

# Research on Application Path of Traditional Music Elements of Hainan Li and Miao in Music Teaching for Preschool Children

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**Abstract:** Hainan Li and Miao traditional music represents a cultural treasure of Hainan's ethnic minorities, embodying unique ethnic rhythms, authentic emotional expressions, and profound cultural significance. Integrating this music into early childhood music education serves not only as a vital measure to preserve outstanding traditional ethnic cultures but also as an effective approach to enrich teaching content, optimize instructional methods, and cultivate children's cultural identity and musical literacy. This study focuses on traditional music elements of the Li and Miao ethnic groups in Hainan, examining their core artistic characteristics and compatibility with early childhood music education. It analyzes current challenges in incorporating Li and Miao traditional music into preschool music programs and explores systematic implementation strategies through five dimensions: educational resource development, content selection, innovative teaching methods, expanded learning environments, and teacher training. The research aims to provide theoretical references and practical guidance for localized, distinctive music education in kindergartens, achieving mutual benefits between preserving ethnic musical heritage and enhancing early childhood music education quality.

**Keywords:** Traditional music of Hainan Li and Miao ethnic groups; Musical elements; Early childhood music education; Application approaches; Cultural inheritance

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## 1. Introduction

Traditional music of China's ethnic minorities constitutes a vital component of the nation's outstanding traditional culture, preserving historical memories, living customs, and spiritual aspirations of various ethnic groups while holding immense cultural heritage value and artistic education significance. As the foundation of the national education system, preschool education serves as a critical phase for children to perceive cultural elements, cultivate artistic interests, and develop aesthetic sensibilities. Integrating indigenous ethnic minority musical elements into early childhood music education aligns with the educational guidelines outlined in the "Guidelines for Learning and Development of Children Aged 3–6," which emphasize "leveraging local cultural resources to help children appreciate the richness and excellence of their hometown cultures."

The Li and Miao ethnic groups, as indigenous minorities unique to Hainan, have cultivated diverse and distinctive traditional music cultures through centuries of daily life and production activities. The Li people's folk songs, bamboo and wood instrumental music, and firewood-carrying dance accompaniments, along with the Miao ethnic group's mountain songs and lusheng music, feature simple melodies, lively rhythms, and themes closely tied to natural life—elements that align perfectly with young children's innate curiosity and intuitive learning patterns. However, current music education practices in Hainan kindergartens predominantly rely on standardized music textbooks, with insufficient integration of local Li and Miao traditional musical elements. Challenges include shallow resource exploration, monotonous teaching methods, and inadequate teacher training, which not only hinder localized innovation in early childhood music education but also impede the living inheritance of ethnic minority musical heritage. Against this backdrop, exploring scientific approaches to incorporate traditional Li and Miao musical elements into preschool music education holds significant practical value and real-world relevance<sup>[1-3]</sup>.

## **2. Analysis of Core Elements in Hainan Li and Miao Traditional Music and Their Adaptability for Early Childhood Education**

### **2.1. Core Artistic Elements of Traditional Hainan Li and Miao Music**

Traditional Li ethnic music is rooted in folk songs and instrumental performances. Folk songs encompass labor chants, love ballads, and customary melodies, featuring melodious tunes and relaxed rhythms. These songs are primarily passed down orally, with lyrics that reflect simple, everyday life scenarios like farming, hunting, and festivals. The Li ethnic instrumental repertoire is highly distinctive, featuring bamboo and wood instruments such as single-log drums, dingdong wooden clappers, mouth bows, lié (a traditional mouth harp), and nose flutes. These instruments produce crisp tones with straightforward melodies, and their intuitive playing methods align well with children's auditory perception. Moreover, Li music is often integrated with dance and games. The rhythmic accompaniment of firewood-harvesting dances, with its distinct beats and strong musical dynamics, makes it ideal for children's rhythmic activities and dance performances.

Miao traditional music, primarily expressed through mountain songs and lusheng (reed pipe) performances, embodies the cultural heritage of Hainan's Miao ethnic group. The mountain songs feature soaring melodies and free rhythms, vividly depicting the daily life and folk customs of the Miao people. The Lusheng, as a signature instrument, produces rich and bright tones while blending musical performance with rhythmic body movements, creating dynamic musical interactions. Often performed during festivals, rituals, and folk events, this music carries a strong sense of everyday life and entertainment value, making it particularly engaging for young children to learn and participate in<sup>[4]</sup>.

### **2.2. Compatibility of Traditional Li and Miao Musical Elements with Early Childhood Music Education**

The musical features are tailored to the learning characteristics of young children. Traditional Li and Miao music features simple melodies, brisk rhythms, and a narrow vocal range, requiring no complex music theory knowledge or singing techniques. These elements align with the intuitive-action thinking and sensory-based learning patterns of children aged 3–6. Without professional training, children can easily perceive, hum, and imitate the music, effortlessly participating in musical activities and sparking their interest in music learning.

The content closely aligns with young children's cognitive development. Most traditional music of the Li and Miao ethnic groups originates from their agricultural labor and daily routines. Whether depicting farming and hunting scenes in Li folk songs or showcasing life pleasures and folk customs in Miao mountain ballads, the lyrics remain simple and direct, reflecting natural phenomena and everyday life experiences that children can easily observe and comprehend. For instance, Li labor songs often mimic the sounds and rhythms of fieldwork—similar to activities like planting and handicrafts children participate in kindergarten. This creates a sense of familiarity and resonance, making it easier for young learners to understand and absorb the musical messages conveyed<sup>[5]</sup>.

The content closely aligns with young children's cognitive development. Li and Miao traditional music originates from ethnic minority communities' daily life and production activities, focusing on natural landscapes, routine labor, folk games, and familial bonds. This approach resonates with children's life experiences and cognitive levels, enabling them to grasp musical concepts and appreciate the lifestyle charm and ethnic sentiments embedded in the music. The instructional format caters to preschool education needs, integrating traditional music with dance and games. For instance, the rhythmic accompaniment of the Li ethnic group's firewood-carrying dance features distinct beats and dynamic movements, allowing children to engage in physical exercises and dance routines while experiencing musical rhythms and enjoyment. Miao ethnic group's lusheng performances combine musical interpretation with body movements, creating highly interactive musical experiences ideal for group music games. This "music + dance + games" integrated model aligns with children's innate curiosity and participation preferences, seamlessly incorporating music education into popular activities. Such methodology enhances engagement and motivation, transforming music learning into a vibrant and enjoyable experience<sup>[6]</sup>.

The format aligns with early childhood education needs. Li and Miao traditional music is often integrated with games, dance, and folk activities, combining auditory experiences, physical movements, and interactive games. This approach breaks away from the traditional single-model approach of "listening and singing-focused" music education for young children, catering to their innate tendencies to be active, playful, and interactive. It aligns well with kindergarten teaching philosophies that emphasize gamification and life-related learning.

### **3. Current Status and Challenges of Integrating Traditional Hainan Li and Miao Musical Elements into Early Childhood Music Education**

#### **3.1. Integration into the Current Situation**

In recent years, as local cultural initiatives have expanded into schools, some kindergartens in Hainan have begun incorporating traditional Li and Miao music into their music education programs. By inviting folk artists to campuses and organizing activities such as simple folk song learning sessions and ethnic instrument appreciation workshops, these institutions have introduced young children to Li and Miao musical traditions. However, from a broader perspective, the integration of Li and Miao traditional music elements into early childhood music education remains at an elementary stage. A systematic and standardized teaching model has yet to be established, resulting in limited coverage and insufficient implementation depth of these cultural practices.

#### **3.2. Existing Issues**

There is insufficient exploration of teaching resources, and localized instructional materials are lacking. Most kindergartens only superficially utilize Li and Miao traditional music resources, selecting merely a small number of simple folk songs for teaching without systematically organizing music elements, instrumental materials, or folk music scenarios tailored to young children. Additionally, there is a shortage of specialized Li and Miao music textbooks, picture books, audio recordings, and videos specifically designed for preschoolers. The existing resources are fragmented and lack a coherent framework, making it difficult to support regular teaching practices.

The teaching application formats are monotonous and lack innovation. Currently, the integration of Li and Miao music into teaching predominantly follows the traditional model of "teachers singing, children learning," remaining limited to folk song singing and instrument appreciation. It fails to incorporate game-based, interactive, and experiential music activities tailored to children's age characteristics, and lacks sufficient integration of music with games, dance, and real-life scenarios. Consequently, children's participation enthusiasm is not fully stimulated, resulting in suboptimal teaching outcomes<sup>[7-9]</sup>.

Kindergarten teachers generally lack professional expertise in traditional Li and Miao music, with insufficient teaching adaptability and inadequate knowledge of its cultural significance, artistic characteristics, and performance techniques. This makes it challenging for them to accurately select, adapt, and teach Li and Miao music content. Additionally, teachers

lack specialized training and teaching experience in integrating local musical resources into early childhood education, resulting in an inability to design scientifically structured and engaging music activities that reflect Li and Miao cultural characteristics.

The teaching of ethnic minority music in kindergartens lacks sufficient emphasis and long-term mechanisms. Some institutions prioritize general music education over traditional Li and Miao music programs, failing to integrate these cultural elements into regular teaching systems. The absence of comprehensive instructional plans, pedagogical support, and evaluation frameworks has resulted in superficial integration of Li and Miao music into early childhood education, hindering sustainable progress in this field<sup>[10]</sup>.

## **4. Specific Application Approaches of Traditional Hainan Li and Miao Musical Elements in Early Childhood Music Education**

### **4.1. Deeply explore and integrate resources to establish a dedicated Liao and Miao music resource library for young children**

Tailored to the developmental characteristics and educational needs of young children, we systematically identify, curate, and adapt traditional Li and Miao musical elements to establish a comprehensive, localized teaching resource repository. Collaborating with cultural scholars, folk artists, and early childhood education experts, we have selected age-appropriate Li and Miao folk songs, instrumental pieces, and rhythmic music for preschoolers. Complex or obscure content has been removed, while melodies and lyrics have been simplified to better align with children's vocal capabilities and sensory perception. Additionally, we have compiled visual materials, including images, audio recordings, videos, folk tales, and cultural scenarios related to Li and Miao music. These resources include children's music picture books, animated videos, rhythmic movement tutorials, and DIY instrument-making kits. We have also developed kindergarten-specific Li and Miao music curricula to provide rich educational support for teaching practices.

### **4.2. Precisely select teaching content and integrate it in a tiered manner into early childhood music instruction**

Guided by the developmental principles of young children's physical and mental growth, the curriculum is structured in three age-appropriate tiers: small class, middle class, and large class, ensuring progressive integration. For younger children, the focus is on sensory development through Li-Miao music listening, simple rhythm imitation, and instrument tone identification—such as identifying the distinctive sounds of dingdong wood and lusheng, and performing basic body movements to Li-Miao rhythmic music. Middle-class children engage in learning simple folk songs, rhythm games, and basic movements, including singing adapted Li-Miao nursery rhymes and participating in firewood-drawing dance interactions. Older children delve into musical culture through Li-Miao music composition, instrument crafting, and folk music role-playing performances, allowing them to experience the charm of Li-Miao music through progressive learning experiences<sup>[11]</sup>.

### **4.3. Innovating Teaching Methodologies: Developing Game-Based Music Instructional Activities**

Adhering to the gamified teaching philosophy in kindergartens and innovating Li and Miao music instruction methods, we enable young children to learn through play and enjoyment. First, we implement music-based game teaching by integrating Li and Miao musical rhythms into activities such as passing a handkerchief, drum-beating flower-passing games, and ethnic rhythmic movements, allowing children to perceive musical rhythms and melodies through play. Second, we combine rhythmic dance instruction with the Li ethnic firewood-cutting dance and Miao Sheng flute dance to design simple ethnic music dances for young children, fostering the integration of music and physical movement. Third, we conduct instrument experience sessions where children create simple Li and Miao musical instruments using recycled materials, guiding them to strike rhythms and imitate performances to develop their hands-on musical skills. Fourth, we

create scenario-based teaching by incorporating scenes from Li and Miao folk life into musical performances, helping children understand the cultural significance embedded in the music.

#### **4.4. Expand teaching implementation scenarios to achieve comprehensive integration and permeation**

Overcoming the limitations of traditional classroom teaching, we integrate Li and Miao musical elements into kindergarten daily routines and various activities. Gentle traditional Li and Miao music is played during morning activities, area-based activities, and outdoor activities to foster a local musical atmosphere. During thematic educational events, initiatives such as the “Li and Miao Music Culture Festival” and “Young Ethnic Music Talents” are organized, inviting Li and Miao folk artists to perform and teach on campus. Through home-school collaboration channels, parents are encouraged to take their children to Li and Miao villages and folk museums to experience authentic Li and Miao music, thereby creating a collaborative music education environment involving both home and school<sup>[12]</sup>.

#### **4.5. Strengthening Faculty Development and Enhancing Teaching Professional Competence**

We will establish a sustainable teacher training system to enhance kindergarten teachers’ proficiency in Li and Miao music education. Regular specialized workshops will be conducted on Li and Miao traditional music knowledge, teaching adaptation techniques, and gamified instructional methods, featuring lectures by Li and Miao folk artists and preschool music education experts. Teachers will participate in school-based research activities, classroom observation sessions, and case study discussions to exchange teaching experiences in Li and Miao music education. Additionally, educators will be encouraged to conduct field research in Li and Miao villages to gain in-depth understanding of their musical culture, accumulate teaching materials, and ultimately build a professional teaching team that combines cultural literacy, instructional expertise, and innovative capabilities.

### **5. Safeguard Measures for the Application of Traditional Hainan Li and Miao Musical Elements in Early Childhood Music Education**

#### **5.1. Strengthen Ideological Emphasis and Improve the Teaching Management Mechanism**

Kindergartens should attach great importance to music education for indigenous ethnic minorities, integrate traditional Li and Miao music into early childhood music teaching within the curriculum planning, clarify teaching objectives and implementation requirements, establish specialized teaching research mechanisms, regularly conduct teaching seminars and lesson evaluations on Li and Miao music, and promote the normalization and standardization of teaching practices.

Meanwhile, a Li-Miao Music Teaching Task Force should be established under the leadership of the kindergarten principal, comprising the Head of Education and Care Services along with key faculty members. This team will coordinate efforts in developing teaching resources, designing educational activities, and conducting teacher training programs to ensure the effective implementation of all instructional objectives. Furthermore, the effectiveness of Li-Miao traditional music education should be integrated into the kindergarten’s comprehensive teaching quality evaluation system with clearly defined assessment criteria. Through regular inspections and feedback mechanisms, potential teaching challenges can be promptly identified and addressed, thereby establishing institutional safeguards for the sustained and in-depth incorporation of Li-Miao traditional musical elements into early childhood music education.

#### **5.2. Increase Resource Investment and Provide Material and Financial Support**

Increase financial investment in the development of teaching resources for Li and Miao music education, teacher training, and the procurement of teaching equipment, including the provision of Li and Miao ethnic musical instruments, music picture books, and multimedia teaching devices; strengthen collaboration with local cultural and tourism departments, Li and Miao villages, and folk artists to establish off-campus teaching practice bases, thereby providing diversified resource support for educational activities.

Kindergartens should establish dedicated funds for Li and Miao traditional music education, clearly defining the scope and standards of fund usage to ensure proper allocation and provide stable financial support for teaching activities. Concurrently, they should actively seek financial assistance from government agencies, non-profit organizations, and enterprises to diversify funding sources and address funding shortages. In purchasing teaching materials, beyond common Li and Miao ethnic instruments such as the nasal flute, mouth bow, dingdong zither, and coconut hu, educators can create miniature, simplified models tailored to children's age and cognitive development for hands-on exploration. Music picture books should emphasize engaging content and storytelling, integrating the origins, evolution, representative works, and cultural traditions of Li and Miao music to help children appreciate its charm through reading. Multimedia teaching equipment—including high-definition projectors, audio systems, and tablets—should be state-of-the-art and practical, enabling teachers to effectively utilize digital resources like traditional music videos and visual displays of Li and Miao performances. Additionally, when collaborating with local cultural/tourism departments, Li and Miao villages, and folk artists to establish off-campus teaching practice bases, kindergartens must allocate funds for facility development, maintenance, and event organization—such as inviting artists for live demonstrations and arranging village visits to experience musical culture—ensuring these bases deliver authentic, immersive learning environments for children.

### **5.3. Optimize Teaching Evaluation to Enhance Teaching Effectiveness**

Establish a diversified teaching evaluation system that incorporates children's interest in Li and Miao music, participation levels, and emotional experiences into the assessment scope, while abandoning single-dimensional skill assessments. Simultaneously, evaluate teachers' instructional design and teaching implementation effectiveness, integrating Li and Miao music education into teacher performance evaluations to motivate teaching enthusiasm and continuously optimize educational quality.

We will establish a dynamic evaluation feedback mechanism, regularly documenting children's performance in Li-Miao music activities through classroom observations. Key metrics include their proactive imitation of Li-Miao song rhythms and engagement in traditional dance movements. Parent feedback will be integrated to assess children's extended interest in Li-Miao music at home, such as humming learned songs or actively asking for cultural stories, thereby generating multidimensional evaluation data. Based on assessment results, teachers will promptly conduct instructional workshops to analyze common challenges and individual differences in Li-Miao music learning. For instance, some children may exhibit limited sensitivity to specific Li-Miao instrument timbres or low participation in group performances. To address these issues, teaching strategies will be adjusted through hands-on instrument exploration activities and collaborative dance games. This ensures evaluation outcomes effectively inform teaching practices, continuously optimizing and deepening the integration of Li-Miao traditional music elements into early childhood music education.

## **6. Conclusion**

The traditional music elements of Hainan Li and Miao ethnic groups demonstrate remarkable compatibility with early childhood music education. Integrating these elements scientifically into preschool music programs not only enriches teaching content and formats, but also stimulates children's musical interest while fostering cultural identity and aesthetic literacy. This approach enables dynamic preservation of outstanding ethnic traditional music during the preschool education stage. Current challenges in teaching practice—including resource scarcity, limited instructional formats, and insufficient teacher training—require systematic solutions through resource integration, content stratification, innovative teaching methods, professional development initiatives, and institutional safeguards.

Early childhood educators should leverage local cultural resources to thoroughly explore the educational value of Li and Miao traditional music. By adhering to the principles of early childhood education and the characteristics of music learning, they should continuously innovate teaching models and implementation approaches. This will enable traditional Li and Miao music to genuinely enter preschool classrooms and integrate into children's daily lives. Through experiencing

the charm of indigenous ethnic music, children can develop a love for music and cultural heritage preservation. Such efforts will facilitate the synergistic development of early childhood music education and ethnic minority cultural inheritance, laying a solid foundation for preserving China's excellent traditional culture and innovating localized preschool education practices.

## Funding

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