning ability. She also tested the students regularly and targeted them after identifying deficiencies. At the same time, they can rehearse and communicate with each other online to improve learning efficiency and interaction. Finally, she believed that the teacher-sharing mechanism could lead to the equalization of education. Ren (2020) described how pipa teachers at Jinzhong College taught college students how to play the pipa in a blended learning environment. The classroom teaching used Tencent Meeting for online real-time teaching, and the learning channel was used to upload postclass videos after class. Teachers were required to develop a 17-week lesson plan before class, with 4 stages and an average of 1 stage every 4 weeks. The first three phases involved learning new knowledge, and the fourth phase involved review. However, students with fast learning progress cannot learn new content once they have completed the content and can only maintain it in the fourth stage while waiting for other students.

5. Conclusion

This review begins with an overview of the historical development of pipa education from the Han Dynasty to the present, followed by a review of the current status of pipa education and related challenges. The results of the review indicate that China's eleven conservatories constitute the primary training institutions for pipa education in the country. Representative figures such as Lin Shicheng, Wang Fandi, and Liu Dehai have made significant contributions to the development of contemporary pipa education. Pipa instruction primarily targets children and university students, with limited attention

devoted to the elderly and special populations. Both individual and group lessons in traditional pipa teaching have their respective advantages and disadvantages. However, further research on integrated teaching methods and the use of modern information technology in innovative teaching is needed. This paper employs a narrative review method, which presents certain limitations regarding the availability and selection of sources. Additionally, this study included only literature in Chinese, excluding English-language literature. Therefore, there are some limitations in the selection of studies to be included.

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Ethical Considerations

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Conflict of Interest

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