
Bai Pai Pingju in Tianjin: Guidelines for Protection, Development, and Inheritance

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Abstract

Bai Pai Pingju in Tianjin, a distinctive school within the broader Pingju tradition, embodies a rich cultural heritage defined by expressive vocal techniques, emotive performances, and a specialized repertoire. This qualitative study investigates the preservation, development, and transmission of Bai Pai Pingju. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with experienced performers, instructors, and cultural practitioners, complemented by participant observation of performances, rehearsals, and training sessions. Using NVivo for thematic analysis, the study identified the pivotal roles of intergenerational transmission, mentorship, and community engagement in sustaining the art form. Institutional support—through educational initiatives, training programs, and public outreach—was also found to be essential for nurturing emerging talent and enhancing audience awareness. At the same time, challenges such as modernization, evolving audience preferences, and the declining number of traditional performers underscore the urgency of adaptive strategies. The findings reveal that the continuity of Bai Pai Pingju relies on a dynamic balance between preservation, innovation, and social support, where traditional techniques are not only documented and taught but also creatively integrated into contemporary contexts. By drawing on lived experiences and cultural practices, this research demonstrates how Bai Pai Pingju can sustain its relevance and vitality, ensuring that this treasured form of Tianjin's artistic heritage is effectively transmitted to future generations.

Keywords: Experiential Learning, Literacy Competency, Curriculum Development, Educational Design Research, Private Schools, Reading and Writing Skill

1. Introduction

Bai Pai Pingju in Tianjin is a distinctive and expressive school within the broader tradition of Pingju Opera, one of the most valuable theatrical systems in northern China (Li, 2022). Bai Pai Pingju is characterized by emotionally rich vocal performances, a melancholic style, and a unique repertoire that embodies both artistic refinement and strong regional identity. Originating in Tianjin, this performance school has played a vital role in enriching the region's cultural vibrancy by merging art, tradition, and community culture. However, with the rapid pace of modernization, shifting cultural preferences, and a declining number of professional performers, Bai Pai Pingju now faces severe threats of extinction (Liu, 2023). These challenges are compounded by the disappearance of traditional apprenticeship systems and limited institutional support. As a significant component of China's intangible cultural heritage, traditional Chinese opera reflects profound aesthetic, historical, and social values. Among the operatic forms in the region, Pingju stands out for its accessible narratives, expressive singing, and emotional depth (Xu, 2023). Developed as a folk art during the late Qing Dynasty, Pingju was popular across northern China—particularly in Tianjin and Hebei—because of its simple structure and relatable themes. The Bai Pai Pingju school emerged as one of the most influential and distinctive representatives of this tradition, named after the legendary artist Bai Yushuang. Her emotionally charged and artistically experimental performances left a lasting impact on the cultural landscape of Tianjin (Zhang et al., 2024).

Bai Pai Pingju is renowned for its emotional realism, lyrical delivery, expressive vocal techniques, and graceful body language, all of which distinguish it from other regional schools. Its productions often portray the inner struggles and emotional depth of female characters through subtle vocal tones and refined gestures that convey psychological nuance (Yang et al., 2022). Over the decades, the school has developed a distinctive repertoire and performance style that symbolize Tianjin's artistic temperament and connect it deeply with Chinese cultural identity. Nevertheless, in the age of modernization, globalization, and digital entertainment, traditional performing arts such as Bai Pai Pingju face unprecedented challenges. Reduced media visibility, declining training opportunities, and shrinking traditional audiences have collectively contributed to cultural erosion and the discontinuity of performance skills.

The defining features of Bai Pai Pingju—its expressive vocal techniques, delicate emotional delivery, and specialized repertoire—exemplify the artistic ingenuity and cultural essence of Tianjin (Shi, 2022). The refinement of this style over decades by exceptional performers has created a rich theatrical tradition that continues to captivate audiences (Zong et al., 2025). Yet, like many traditional performing arts, Bai Pai Pingju struggles in modern times due to changing audience preferences, ongoing modernization, and a shortage of skilled performers.

Preserving, developing, and transmitting Bai Pai Pingju are therefore essential not only to safeguard cultural memory but also to maintain its artistic brilliance (Shi et al., 2025; Brown et al., 2023). Although limited research exists on the mechanisms of transmission, community participation, and institutional support for Bai Pai Pingju, the topic remains historically and artistically significant. Understanding how this art form is taught, performed, and adapted to modern contexts is crucial for developing effective strategies that ensure its continued survival (Sheu et al., 2024).

This research adopts a qualitative approach, involving in-depth interviews with performers, teachers, and cultural practitioners, as well as participant observation of performances and training workshops. Ultimately, the study aims to explore the protection, development, and transmission of Bai Pai Pingju, contributing to the broader effort of preserving China's intangible cultural heritage. It highlights that mentorship, community engagement, and institutional reinforcement are key to ensuring this treasured art continues to thrive in the hearts and minds of future generations.

This research use qualitative analysis to explores the conservation, development, and transmission of Bai Pai Pingju. Earlier studies, including Ren (2025), have found faults in ICH transmission, including inadequate user experience and lack of engagement, but Lu and Ahmad (2023) have found contradictions between cultural preservation and modernization in traditional villages. Such limitations hinder effective succession and permanent growth. These concerns are the focus of the current investigation through a combined approach that encompasses community involvement, stringent evaluation, and documentation with the aid of technology. This framework enhances the engagement of audiences, retention of culture, and a compromise between protection and contemporary development, which leads to a more sustainable pathway of protecting and developing Bai Pai Pingju.

2. Literature Review

By strengthening core cultural capital through design intervention strategies, Sun et al. (2024) proposed a sustainable livelihood model for rural regions rich in intangible cultural heritage (ICH). This approach not only supports the sustainable development of rural communities but also ensures the preservation of ICH. A similar initiative in Luanzhou demonstrated how the historical legacy of shadow play could serve as a model for innovative and sustainable rural development in contemporary contexts.

In response to issues such as poor user experience and limited content interactivity in the transmission of traditional performing arts, Ren (2025) developed the Intelligent Heritage Transmission System of the Play Culture (IHTSDC). This model aims to integrate traditional play heritage into modern digital society. Complementing this, Ding et al. (2024) examined the auditory traditions of Kunqu—often regarded as the “father of all Chinese operas.” Through expert interviews and thematic

analysis, they explored the opera's symbolic and emotional meanings, key acoustic characteristics, and methods of vocalization and musical structure. Their findings emphasized the crucial role of Kunqu in preserving Jiangnan's cultural identity and collective memory.

Cai et al. (2024) investigated the spatial distribution of intangible cultural heritage objects (ICHOs) and their inheritors to determine strategies for more effective cultural transmission. Using spatial analysis tools such as geographic concentration mapping, kernel density estimation, Moran's I index, and imbalance index assessments, the study highlighted the importance of integrating governmental, educational, touristic, and media frameworks to promote sustainable ICH inheritance.

Yang et al. (2021) developed a strategy for the sustainable development of Cantonese opera as a leisure-oriented cultural product, analyzing the relationship between cultural identity and loyalty in cultural consumption. Their results indicated that both dimensions of cultural identification positively influence satisfaction and perceived value among audiences, reinforcing the link between identity and heritage appreciation.

Ma et al. (2024) presented a comprehensive overview of China's rich ICH resources, detailing their regional distribution and cultural significance. The study underscored the contributions of ICH practitioners in safeguarding these traditions and explored the mutually beneficial relationship between ICH-related enterprises and the knowledge economy, highlighting their roles in promoting innovation, economic growth, and regional development.

Liu et al. (2025) examined the role of Chinese folk ritual music in promoting biodiversity preservation in the Lingnan region of southern China. Using ethnographic methods and interviews with local musicians, the study revealed how Cantonese opera and agricultural rituals intertwine cultural narratives with ecological stewardship, emphasizing the interconnectedness of cultural preservation and environmental sustainability.

Lu and Ahmad (2023) developed a scientific evaluation framework for the sustainable growth of traditional villages in Guangxi, addressing tensions between cultural preservation and modernization. Drawing on data from six villages through field surveys and interviews, they employed the Delphi technique and Analytic Hierarchy Process to establish weighted indicators for sustainability assessment. Their results revealed spatial and industrial imbalances, leading to recommendations for targeted conservation measures to enhance cultural value, industry development, spatial assets, and environmental harmony.

Perera (2023) emphasized the importance of traditional cultural heritage (TCH)—including both tangible and intangible elements such as customs, beliefs, and indigenous knowledge—as a foundation of cultural identity. The study noted that while digital repositories, libraries, and museums increasingly use technology to preserve these traditions, challenges such as funding, staffing, and technical capacity persist. Nonetheless, technological innovation has proven vital in ensuring the security and continuity of TCH.

Finally, Liu (2022) investigated the application of modern information technologies for safeguarding ICH, focusing on its fragility and evolving nature. The study explored digital capture, storage, remote sensing, and spatial modeling as preservation tools, identifying both their potential and their limitations. The findings suggested that the integration of advanced digital technologies offers a comprehensive and sustainable approach to protecting diverse forms of intangible cultural material.

3. Methodology

Data for this study were collected through in-depth interviews and participant observations involving Bai Pai Pingju performers and instructors. The research employed a qualitative approach, utilizing Thematic Analysis, Template Analysis, and Grounded Theory methods, all conducted using the NVivo platform. These analytical frameworks were applied to identify patterns, generate insights, and develop theoretical understandings of Bai Pai Pingju's preservation and transmission.

Through iterative coding and interpretation, five core themes emerged: Intergenerational Transmission, Institutional and Governmental Support, Challenges and Threats to Continuity, Innovation and Adaptation, and Community Engagement and Public Awareness. These themes collectively illuminate the mechanisms of cultural transmission, institutional involvement, community participation, and adaptive strategies essential for the long-term sustainability of Bai Pai Pingju.

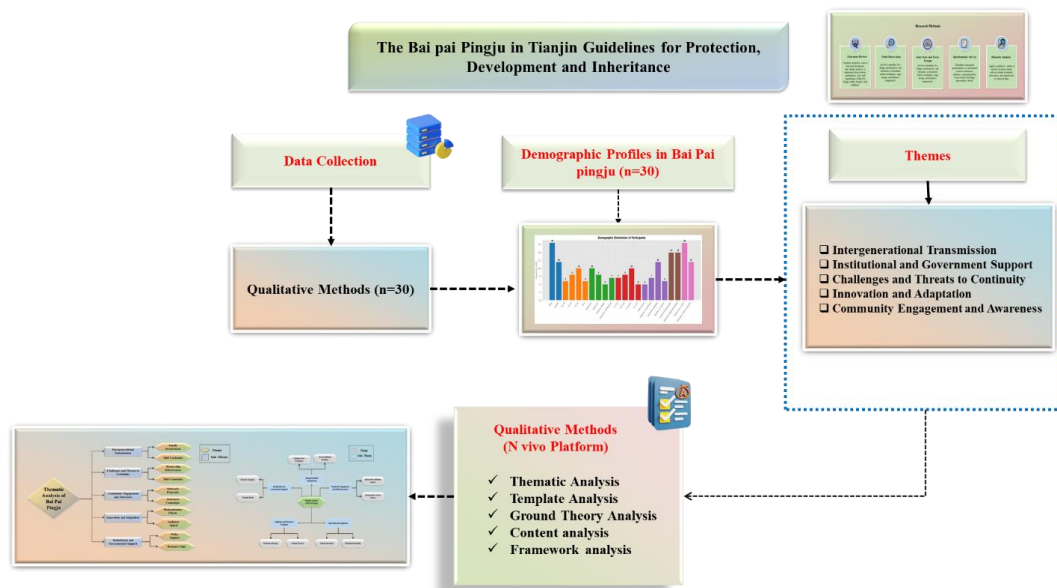


Figure 1. The Overall Framework Illustrating the Protection, Development, and Inheritance Processes of Bai Pai Pingju in Tianjin

3.1. Data collection

Data for this investigation were collected using qualitative research methods. A purposive sample of 30 participants was selected, comprising 10 veteran performers, 8 instructors, 5 cultural officers, and 7 audience members or enthusiasts of Bai Pai Pingju. Multiple data collection techniques were employed, including in-depth semi-structured interviews to capture personal experiences, participant observation of 10 live performances and 5 rehearsal sessions, and document analysis of archival materials, policy papers, and media sources.

The fieldwork was conducted across three major cultural venues in Tianjin over a period of more than six months. All collected data were systematically documented, transcribed, and coded using thematic analysis to ensure the authenticity, reliability, and depth of the findings.

3.2. Qualitative Data Collection

Qualitative data were collected through field observations and interviews with Bai Pai Pingju performers, instructors, and cultural experts. These methods were employed to explore the transmission, adaptation, and preservation of Bai Pai Pingju in contemporary contexts.

3.3. Demographic Profiles of Bai Pai Pingju Participants (n = 30)

The study sample comprised 30 participants, providing a balanced representation of individuals involved in Bai Pai Pingju, as summarized in Table 1 and Figure 2. The majority of respondents were men, with women constituting a significant proportion of the sample. Most participants were middle-aged, while younger and older generations were also represented, reflecting the wide age range within the Bai Pai Pingju community.

The sample included performers, instructors, cultural officers, and audience members, ensuring diversity in roles and perspectives. Participants' experience levels ranged from newcomers to highly seasoned practitioners. Educational backgrounds varied from high school diplomas to postgraduate qualifications. Training was received through both formal institutional programs and traditional apprenticeship methods. Most participants were based in central Tianjin, with others residing in suburban areas, providing a comprehensive view of the Bai Pai Pingju landscape.

Table 1. Demographic Data in Balanced Representation for Bai Pai Pingju in Tianjin

Variable	Category / Details	Count (n=30)
Gender	Male	18
	Female	12
Age Group	20–30	6
	31–40	8
	41–50	10
	51+	6
	Performer	10
Role / Occupation	Instructor	8
	Cultural Officer	5
	Audience / Enthusiast	7
	1–5	7
Experience (Years)	6–10	8

	11–20	10
	21+	5
Education Level	High School	5
	Diploma / Certificate	7
	Bachelor's Degree	12
	Master's or above	6
Training Type	Formal (Institutional)	15
	Informal (Apprenticeship)	15
Location	Tianjin City Center	18
	Suburban / Other Districts	12

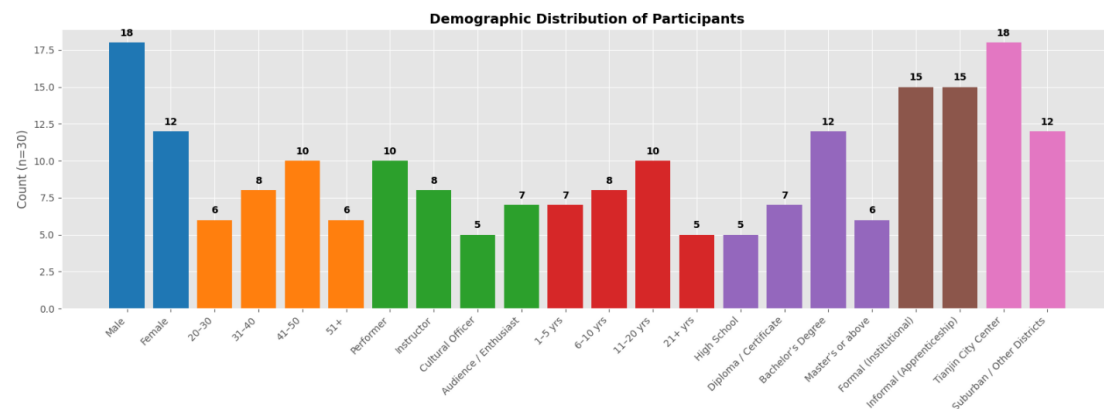


Figure 2. Bar Chart Depicting Diverse Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

3.4. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design, primarily using interviews to examine the protection, development, and transmission of Bai Pai Pingju in Tianjin. To complement the qualitative data, a five-point Likert scale survey (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) was administered to 30 participants, including performers, instructors, cultural officers, and audience members. The quantitative component was used to capture participants' perspectives on five key themes: intergenerational transmission, institutional support, challenges to continuity, innovation and adaptation, and community engagement. Table 2 presents the survey responses, highlighting participant attitudes toward the critical determinants of Bai Pai Pingju preservation and development.

This mixed approach allowed for data triangulation, combining numerical trends with rich contextual insights obtained from interviews and field observations. Each survey statement was assigned a mean score (M-score) by multiplying the number of respondents in each response category by the corresponding Likert value, summing the products, and dividing by the total number of respondents.

The five main thematic variables are described as follows:

- Intergenerational Transmission

The intergenerational transmission of Bai Pai Pingju occurs through apprenticeships in which younger performers learn from experienced practitioners. This process teaches the craft of singing, acting, and repertoire memorization, ensuring the continuity and preservation of the art form for future generations of performers and audiences.

- Institutional and Governmental Support

Institutional and governmental support—including funding, training programs, community initiatives, and performance incentives—plays a vital role in preserving Bai Pai Pingju. Such support nurtures new talent, raises public awareness, and contributes to the sustainability and self-sufficiency of the art form in contemporary society.

- Challenges and Threats to Continuity

Bai Pai Pingju faces challenges such as modernization, changing audience preferences, and a shortage of skilled performers. These factors reduce public interest and hinder knowledge transmission, highlighting the need for adaptive strategies to maintain the relevance and continuity of the art form.

- Innovation and Adaptation

Innovation in Bai Pai Pingju includes the integration of new themes, performance formats, and media while retaining traditional elements. These adaptations increase audience engagement, enhance cultural relevance, and support the sustainable development of the art form in contemporary contexts.

- Community Engagement and Awareness

Community engagement through interactive performances, festivals, and workshops fosters public appreciation of Bai Pai Pingju. Active participation reinforces cultural identity, attracts audiences, and facilitates the transmission of the art form to younger generations.

Table 2. Participant Responses on the Preservation and Development of Bai Pai Pingju

Questionaries	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Score
Intergenerational Transmission						
1. How have you learned Bai Pai Pingju techniques?	2	4	10	8	6	3.73
2. What methods are most effective for teaching the younger generation?	3	6	9	7	5	3.50
Institutional and Governmental Support						
1. How do institutions or government programs support Bai Pai Pingju?	4	7	8	7	4	3.33
2. What additional resources would help preservation?	3	5	10	8	4	3.53
Challenges and Threats to Continuity						
1. What challenges exist in practicing or teaching Bai Pai Pingju?	1	3	6	10	10	3.97
2. How does modernization affect sustainability?	2	4	5	9	10	3.93
Innovation and Adaptation						
1. Have modern elements been incorporated in performances?	2	3	8	9	8	3.87
2. What adaptations are needed to attract younger audiences?	1	2	7	10	10	3.99
Community Engagement and Public Awareness						
1. How does the community participate in Bai Pai Pingju?	1	3	6	10	10	3.97
2. What strategies could increase public awareness?	2	4	7	9	8	3.80

3.5. Strategies for Protection and Development

The sustainable preservation and development of Bai Pai Pingju can be achieved by systematically documenting traditional techniques, encouraging creative innovation while maintaining core elements, and strengthening social and institutional support through education, mentorship, and community engagement.

3.5.1. Documentation of Traditional Techniques

Systematic recording of vocal methods, performance styles, scripts, and repertoire is essential for preserving Bai Pai Pingju. The creation of archives, manuals, and digital repositories ensures that these traditional practices are accessible for future reference and training, even as the number of active performers declines.

3.5.2. Encouragement of Creative Innovation

Performers and instructors should be encouraged to experiment with contemporary themes, stage design, and performance methods, while retaining the art form's core elements. Such innovation helps Bai Pai Pingju remain culturally relevant and engaging to modern audiences, fostering appreciation without compromising its artistic and historical integrity.

3.5.3. Strengthening Social and Institutional Support

Educational programs, workshops, and mentorship initiatives play a crucial role in cultivating new generations of performers. Support from cultural institutions, local governments, and community organizations provides essential resources, platforms, and opportunities for both learning and performance, ensuring the continued vitality of the art form.

4. Result

Qualitative data were organized and analyzed using the NVivo platform to provide deeper insights into the preservation and development of Bai Pai Pingju. Grounded Theory helped uncover patterns in cultural transmission, highlighting the interplay between mentorship, institutional support, innovation, and audience engagement. Thematic Analysis revealed dominant themes related to adaptation strategies, community involvement, and public awareness, illustrating the necessity of maintaining the art form's vitality while aligning it with contemporary audience expectations. Content Analysis systematically examined textual and visual materials to identify recurring motifs, narratives, and stylistic features, whereas Framework Analysis mapped and

categorized key factors influencing Bai Pai Pingju preservation and innovation. This structured approach enabled comparisons and offered practical guidance for strategies aimed at sustaining and modernizing the art form.

4.1. Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis involved systematically identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns in the qualitative data from interviews and observations. This process highlighted key concepts and practices related to the preservation, transmission, and modernization of Bai Pai Pingju. The analysis revealed recurring patterns in instructional practices, institutional support, adaptive strategies, and community involvement.

The findings also demonstrated how cultural relevance is expressed through audience engagement, creative innovation, and the protection of skills via mentorship and policy support. By synthesizing lived experiences with structural and institutional factors, thematic analysis provided a comprehensive understanding of the current status of Bai Pai Pingju and its future prospects. Table 3 and Figure 3 summarize the key themes identified in the thematic analysis, which guide strategies for the preservation and development of Bai Pai Pingju.

Table 3. Thematic Overview Connecting Transmission, Support, Challenges, Innovation, and Engagement

Themes	Sub-theme	Definition
Intergenerational Transmission	Mentorship	The guidance and teaching provided by masters to apprentices in learning Bai Pai Pingju.
	Family Involvement	The role of family members in supporting and transmitting skills and knowledge of Bai Pai Pingju.
Institutional & Governmental Support	Policy Support	Government or institutional policies aimed at preserving and promoting Bai Pai Pingju.
	Training Programs	Formal programs or courses designed to teach Bai Pai Pingju to new learners.
Challenges & Threats	Aging Performers	The impact of the decreasing number of experienced performers on the continuity of Bai Pai Pingju.
	Audience Decline	The reduction in audience interest or attendance affects the sustainability of the art form.
Innovation & Adaptation	Artistic Innovation	Incorporation of new creative elements into performances while maintaining traditional integrity.
	Modern Audience Engagement	Strategies to attract younger or contemporary audiences to Bai Pai Pingju.
Community Engagement & Public Awareness	Festivals & Workshops	Community events and educational programs aimed at promoting Bai Pai Pingju.
	Media & Outreach	Use of media, social platforms, or public campaigns to raise awareness and appreciation.

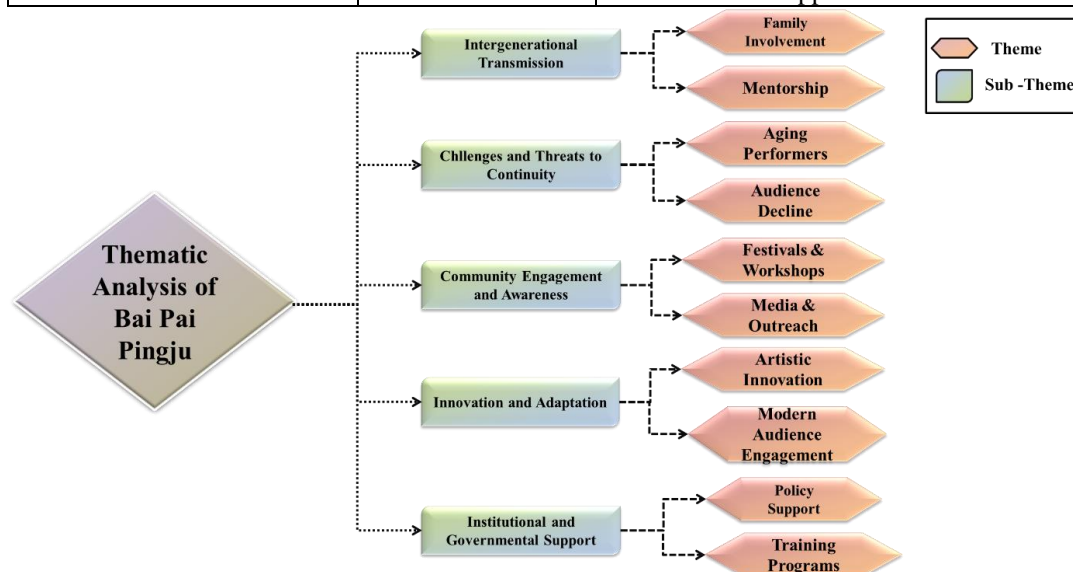


Figure 3. Visualization of Thematic Analysis Themes Guiding Bai Pai Pingju**4.2. Template Analysis**

In the context of Bai Pai Pingju, template analysis involved organizing interview and observational data using a predefined set of thematic codes. This method facilitated the identification of patterns in teaching, performance practices, and cultural transmission, providing a systematic understanding of the factors influencing the preservation and development of the art form. Template analysis organizes data according to established themes while allowing for the emergence of new insights, making it adaptable to evolving trends in qualitative data.

In this study, template analysis captured key aspects such as performer learning, institutional and community approaches to sustaining Bai Pai Pingju, mentorship practices, audience engagement, and resource allocation. The inclusion of sub-themes—such as continuity of skills, policy effectiveness, and cultural promotion—offered a comprehensive view of both structural and human determinants of preservation. The analysis also highlighted the interaction between traditional practices and contemporary demands, demonstrating how template methods enable organizations to systematically collect and interpret qualitative data in a manner responsive to current cultural dynamics.

Table 4 and Figure 4 present a framework illustrating the key factors influencing the protection, development, and intergenerational transmission of Bai Pai Pingju, highlighting the interplay between mentorship, institutional support, and sustainability considerations.

Table 4. Analytical Framework Summarizing Key Themes, Codes, and Interpretations of Bai Pai Pingju

Theme	Sample Questions	Initial Codes / Indicators	Sub-Themes (Modified from Data)	Interpretation / Analysis
1. Intergenerational Transmission	1. How have you learned Bai Pai Pingju techniques? 2. What methods are most effective for teaching the younger generation?	Master-apprentice system, oral tradition, family involvement	Skill continuity, mentorship effectiveness, and generational gaps	Confirms that traditional transmission is dominant, but gaps exist due to fewer young learners.
2. Institutional & Governmental Support	1. How do institutions or government programs support Bai Pai Pingju? 2. What additional resources would help preservation?	Cultural policies, training programs, funding, and public initiatives	Resource adequacy, policy effectiveness, and program reach	Reveals strengths and limitations of institutional support.
3. Challenges & Threats to Continuity	1. What challenges exist in practicing or teaching Bai Pai Pingju? 2. How does modernization affect sustainability?	Aging performers, audience decline, modernization, and low awareness	Performer shortage, audience engagement decline, and societal pressure	Highlights critical threats that may endanger continuity.
4. Innovation & Adaptation	1. Have modern elements been incorporated in performances? 2. What adaptations are needed to attract younger audiences?	Stage modernization, creative storytelling, and youth engagement	Artistic innovation, modernized teaching, and audience appeal	Shows areas where tradition adapts to modern demands without losing authenticity.

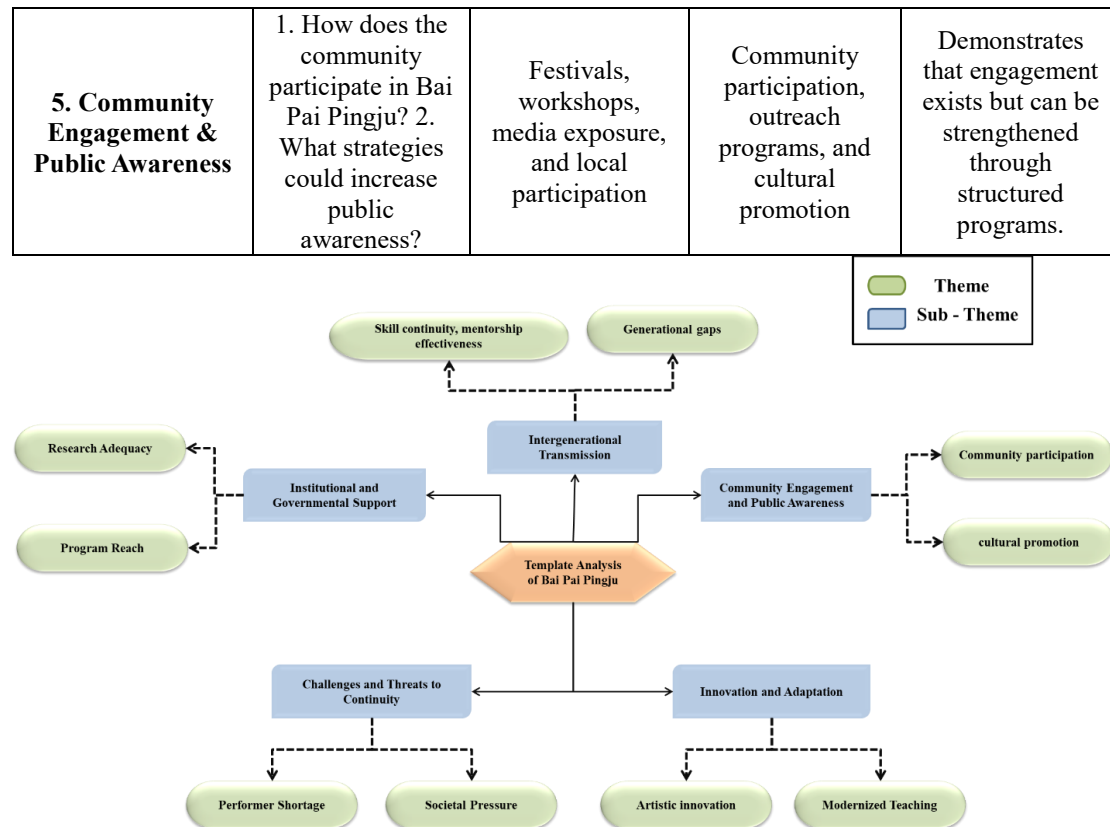


Figure 4. Conceptual Framework Illustrating Thematic Connections in Bai Pai Pingju Analysis

4.3. Grounded Theory Approach

In Bai Pai Pingju, the grounded theory method entails gathering and analyzing qualitative data systematically to come up with theories regarding cultural transmission, performance practices, and preservation practices. Trends, ideas, and connections are formed as a direct result of the experience and observation of performers. The Grounded Theory shown in table 5 can be used to demonstrate how the open codes were developed into axial codes and emergent themes. The practice revealed subtle links between practices of mentoring, institutional support, audience engagement, and the innovation strategies in Bai Pai Pingju. It may be explained further how these emergent patterns inform theory regarding sustainable cultural transmission. As an example, it explains why the involvement of the family is complementary to formal training, how the modernization pressures influence the performer motivation, and why the role of community support is interrelated. This additional fact clarifies that grounded theory, by itself, not only classifies information but also creates conceptual models that define the influences on the maintenance of the art form.

Table 5. Ground Theory Theme -Based Coding Structure Connecting Open Codes, Categories, and Emergent Themes

Open Codes	Axial Codes (Categories)	Emergent Theme / Concept	Sample Questions	Interpretation / Analysis
Learning from masters	Mentorship & training	Intergenerational Transmission	How have you learned Bai Pai Pingju techniques, and who has been your mentor?	Shows how apprentices gain skills and the importance of master-apprentice relationships.
Family influence	Mentorship & training	Intergenerational Transmission	What methods are most effective for passing Bai Pai Pingju to younger generations?	Highlights family involvement in preserving tradition.
Cultural policies & funding	Institutional support	Institutional & Governmental Support	How do cultural institutions or government	Identifies formal mechanisms supporting sustainability.

			programs support Bai Pai Pingju?	
Training programs	Institutional support	Institutional & Governmental Support	What additional resources or policies would help preservation?	Reveals gaps or needs in institutional support.
Audience decline	Challenges to continuity	Challenges & Threats	How do modern audience preferences affect sustainability?	Shows how changing preferences threaten tradition.
Aging performers	Challenges to continuity	Challenges & Threats	What are the main challenges in practicing or teaching Bai Pai Pingju?	Highlights the shortage of skilled performers.
Modern stage techniques	Innovation & adaptation	Innovation & Adaptation	Have you tried incorporating modern elements in performances?	Shows how artists adapt to contemporary tastes.
Youth engagement	Innovation & adaptation	Innovation & Adaptation	What adaptations are needed to attract younger audiences?	Explores strategies for audience retention and relevance.
Festivals & workshops	Community participation	Community Engagement & Public Awareness	How does the community participate or support Bai Pai Pingju?	Demonstrates public involvement in cultural preservation.

4.4. Content Analysis (Thematic Variant)

A content analysis of Bai pai Pingju in the Tianji Guidelines for Protection, Development, and Inheritance focuses on the traditional Chinese opera's story, performance, and cultural components. It highlights major themes, tale frameworks, character archetypes, musical rhythms, and creative manifestations while emphasizing their historical value. It also assesses ways for protecting, promoting, and disseminating Pingju, guaranteeing both historical preservation and adaptation for current audiences while retaining authenticity and cultural significance.

The thematic content analysis of Bai Pai Pingju reveals significant factors that influence its maintenance and growth, as displayed in Table 6. Intergenerational transmission emerges as the most common topic, with 28 instances emphasizing the importance of master-apprentice mentorship, family engagement, and oral teaching traditions in preserving the art form. Institutional and governmental support appears to be limited, with 18 references stating that while some financing and cultural policies exist, there are still shortages in training programs and resource distribution. The difficulties and danger themes, which were recorded 25 times, emphasize important concerns such as aging performers, diminishing audiences, and the influence of modernization, all of which threaten the longevity of Bai Pai Pingju. With 15 occurrences, innovation and adaptation demonstrate that artists are cautiously integrating modern storytelling, stage design, and youth-focused engagement to remain relevant. Lastly, there are community participation and publicity, to which 12 mentions were given, which portrays that although community festivals and workshops are helping in participation, larger campaigns of awareness and media outreach are needed. In general, the assessment demonstrates that the sustainability of Bai Pai Pingju relies on the ability to balance the traditional means of transmission with the institutional support, creative innovation, and the involvement of more people to guarantee its existence in the contemporary cultural environment.

Table 6. Thematic Content Analysis of Bai Pai Pingju, Transmission, Support, Challenges, Innovation, and Community Engagement

Theme	Sample Questions	Codes / Keywords	Frequency (Example Count)	Interpretation / Analysis
Intergenerational Transmission	1. How have you learned Bai Pai Pingju techniques? 2. What methods are effective for	Mentor guidance, apprenticeship, family involvement, oral transmission	28	Most participants emphasize master-apprentice training, showing it is the dominant

	teaching the younger generation?			way knowledge is transmitted.
Institutional & Governmental Support	1. How do institutions or government programs support Bai Pai Pingju?2. What additional resources are needed?	Funding, cultural policies, training programs, outreach	18	Institutional support is moderate; gaps exist in resources and formal programs.
Challenges & Threats	1. What challenges exist in practicing or teaching Bai Pai Pingju?2. How does modernization affect continuity?	Aging performers, audience decline, modernization, low awareness	25	High frequency indicates significant threats to sustainability.
Innovation & Adaptation	1. Have modern elements been incorporated in performances?2. What adaptations attract younger audiences?	Modern storytelling, stage design, youth engagement, contemporary techniques	15	Innovation is present but less frequent; adaptation strategies are emerging.
Community Engagement & Public Awareness	1. How does the community participate in Bai Pai Pingju?2. What strategies could improve public awareness?	Festivals, workshops, media exposure, local participation	12	Community support exists but is limited; awareness campaigns could be strengthened.

4.5. Framework Analysis

The framework analysis of the Tianji Guidelines of Bai Pai Pingju emphasizes the organized method of a combination of cultural preservation, sustainable development, and creative passing. It pays attention to determining the main cultural components, the current level of preservation, and creates measures of action plans to regenerate creativity. The framework also promotes digital preservation, talent development, and community engagement to bring about long-term succession.

The framework discussed by Bai Pai Pingju recognizes five factors that are interrelated and that determine its maintenance and further development, which are presented in Table 7. Intergenerational transmission shows that traditional learning as taught by masters and family is still relevant, although the loss of interest by younger generations poses a threat to continuity, making it essential to have formalized and structured systems of training. Despite existing cultural programs and regulations, their enduring impact is restricted due to uneven funding and lax implementation, as per the institutional and governmental support. Modernity, a declining audience, and low participation among the youth are identified as the main challenges and threats to continuity, meaning that exposure through digital platforms and media exposure would revitalize the interest. The use of innovation and adaptation shows that integrating the old ways with something new, like Light Emitting Diode (LED) stage designs, replaced stories, and social media outreach, would resonate with the younger audiences without affecting the cultural authenticity. Community participation and awareness emphasize that festivals, seminars, and tourism allow the locals to participate in these activities, yet these plans are often seasonal and do not follow up on the events. Overall, the analysis shows that Bai Pai Pingju's survival is dependent on an integrated strategy that includes effective education, consistent institutional support, creative modernization, and strong community participation to ensure the art form remains relevant and thriving in contemporary society.

Table 7. Framework Analysis of Bai Pai Pingju under the Tianjin Guidelines for Protection, Development, and Inheritance

Theme	Sample Questions	Key Codes / Indicators	Example Participant Responses (Summarized)	Interpretation / Analytical Notes
1. Intergenerational Transmission	1. How have you learned Bai Pai Pingju techniques?	Apprenticeship, family training, oral tradition, generational gap	"I learned directly from my master... young	Highlights the importance of mentorship and waning youth

	2. What methods are most effective for teaching the younger generation?		people today are less interested.”	participation. Suggests the need for structured training institutions.
2. Institutional & Governmental Support	1. How do cultural institutions or government programs support Bai Pai Pingju? 2. What additional resources are needed?	Funding, training centers, heritage policy, cultural promotion	“The local cultural bureau supports performances, but funding is inconsistent.”	Institutional support exists but lacks continuity; policy implementation is uneven.
3. Challenges & Threats to Continuity	1. What are the main challenges in practicing or teaching Bai Pai Pingju? 2. How does modernization affect sustainability?	Audience decline, lack of youth interest, modernization, low media exposure	“Fewer students enroll, and audiences prefer modern shows.”	Modernization and changing tastes threaten art form’s survival; suggests need for digital engagement strategies.
4. Innovation & Adaptation	1. Have you incorporated modern elements into performances? 2. What adaptations are needed for younger audiences?	Modern stage design, creative blending, new scripts, social media	“We tried adding LED screens and new storylines — it attracted young viewers.”	Innovation increases appeal but must balance authenticity with creativity.
5. Community Engagement & Public Awareness	1. How does the community participate in Bai Pai Pingju? 2. What strategies can raise awareness?	Festivals, outreach, workshops, local media, tourism	“Annual festivals bring people together, but activities are limited.”	Public engagement is positive but lacks year-round continuity; suggests community-led initiatives.

5. Discussion

Intergenerational transmission, institutional support, and community involvement are critical for the preservation and development of Bai Pai Pingju. The template analysis highlights the importance of mentorship systems, family participation, and master-apprentice traditions in maintaining continuity of skills. Grounded Theory further reveals the interconnectedness between performer experience, institutional resources, and audience engagement in sustaining the art form.

Thematic analysis emphasizes the significance of innovation and adaptation, particularly through the integration of contemporary themes and the engagement of younger audiences. Community participation in workshops, festivals, and media outreach strengthens cultural awareness and appreciation, reinforcing the social relevance of Bai Pai Pingju. Challenges such as the declining number of practitioners, evolving audience preferences, and variable institutional support underscore the urgency of concerted preservation efforts. Content analysis confirms the presence of key elements, including intergenerational transmission, modest institutional backing, modernization pressures, creative innovation, and active community involvement.

Maintaining both cultural authenticity and contemporary relevance requires a careful balance between traditional mentoring, innovative adaptation, policy support, and public engagement. The proposed framework emphasizes organized preservation

through the integration of mentorship, institutional support, creative adaptation, and community participation. Digital strategies, innovative performance approaches, and cultural festivals further enhance audience engagement and sustain relevance.

For long-term cultural viability, continuity depends on formal training, consistent institutional support, a balanced approach to modernization, and ongoing community participation. Overall, the findings indicate that sustaining Bai Pai Pingju requires harmonizing traditional teaching methods, creative adaptation, and social reinforcement to ensure the art form is effectively transmitted to future generations while remaining culturally vibrant and relevant.

6. Conclusion

Bai Pai Pingju in Tianjin is a culturally rich art form distinguished by its unique vocal techniques, expressive performances, and specialized repertoire. This study employed a qualitative methodology, combining template analysis, Grounded Theory, and thematic analysis based on interviews with performers, instructors, and cultural practitioners, as well as observations of rehearsals, training sessions, and live performances. The analyses revealed that intergenerational transmission, mentorship, institutional support, innovation, and community engagement are critical for sustaining the art form.

The findings indicate that traditional teaching methods remain central to maintaining cultural integrity, while innovative adaptations and outreach efforts enhance audience engagement and cultural relevance. Overall, the study demonstrates that a balanced approach integrating preservation, adaptation, and social support is essential for ensuring the continuity, vitality, and effective transmission of Bai Pai Pingju to future generations. The research highlights the value of synthesizing multiple qualitative approaches—including thematic, template, Grounded Theory, content, and framework analyses—to capture both the structural and lived experiences that underpin the sustainability of this art form.

7. Limitations and Future Scope

The preservation of Bai Pai Pingju in Tianjin faces several challenges, including declining interest among younger audiences and limited digital documentation. Traditional performances are primarily live events, restricting accessibility and broader promotion. Additionally, insufficient funding and a lack of structured training programs hinder the long-term cultivation of new performers.

Future research could focus on digital preservation, virtual performances, and the integration of Pingju into educational curricula to increase accessibility and engagement. Collaborative initiatives with media platforms and cultural tourism programs could further raise public awareness, while formal training programs can develop new talent, ensuring the long-term sustainability, innovation, and cultural relevance of Bai Pai Pingju.

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