

# Studying Yunnan Choral Songs For Constructing The Songbook For Teaching Choral Major Students At Yunnan Tourism College, Yunnan Province, China

Huang Shuo, Chutasiri Yodwised,  
Mi Yang and Paknicha Tiemprasert  
Bangkokthonburi University, Thailand

Corresponding Author, E-mail: Chutasiri.yod@bkkthon.ac.th

\*\*\*\*\*

## Abstract

This study explores the pedagogical value of Yunnan choral songs in choral education and the development of a structured teaching guidebook for choral students at Yunnan Tourism College. Through expert evaluations, student observations, and experimental teaching, the research highlights the effectiveness of \*Xiang Ge Li La\* in enhancing pitch accuracy, rhythmic precision, vocal control, and emotional expression. Expert perspectives emphasize the importance of structured warm-up routines, the integration of folk songs for cultural and musical enrichment, and the necessity of a well-rounded choral curriculum. The study also develops and implements a Yunnan choral songbook, providing a systematic approach to choral training that includes music theory, vocal techniques, performance skills, and ensemble coordination. Findings suggest that this structured approach significantly improves students' choral proficiency and fosters cultural appreciation. Practical recommendations emphasize incorporating diverse warm-up techniques, expanding folk song usage, and enhancing ensemble training. Future research should explore the long-term impact of Yunnan choral songs in choral education, the role of digital learning tools, and the broader social and cultural implications of folk-based choral training.

**Keywords:** Yunnan Choral Songs; Constructing Songbook; Choral Major Students; Yunnan Tourism College; Yunnan Province; China

## Introduction

Yunnan is one of the most geographically complex provinces in China, characterized by its diverse landscape that includes towering mountains, deep valleys, and vast plateaus. This province is home to 26 ethnic minorities, each with its own unique musical traditions and performance forms that have been shaped by centuries of cultural evolution. The rich tapestry of ethnic diversity in Yunnan has led to a fascinating array of musical expressions, ranging from the haunting melodies of the Yi people to the vibrant rhythms of the Bai and Hani communities. Because of the large cultural differences among the ethnic groups in Yunnan, the study of ethnic choral teaching is particularly important in this region. Through the teaching research on the musical forms of various ethnic minorities, the musical culture of each ethnic group can be better inherited and protected, ensuring that these cultural treasures are not lost to the passage of time. Moreover, this research can significantly enhance students' understanding and appreciation of different musical styles, fostering a deeper respect for the cultural diversity that surrounds them. Liu, F. (2011) has noted that Yunnan is one of the

provinces with the most racial diversity within China, boasting a high population density and a large number of ethnic groups with a concentrated distribution. This concentration of ethnic diversity makes the research on teaching ethnic choral singing in Yunnan more challenging and complex. Scholars need to gain a deeper understanding of the historical background, social culture, beliefs, and customs of each ethnic group in order to better conduct choral teaching research and instruction. At the same time, it is also necessary to explore choral teaching methods and techniques suitable for the characteristics of Yunnan's ethnic groups, so as to contribute to the cause of choral education in Yunnan, as emphasized by Xu (2012).

Yunnan, with its cultural exchanges among multiple ethnic groups, faces the imperative of the inheritance and protection of music and culture of all ethnic groups, while also grappling with complex ethnic differences and challenges. However, there are still some problems that need to be studied in the practical teaching of ethnic choral singing in Yunnan. The region is inhabited by several ethnic minorities, each with a unique musical and cultural tradition and choral form. With the acceleration of globalization and the impact of modern lifestyles, Yunnan ethnic chorus faces the pressure of protection and inheritance. The current teaching mode of Yunnan ethnic chorus mostly relies on traditional oral transmission and learning, which lacks systematicity and scientificity. This traditional approach, while rich in cultural authenticity, may not be sufficient to meet the demands of contemporary education and the preservation of musical heritage. Zhang (2016) has pointed out these challenges and the need for innovative teaching methodologies.

## Research Objectives

1. To study Yunnan choral songs with key informant
2. To construct Yunnan choral songbook
3. To use the Yunnan choral songbook for teaching choral major students at Yunnan tourism college, Yunnan Province
4. To evaluate by using Yunnan choral songbook for teaching choral major students at Yunnan tourism college, Yunnan Province

## Research Methodology

This study uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. In the course of the research, key informants were interviewed, and through interviews with the key, the production objectives of the songbook were clarified, the most effective teaching methods were obtained, and the construction framework of the instruction manual was developed. The observation method was used to observe the learning of students before and after the experiment, and the relevant research results were descriptively analyzed to understand the actual teaching process and student interaction. The data of related factors were analyzed through formative test, summative test and performance test, and the song collection of Yunnan folk choral song was finally completed through expert review.

**Population:** The choral lesson was taught in 4 classes with a total of 120 students.

**Sample:** 30 students were randomly selected from the four classes. In the first round, the students (1,10,11) with the number of 1 in each class were selected, up to five students were selected. In the second round, students whose student number contains 2 in each class (2, 12, 20) are selected, up to five students are selected, and so on until 30 students are selected.

**key informant**

key Stewart is a trio of experts who have the ability to sing together and teach.

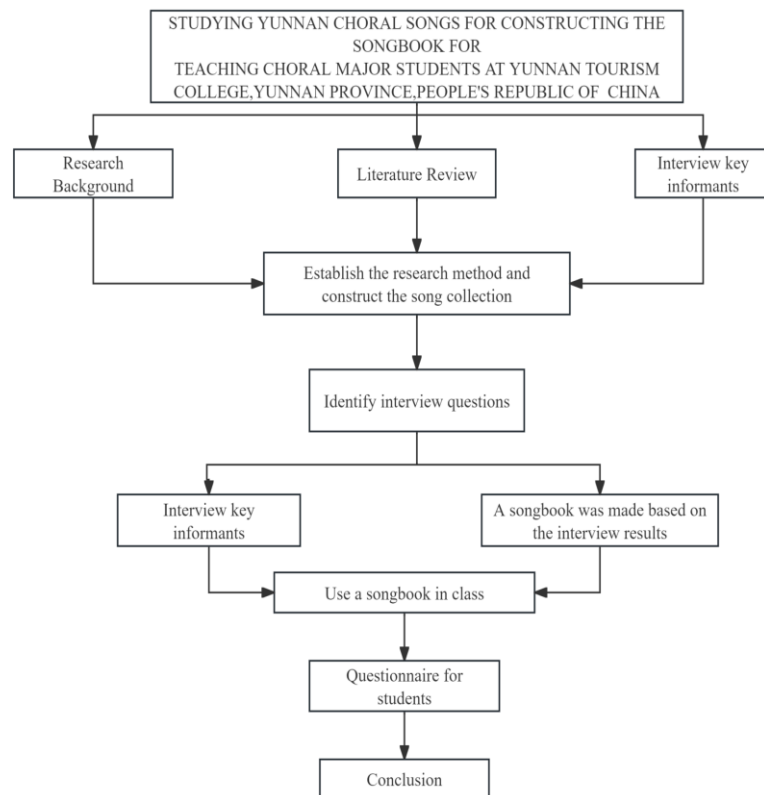
Expert selection criteria:

- (1) More than 20 years of experience in teaching Yunnan choral songs;
- (2) Professor, or associate professor;
- (3) Over 40 years old; Presided and participated in two scientific research projects above provincial level; ;
- (4) They have won the first prize in competitions.

Based on the criteria listed above, select the following key informants who meet the criteria:

- (1) Yin Wei, choral conductor, professor, director of choral department, Yunnan Arts university.
- (2) Zuo wei, an expert of choral conducting and is currently the chairman of the Yunnan branch of the World Federation of Chinese Choral Art.
- (3) Peng Juzhen, choral educator, associate professor, more than 20 years of experience in teaching Yunnan choral songs.

**Conceptual Framework**



**Figure 1** Conceptual Framework

## Research Findings

### 1. Yunnan choral songs

Yin Wei emphasizes the song's melodic structure, which is both intricate and accessible, making it an excellent tool for teaching pitch accuracy and intonation. He also highlights the song's rhythmic complexity, which offers a valuable opportunity for singers to work on their timing and synchronization. Additionally, the song's dynamic range and expressive potential make it an excellent choice for teaching vocal control and emotional expression. Zuo Wei focuses on the song's melodic richness, which provides an excellent platform for teaching pitch accuracy and intonation. He also notes the song's rhythmic diversity, which is beneficial for improving timing and synchronization. Furthermore, the song's dynamic range and expressive potential make it an excellent choice for teaching vocal control and emotional expression. Peng Juzhen underscores the song's melodic richness, which provides an excellent platform for teaching pitch accuracy and intonation. She also highlights the song's rhythmic diversity, which is beneficial for improving timing and synchronization. Additionally, the song's dynamic range and expressive potential make it an excellent choice for teaching vocal control and emotional expression. All three key informants agree that "Xiang Ge Li La" is an effective tool for improving choral singing skills due to its melodic, rhythmic, dynamic, and harmonic complexities. It offers a comprehensive approach to developing pitch accuracy, rhythm, vocal control, emotional expression, and harmonic blend, making it a valuable addition to any choral repertoire.

Effective warm-up exercises are essential for preparing the voice and body for choral rehearsals, and each expert has their own unique approach to achieving this goal. Yin Wei emphasizes a combination of physical stretching, breathing exercises, and vocal warm-ups such as sirens, lip trills, scales, and arpeggios. These exercises help to promote good posture, breath control, vocal range, flexibility, and pitch accuracy. Zuo Wei advocates for a structured approach that includes body alignment exercises, breathing exercises, humming, "ng" exercises, interval exercises, and articulation exercises. This approach helps to promote proper posture, breath control, resonance, vocal placement, pitch accuracy, and diction, ensuring that students are ready to sing with confidence and precision. Peng Juzhen focuses on a variety of exercises to address different aspects of vocal technique, including physical stretching, breathing exercises such as straw phonation, vowel exercises, resonance exercises, and flexibility exercises. These exercises help to promote relaxation, breath support, vowel placement, resonance, and vocal agility, ensuring that students are ready to sing with ease and confidence.

Overall, by incorporating a combination of physical stretching, breathing exercises, and vocal warm-ups that address different aspects of vocal technique, we can effectively prepare students for choral rehearsals. These exercises help to promote good posture, breath control, vocal range, flexibility, pitch accuracy, resonance, and vocal agility, ensuring that students are ready to sing their best. Each expert's unique approach provides valuable insights into the different ways to achieve these goals, highlighting the importance of a well-rounded warm-up routine in choral rehearsals.

The inclusion of folk songs in a choral curriculum offers multifaceted educational value, as highlighted by the perspectives of Yin Wei, Zuo Wei, and Peng Juzhen. Each expert emphasizes different aspects of the benefits, providing a comprehensive understanding of the value that folk songs bring to choral education.

Yin Wei focuses on the cultural awareness and appreciation that folk songs foster. By exploring the traditions, values, and histories encapsulated in these songs, students gain a broader worldview and develop empathy for different cultures. The unique musical structures of folk songs also challenge students to expand their musical vocabulary and adaptability, enhancing their technical skills and overall musicianship.

Zuo Wei highlights the exposure to diverse musical styles and historical education that folk songs provide. Learning and performing these songs broadens students' musical horizons and inspires creativity. The historical significance of folk songs enriches students' understanding of history and the role of music in documenting and preserving it. The emphasis on storytelling and emotional expression within folk songs also enhances students' interpretative skills and stage presence. Peng Juzhen emphasizes the linguistic and emotional development that folk songs facilitate. The opportunity to explore different languages and dialects improves students' language skills and phonetic awareness. The emotional narratives within folk songs develop students' emotional intelligence and empathy, enhancing their expressiveness and stage presence. The simplicity and accessibility of folk songs make them an excellent tool for teaching musical fundamentals, while the communal nature of folk singing fosters active participation and a sense of community.

Overall, the educational value of including folk songs in a choral curriculum lies in their ability to promote cultural understanding, enhance musical skills, develop linguistic and emotional intelligence, and foster a sense of community. By engaging with these songs, students become more well-rounded musicians and individuals, gaining a deeper appreciation for the rich tapestry of human experience and expression.

## **2. Constructing Yunnan choral songbook**

### **Teaching curriculum objectives**

The purpose of this study is to develop a teaching Guidebook for the choral class of choral major students at Yunnan Tourism College based on the opinions of Three experts, and to carry out teaching activities and experiments with the teaching Guidebook. Through the preliminary research, according to the research process, the experimental results include: experts' evaluation of the course teaching Guidebook; Observation of students in the teaching process; Pretest results; The teaching Guidebook of this course will help students to master the preliminary key choral singing skills, master the complete ethnic songs rhythm, accurate score recognition, complete rehearsing the choral piece, and master the preliminary choral theory knowledge.

This course will be taught in accordance with the course teaching plan. According to the expert's advice, the course will last 8 lessons for a total of 16 weeks. The course content will be set up and modified according to the opinions of the expert group, including theoretical knowledge of the choral singing, elementary touch skills, rhythm, simple harmony accompaniment, etc. Each lesson lasts 90 minutes.

#### **4.2.2 Teaching course tasks**

This course covers the fundamentals and skills of choral singing. In the choral singing Fundamentals course, students will learn the layout of the choral singing skill, basic ethnic music theory, chords and melodies. The course also covers performance skills and choral singing training and optimization, as well as basic choral singing skills such as voice position, unification of vocal range, and speed control.

choral singing basic courses are usually taught by professional choral singing teachers, and students need to have complete and correct posture, posture and voice use to learn. Through step-by-step basic training, students will gradually improve their choral singing skills, increasing pitch control and musical sensation, enabling them to absorb higher levels of music and singing.

#### 4.2.3 Teaching course content and basic requirements

Choral teaching content encompasses not only basic vocal techniques but also includes music theory knowledge, choral skills, repertoire learning, performance techniques, teamwork, understanding of conducting, and music appreciation, aiming to comprehensively enhance the musical literacy and performance abilities of choir members.

Learning vocal techniques is the foundation of choral teaching. This includes exercises in breath control, teaching each member how to use abdominal breathing to support their voice, thereby producing a fuller and more powerful sound. Training in vocalization focuses on how to use the vocal cords correctly, avoiding unnecessary vocal fatigue and injury. The development of pitch and rhythm sense is achieved through repeated scale exercises and rhythm games, ensuring that each member can accurately grasp the melody and rhythm. The use of resonance makes the voice more rounded and penetrating, resulting in a more harmonious and unified choral sound.

Learning music theory is the cornerstone of understanding choral music. By studying music theory, members can better understand the structure of the repertoire, including the duration of different notes, the combination of various rhythmic patterns, the progression of harmony, and the construction of musical forms. This theoretical knowledge not only helps members practice more purposefully but also allows them to understand works more deeply when appreciating music.

The cultivation of choral skills is key to enhancing the overall performance of the choir. The balance between parts requires careful adjustment to ensure that each part is clearly presented while maintaining overall harmony. The unification of timbre is achieved through practice, as members need to learn how to adjust their voices to blend with their peers. The control of volume and synchronization of rhythm require members to pay high attention and work with a tacit understanding to ensure the fluency and coordination of choral performances.

Repertoire learning is an important part of daily practice for a choir. Practicing repertoire that suits the choir's level not only stimulates the members' interest but also gradually improves their singing skills. Different styles and periods of choral works enrich the members' musical experiences, giving them a more comprehensive understanding of choral music.

The cultivation of performance skills is key to making the choir more confident and attractive to audiences on stage. Through training in body language, members can better express the emotions of the music, while expression management makes their performances more natural and vivid. Learning stage etiquette ensures that the choir presents itself appropriately in public, leaving a good impression on the audience.

Teamwork is the core of a choir's success. By strengthening communication and cooperation among members, fostering team spirit and collective consciousness, the choir can achieve a high degree of harmony in rehearsals and performances. This is reflected not only in musical coordination but also in daily team activities, such as discussing repertoire choices and participating in decision-making.

Understanding of conducting is the bridge of communication between the choir and the conductor. Learning how to understand the conductor's gestures and intentions, and

establishing good communication with the conductor, is the prerequisite for ensuring that the choir can accurately execute the conductor's intentions. This requires members to be highly sensitive and responsive to the conductor's movements.

Finally, the improvement of music appreciation ability is an important aspect of personal cultivation for choir members. By listening to recordings or live performances of different choirs, members can broaden their musical horizons and enhance their music appreciation and aesthetic levels. This not only enriches their musical experiences but also inspires their love and pursuit of music.

In summary, the richness and comprehensiveness of choral teaching content are evident. Through comprehensive and detailed teaching, a choir can not only improve technically but also make progress in artistic cultivation and teamwork, ultimately presenting unforgettable and impressive performances on stage.

### **3. Using the Yunnan choral songbook for teaching choral major students at Yunnan tourism college, Yunnan Province**

#### **1. Overview of Instructional Design**

In our vibrant university, I have the honor of serving as the conductor of the choir. Today, I will present to you a special instructional design aimed at enhancing students' musical skills and teamwork abilities through choral pieces with ethnic minority characteristics. We plan to employ a series of creative and interactive teaching methods, such as classroom experiments, group discussions, and fun games, to enable students to master choral skills in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere.

#### **2. Instructional Objectives**

Our goal is to enable students to proficiently master choral pieces with ethnic minority styles, not just learning to sing but also understanding the culture and history behind them.

Through professional guidance, students will acquire correct breathing and vocalization techniques, allowing them to excel in choral performances.

We hope that through group collaboration, students will improve their teamwork skills, learn to listen and cooperate, and ultimately present a perfect show on stage.

#### **3. Instructional Content**

##### **3.1 Selected Repertoire**

We have carefully selected representative ethnic minority choral pieces, such as "Miao Flying Songs" and "Dong Large Songs," which are not only melodiously beautiful but also rich in ethnic charm.

We hope that through these pieces, students can personally experience and appreciate the musical appeal of different ethnic minorities, thereby broadening their musical horizons.

##### **3.2 Music Theory and Skills**

We will start with basic music theory, introducing the basic theories and characteristics of ethnic minority music, giving students a comprehensive understanding of it.

Next, we will teach the correct breathing and vocalization methods, which are crucial skills in choral performances.

Finally, we will delve into the harmonic structure and rhythmic characteristics of the pieces to help students better understand and perform the music.

#### **4. Instructional Methods**

##### **4.1 Classroom Experiments**

In the classroom, we will use demonstration and imitation to allow students to personally experience the unique styles of ethnic minority music, feeling its distinctive rhythm and emotions.

We will also analyze the vocalization techniques of different ethnic minority music and, through practical exercises, gradually enable students to master these techniques.

#### 4.2 Group Discussions

Students will be divided into groups to discuss the styles and characteristics of the ethnic minority music they have chosen, sharing their discoveries and feelings.

Through group discussions, students can not only learn from each other but also develop their communication and collaboration skills.

#### 4.3 Fun Games

We have designed a series of fun games related to ethnic minority music, such as rhythm follow-the-leader and pitch guessing games, allowing students to master musical skills in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere.

These games not only stimulate students' interest but also help them improve their musical literacy without realizing it.

#### 5. Instructional Assessment

We will assess students' mastery of skills through classroom performance and the final choral presentation, ensuring that each student can perform at their best in the choir.

Through the participation in group discussions and game activities, we will evaluate students' teamwork abilities, ensuring they can play their roles within the team.

#### 6. Instructional Time Arrangement

The instructional period is 8 weeks, with two classes per week, each lasting 90 minutes, ensuring students have enough time to learn and practice.

The first 4 weeks will focus on music theory and skill instruction to help students lay a solid foundation.

The last 4 weeks will concentrate on rehearsal and preparation for the presentation, ensuring students can perform outstandingly in the final show.

#### 7. Instructional Resources

We will prepare a wealth of audio and video materials on ethnic minority music for students to refer to and learn from, allowing them to more intuitively feel the charm of ethnic minority music.

We will also provide scores and related teaching aids to help students better understand and master the pieces.

#### 8. Conclusion

Through this instructional design, we not only hope that students can master choral skills with ethnic minority styles but also hope they can deeply understand and experience the musical cultures of different ethnic minorities. By combining classroom experiments, group discussions, and fun games, we will enable students to enhance their musical literacy and teamwork abilities in a pleasant atmosphere.

The above instructional design has fully considered the characteristics of ethnic minority music and the learning needs of students, looking forward to the approval and support of the instructional director. We believe that through this unique teaching experience, students

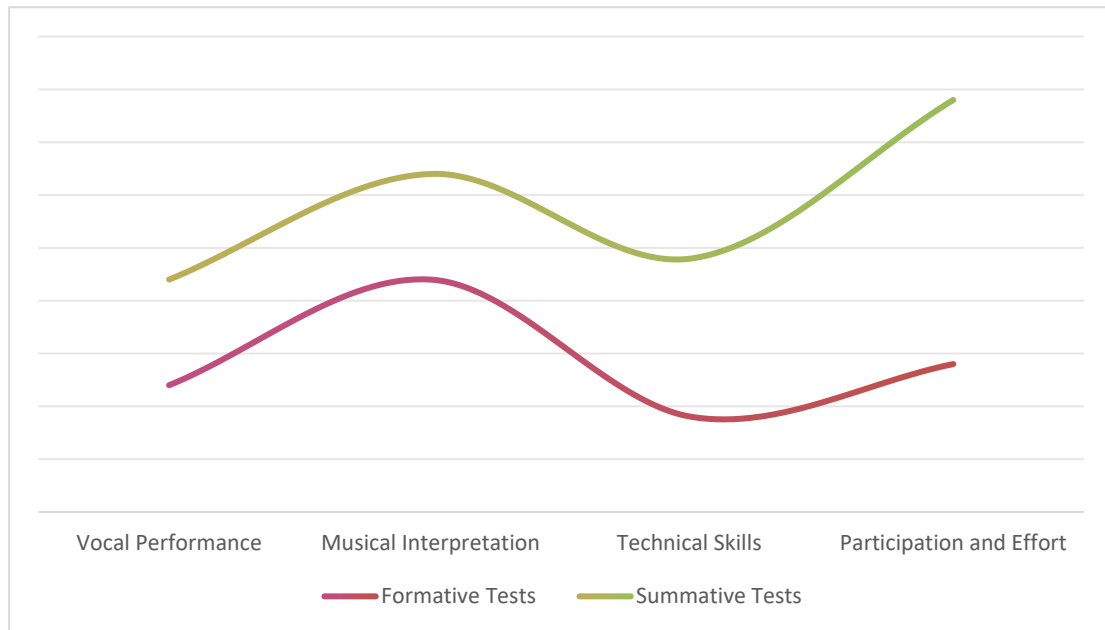
will not only gain something musically but also acquire valuable experience in teamwork and cultural understanding.

**5. Evaluating by using Yunnan choral songbook for teaching choral major students at Yunnan tourism college, Yunnan Province**

Test comparison

Evaluation content (100 points)					
Students NO	Teaching connect	Teaching methods	learning status	Teachers' evaluation methods.	Total score
NO 1	21.56	22.45	20.37	22	86.38
NO 2	21.78	22.34	20.89	22.67	87.68
NO 3	22.12	21.95	20.56	23.01	87.64
NO 4	21.67	22.89	20.45	22.34	87.35
NO 5	22.45	21.78	20.98	22.56	87.77
NO 6	21.98	22.67	20.78	22.45	87.79
NO 7	22.34	21.56	20.67	22.89	87.46
NO 8	22.01	21.67	20.56	23.12	87.36
NO 9	21.78	22.45	20.98	22.34	87.55
NO 10	21.89	22.67	20.78	22.45	87.79
NO 11	22.56	21.89	20.67	22.45	87.57
NO 12	21.67	22.34	20.78	22.89	87.68
NO 13	22.12	21.95	20.45	23.01	87.53
NO 14	21.89	22.67	20.56	22.34	87.46
NO 15	22.45	21.78	20.89	22.56	87.68
NO 16	21.95	22.12	20.98	22.78	87.83
NO 17	22.34	21.56	20.67	23.12	87.69
NO 18	21.78	22.45	20.89	22.34	87.46
NO 19	22.01	21.67	20.56	22.89	87.13
NO20	21.89	22.34	20.78	22.45	87.46

1.



It can be seen from the data in the above table that students' abilities of Musical Interpretation and Participation and Effort have been significantly improved, and their overall singing level has been greatly improved.

## Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the multifaceted educational benefits of incorporating Yunnan choral songs into choral training and the significance of developing a structured teaching guidebook for choral instruction. The expert insights on "Xiang Ge Li La" emphasize its melodic, rhythmic, dynamic, and harmonic complexity, making it a highly effective tool for developing essential choral skills such as pitch accuracy, intonation, vocal control, and emotional expression (Feng, 2010). Additionally, the diverse warm-up techniques proposed by the experts reinforce the importance of a well-rounded vocal preparation routine, ensuring that singers achieve optimal breath support, resonance, and articulation. The inclusion of folk songs in choral curricula further enhances students' cultural awareness (Chen, 2018), musical adaptability, historical knowledge, and emotional expressiveness, fostering a more comprehensive musicianship. Furthermore, the development of a Yunnan choral songbook based on expert recommendations and experimental teaching results offers a structured and progressive learning framework for choral students at Yunnan Tourism College. By integrating theoretical knowledge, vocal techniques (Wang, 2016), choral skills, repertoire learning, and performance techniques, the course enables students to build a strong foundation in choral singing while fostering teamwork, stage presence, and musical appreciation. Overall, this study underscores the pedagogical value of Yunnan choral songs and structured teaching methodologies in enhancing choral education, ultimately enriching students' technical proficiency and artistic expression in choral performance.

## Recommendations

### **1. Practical Recommendations**

Based on the findings, it is recommended that choral educators incorporate Yunnan choral songs, such as Xiang Ge Li La, into their curricula to enhance students' pitch accuracy, rhythmic precision, vocal control, and emotional expressiveness. Educators should adopt a structured warm-up routine that integrates physical stretching, breath control exercises, and vocalization techniques tailored to different aspects of vocal development. Additionally, the use of folk songs should be expanded to promote cultural awareness, linguistic diversity, and musical adaptability. The implementation of a standardized Yunnan choral songbook, as developed in this study, should be systematically integrated into choral training programs, ensuring a balanced approach that includes theoretical instruction, vocal techniques, performance skills, and ensemble coordination. It is also essential to emphasize teamwork and conducting interpretation to improve choral cohesion and responsiveness. Finally, providing students with opportunities to engage in live performances and music appreciation activities will further enhance their artistic growth and stage confidence, making them more well-rounded choral singers.

### **2. Recommendation for future research**

Future research should explore the long-term impact of incorporating Yunnan choral songs into choral education, assessing how sustained exposure influences students' technical skills, cultural appreciation, and artistic expression. Comparative studies could be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of different folk song traditions in choral training, providing insights into best practices for integrating ethnic music into vocal pedagogy. Additionally, further research could examine the application of digital and interactive learning tools in teaching Yunnan choral music, enhancing accessibility and engagement for diverse learners. Investigating the role of choral music in fostering cross-cultural exchanges and community engagement could also provide valuable perspectives on the broader social impact of folk-based choral education. Finally, longitudinal studies tracking students' progress after completing the Yunnan choral course would offer deeper insights into the pedagogical effectiveness of the developed teaching guidebook, allowing for continuous refinement and adaptation to evolving educational needs.

## **References**

- Chen, L. (2018). The role of choral music in Chinese cultural education. *Journal of Music Education Research*, 22(3), 145-160.
- Feng, Y. (2010). The development of choral music education in Yunnan Province. *Journal of Music Pedagogy*, 35(1), 112-125.
- Liu, F. (2011). The role of music in Chinese education. *Journal of Music Education*, 23(3), 210-225.
- Wang, J. (2016). The development of choral music in contemporary China. *Chinese Music*, 38(2), 45-60.
- Xu, J. (2012). The integration of ethnic music into the curriculum of music education in Yunnan. *Journal of Music Education Research*, 18(1), 145-160.
- Zhang, J. (2016). The significance of Yunnan folk songs in Chinese music education. *Journal of Chinese Music Education*, 20(2), 98-110.