

## Music Teachers' Perceptions of the Authenticity Issues Towards World Music Teaching in China

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate Chinese primary and secondary school music teachers' perceptions towards "authenticity"-related issues in world music teaching. Using a qualitative methodology, the researchers conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with nine primary and secondary school music teachers in different provinces of China. The results show that the teachers have different views on whether "authenticity" is often emphasized in the teaching of world music, whether world music in textbooks is represented authentically, whether absolute "authenticity" could be achieved in the teaching of world music, and the role of culture bearers in the transmission of music culture in the classroom. On the whole, to ensure that music teachers can objectively treat authenticity in world music teaching, the teachers should be clear about the purpose of world music teaching and transcend the dilemma of the authentic/inauthentic dichotomy.

**Contribution/Originality:** This study is one of very few studies which have investigated Chinese primary and secondary school music teachers' perceptions towards "authenticity" -related issues in world music teaching.

## 1. Introduction

Klinger (1994) once investigated what was happening in elementary music classes, which constituted multiculturalism in the United States. She participated in a one-month course and rehearsal called "The African Experience," which was led by Angela, a music teacher. It was observed that Angela taught and practiced African songs using Western rhythm and pitch symbols, teaching children to sing in the head voice rather than the chest voice used by the culture. All of these seemed to be centered on Western European music culture, emphasizing the music itself rather than the sociocultural context. James Banks, a renowned expert on multicultural education, stated that one of the main goals of the multicultural curriculum is to help students develop cross-cultural abilities (Banks, 1991, p.9). To that end, Angela ultimately failed to transform the music program into something Banks believed is genuinely multicultural. Therefore, some people have

proposed that the premise of world music education is to respect its purity and uniqueness (Santos, 1994).

In world music education, “authenticity” is considered “a complicated issue” (Lundquist, 2002) and “an elusive and particularly laden concept” (Schippers, 2010). As described by Grove Music Online, “authentic” performance may refer to instruments, performing techniques, performance in itself, the context of the original performance, and even the musical experience of the original audience (Butt, 2008). In addition to the multiple meanings of “authenticity” per se, pursuing a reconstructed authenticity or creating a new identity in the world music classroom has also become the focus of debates.

Besides, the authenticity of world music in textbooks is of concern to scholars. They found that publishers frequently “Westernize” unfamiliar music’s for school use (Volk, 1998). In Chinese music textbooks, the music of ethnic minorities is under-represented. Their lyrics are presented in Mandarin, and Han Chinese musicians have adapted their melodies according to the Western principles of composition (Deng, 2017; Zhang, 2015, 2017).

Culture bearers were thought to be capable of deciding the most authentic musical and cultural representation (Klinger, 1996; Volk, 1998). Clements (2006) indicated many positive attributes of the use of culture bearers in school environments. Still, at the same time, this could constitute a difficult process with frustrations stemming from students’ lack of cultural knowledge and the inexperience of culture bearers in teaching others.

After combing the development history of Chinese music education in the 20th century, it was found that the school music curriculum is deeply influenced by the “Western-centralism” value (Guan, 2013). Nonetheless, it was not until ethnomusicology was introduced to China in the late 1970s that some Chinese scholars realized that the European classical music-theoretical system should not be regarded as the universal norm for human music. At the beginning of the 21st century, the Chinese school music curriculum reform took “developing the national music and understanding the multicultural music of the world” as one of the course’s basic concepts. The music teaching materials in primary and secondary schools have also added the contents of world music (Zhu, 2015). However, experts found that, in practical teaching, Chinese music educators have adopted the same approach as Angela mentioned above, which Banks (1991) called an “additive” approach—using the Western music theory to regulate world music teaching (Zhu, 2019).

Ethnomusicology believes that each musical tradition has its transmission process and can generate its own teaching approaches according to its own music and musical concepts. These teaching strategies derive from cultural insiders’ views of their folk music traditions. To achieve the goal of “understanding multicultural” in world music teaching, modern music educators should, therefore, not depend on written materials and high-technology devices but adopt the traditional person-to-person approach and simulate native learning environments (Santos, 1994). In this regard, authenticity is indeed a legitimate concern.

Drawing from the above discussion, the current study investigates Chinese primary and secondary school music teachers’ perceptions towards “authenticity”-related issues in world music teaching. The research questions are as follows:

- i. Do Chinese music teachers often pay attention to “authenticity” in world music teaching?
- ii. Do Chinese music teachers perceive that world music in textbooks is presented “authentically”?
- iii. Do Chinese music teachers perceive that culture bearers play a role in spreading “authentic” music culture in the classroom?
- iv. Do Chinese music teachers perceive that the teaching of world music can be absolutely “authentic”?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Authenticity and world music

In music, “authentic” has been strongly associated with “historically correct” from the early-music revival movement that emerged in the 1950s and 1960s with “in original context” by ethnomusicologists, especially from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s (Schippers, 2010).

Grove Music Online provides such a description:

*“Authentic” performance may refer to one or any combination of the following approaches: use of instruments from the composer’s own era; use of performing techniques documented in the composer’s era; performance based on the implications of the original sources for a particular work; fidelity to the composer’s intentions for performance or to the type of performance a composer desired or achieved; an attempt to re-create the context of the original performance; an attempt to re-create the musical experience of the original audience (Butt, 2008).*

Taylor (1997) distinguished three authenticities: in art music, authenticity refers to historical accuracy; in world music, it refers to cultural/ethnographic authenticity; the third authenticity refers to “a sincerity or fidelity to a true self” in popular music (Taylor, 1997, p.21). In the approaches to world music with a focus on tradition, “authentic” is often used to refer to “coming from the right country,” being “unaffected by outside influences” and “exactly as it is in the original social context,” in addition to “historically correct” (Schippers, 2010, p.48).

In examining resources for teaching the world’s musical traditions, Goetze and Scott-Kassner (2006) suggested that music educators need to consider authenticity, enculturation, and ownership. Teachers need to provide their students with meaningful encounters with diverse music cultures from cultural informants as enculturation efforts. In establishing ownership, teachers should be committed to using multicultural materials in many significant ways with their students. Teachers also need to consider authenticity issues by examining not only the music materials, songs, and instrumental arrangements, but also their contextual fit, methods of teaching, and their performance practice.

Some people insisted that any art form exists merely to be reproduced in a historically correct manner or in an original context. However, others have argued that the key to authenticity lies in creativity, aesthetics, spirituality, or emotional effects. The discussion revolves around whether the essence lies in the notes, the instruments used, the setting,

the context, the sound, the attitude or the frame of mind of musicians or audience, or other intangible aspects of the total musical experience (Schippers, 2010).

Campbell (1996) indicated that “for teachers, authenticity is a challenge confronted daily in the design and delivery of instruction to students” (Campbell, 1996, p.68). In her interview with musical experts, Seeger presented that “authentic music is that which people possess as their own—music that is ‘genuine’ to them as listeners and performers”; to Yung, authenticity has minimal importance. Yung stated that “I almost never use ‘authentic’ to discuss the music of China because it implies absolute value” because he believes that it is “nonexistent within so historically long and culturally varied a nation” and that it is hard to “draw the cut-off line’ between the authentic and pure music and the music that has been borrowed, adapted, and accepted as their own by the people of a designated culture”; Loza proclaimed that “there is no such thing as a static or totally stabilized ‘authentic’ music” and advised “teachers to inform students of the distinctions between traditional and changing, nontraditional styles” (Campbell, 1996, p.68). Campbell (1995) also suggested that “music—regardless of origin—is authentic or genuine to the group of people who perform it” (Campbell, 1995, p.6).

## 2.2. Authenticity of world music content in textbooks

In general, no one was particularly concerned about authenticity in the past. However, the general assumption was that if it was printed in the school music texts, then it must be accurate (Volk, 1998). As stated by Volk (1998):

*Many of the folk melodies were indeed accurately transcribed—but just as many were adjusted rhythmically, melodically, or textually for didactic purposes. Publishers frequently “Westernize” unfamiliar musics for school use... Ethnomusicology and its acceptance of music in, and as, culture, raised the consciousness of music education in this regard. With the advent of music education’s awareness of world musics combined with the general tenor of recent times regarding sensitivity for all peoples, authenticity suddenly became an issue” (Volk, 1998, p.177).*

In distinguishing the authenticity of multicultural music, Volk (1998) provided four categories for determining the degree of authenticity in school music materials. Category 1 refers to the pieces whose only connection to the authentic music of another culture is in their titles, while Category 2 indicates the pieces that essentially employ the Western art music forms but incorporate melodies from other cultures. Subsequently, Category 3 refers to the pieces that make the conscious effort to incorporate melodic and rhythmic elements from the music of another culture, whereas Category 4 indicates the pieces that either entail original compositions by composers from the culture, or arrangements that constitute a close approximation of the original music of the culture (Volk, 1998, p.178).

Lum (2009) examined the authenticity and representation of Chinese and Chinese American songs published in various textbooks (Grades 1–8) between 1943 and 2005. The contents examined include the lyrics (alphabets and characters of the original language), recordings (native speaker pronunciations [spoken and sung]), and the inclusion of historical and cultural contexts in explanations of the songs appearing in the resources. Evidently, between the 1930s and mid-1960s, Chinese songs in the basal series tended towards scant details of historical and cultural contexts and the pervasive

use of English words in Chinese songs. After the late 1960s, changes in the basal series reflected the influence of multicultural considerations. There was also greater use in some basal series of Romanized characters to sing Chinese songs and more details on the contextual description of songs, providing a fuller understanding of the musical material and appreciation of the cultural tradition.

Zhang (2015, 2017) investigated how government-designed national K1-9 music textbooks represent the Chinese ethnic minority's musical and cultural traditions by drawing from the theoretical frameworks of musical authenticity and two tenets of liberalism theory: equal concern and cultural neutrality. According to the research findings, among the 25 members comprising the textbook designing committee of the People's Education Press, none of them was deliberately selected from the ethnic minority groups or possessed expertise in ethnic music. Moreover, the committee members were exclusively Han musicians. Besides, a total of 67 pieces of ethnic music—comprising 11% of the total number—were adopted in the 18 textbooks. Although there are 56 ethnic groups in China, only the music and culture of 24 ethnic groups are represented in the textbooks. Furthermore, the majority (75%) of these ethnic pieces were adapted or composed rather than being based on traditional tunes.

Additionally, the composers of the ethnic music were mostly Han; they used Han and even Western musical rules to create their view of ethnic music. The cultural standards they follow also demonstrated strong Han influences. Abiding by political ideologies, cultural themes, and cultural contexts emphasized in these textbooks often reflects a strong exoticism. Instead of presenting genuine ethnic life, they stereotypically showed ethnic cultures that emphasize ethnic happy life, colorful clothes, traditional holidays, and beautiful scenery.

Deng (2017) investigated the music textbooks of compulsory education in China and found problems in the selection and presentation of ethnic music such that there was no complete presentation of authentic music in the textbooks. For example, the lyrics were all in Mandarin and there was no presentation of or introduction to ethnic languages. Besides, the melody of the music conformed to the concept of “pleasant to hear” and “easy to sing” as most people thought and it was also not based on “cultural understanding.”

### 2.3. Culture bearers

Klinger (1996) wondered “*who determines what is the most authentic musical and cultural representation*” (Klinger, 1996, p.11). Volk (1998) considered “*the easiest way to solve the authenticity problem is to rely on the culture itself. Whatever the culture bearers say is their music is their music*” (Volk, 1998, p.177). A “culture bearer” refers to a person with specific cultural knowledge gained through direct emersion within a cultural context (Clements, 2006). However, Klinger (1996) realized that “*two individuals from the same ethnic group may interpret the same piece of music quite differently*” (Klinger, 1996, p.156). She argued that “*multiple ‘authenticities,’ equally legitimate, yet different from each other, can and do exist*” (Klinger, 1996, p.197).

Clements (2006) investigated the authentic means of transmission practices outside an indigenous learning environment using a culture bearer. The result indicated many positive attributes of the use of culture bearers and that students were gaining increased cultural and musical knowledge through participation in culture bearer-led ensembles.

However, the study has also shown that this could be a difficult process with frustrations stemming from students' lack of cultural knowledge and the inexperience of culture bearers in teaching others. Besides, the authenticity of students' performance is tied to their cultural knowledge; hence, the more the students know about what they are performing and the cultural meanings of the song and dance, the more accurately they can reproduce the examples given by the tutors.

Although inviting culture bearers into the classroom can solve the limitations of other approaches, it does not address the problem that [Klinger \(1996\)](#) raised in relation to multiple authenticities. Furthermore, many culture bearers tend to face pedagogical challenges as they have little or no training or experience working with children ([Schippers, 2010](#)).

#### 2.4. "Absolute authenticity" in the world music classroom

In his article entitled "*World Music in Education: The Matter of Authenticity*," music educator and scholar [Palmer \(1992\)](#) described authenticity as a continuum, with "Absolute Authenticity" on one end. [Palmer \(1992\)](#) defined "Absolute Authenticity" as

- i. performance by the culture's practitioners, recognized generally by the culture as artistic and representative;
- ii. use of instruments as specified by the composer or group creating the music;
- iii. use of the correct language as specified by the composer or group creating the music;
- iv. for an audience made up by the culture's members; and
- v. in a setting normally used in the culture. ([Palmer, 1992, p.32-33](#))

However, it is worth noting that transferring music from its original cultural context to classroom authenticity will inevitably be detrimental. [Palmer \(1992\)](#) summarized the factors that inherently affect authenticity in the classroom, which include

- i. different setting, both acoustical and socio-cultural;
- ii. use of recordings, videos, and films instead of live music, especially those of questionable stylistic practices;
- iii. performers lacking training by authentic practitioners of the style;
- iv. language problems such as translations, new and inappropriate textual underlays, or lack of intimate knowledge of the language;
- v. changes from the original media;
- vi. simplified versions and other didactic adjustments; and
- vii. introductions and other cultural structures such as tunings, harmonizations and arrangements. ([Palmer, 1992, p.33](#)).

According to [Palmer \(1992\)](#), compromise with "Absolute Authenticity" begins as soon as music is removed from its original setting and its original intentions. How such a compromise will occur is not the question; however, the question lies in how much compromise can be allowed before the original is lost. [Palmer \(1992\)](#) believed that the burden of authenticity rests on the music educator; much depends on the preparation and mindset, the sensitivities that might have been cultivated, and the knowledge that one brings to the act of teaching.

Although [Palmer \(1992\)](#) provided many suggestions to ensure that multicultural music is authentically taught in class, teachers do not always have the time and resources, or perhaps even the desire, to follow the recommendations for teaching music in context (

Koops, 2010). Some teachers reported that they did not want to teach the music of a specific ethnic group for fear of offending the members of that ethnic group (Damm, 2000). Others also worried that inauthenticity would lead at best to inaccuracy and at worst to advancing stereotypical ideas (Volk, 1998). In the interview conducted by Young (1996), Phil stated that ethnic music could not be represented authentically unless the people of those particular ethnic groups presented music. Therefore, he did not believe that he could authentically teach ethnic music. If music cannot be taught or performed authentically, Phil stated that *"it is just as if someone from another country is pretending to be an Australian."* (Young, 1996, p.92-93).

Swanwick (1994) characterized the concept of authenticity as three "r"s: reproduction, reality, and relevance. He argued that relevance is the most important factor followed by reality. However, Swanwick believed that reproduction is of less importance due to "cultural migration" or the constant change of musical styles (Koops, 2010; Swanwick, 1994). Koops (2010), on the other hand, evaluated that Swanwick's authenticity strategy focuses on students rather than music as a priority in the music-making process. Nonetheless, Swanwick (1994) emphasized that the importance of personal relevance yields different choices for a music teacher, which is different from Palmer (1992)'s position.

Johnson (2000) considered the "authenticity continuum" envisioned by Palmer (1992) as more of an "authenticity hierarchy" with a bounded, essentialist "absolute authenticity" as the unattainable, ultimate goal for teaching. As indicated by Johnson (2000), *"it is this bounded understanding of authenticity that makes it difficult, if not impossible, to implement in the music education classroom."* (Johnson, 2000, p.281). Johnson (2000), however, approved of Swanwick's (1994) understanding of the dynamic and flexible nature of music and culture: *"culture is not merely transmitted, perpetuated or preserved but is constantly being re-interpreted."* (Swanwick, 1994, p.222).

Fung (1995) considered absolute authenticity of world musics not achievable due to factors such as the socio-cultural context of the classrooms and the equipment used (for example, videos and recordings). Santos (1994) rejected the concept of authenticity altogether, stating that *"while authenticity is indeed a legitimate concern in the context of preserving tradition, its very concept is founded on the idea of cultural stasis, a belief that has been refuted by modern scholarship and the very dynamic nature of living traditions"* (Santos, 1994, p.33). Green (2006) doubted authenticity in the classroom as an adult construction caused by too much focus on the product and not enough on the process of music-making. She also suggested that teachers should aim not for "musical authenticity," but rather "music-learning authenticity."

Wu (2012) believed that *"music 'authenticity' is not always required"* (Wu, 2012, p.310). She regarded cultural understanding as the basis for teaching and learning world music. Understanding music from different cultures is a long process that cannot be completed in short courses; however, providing an introduction to understanding and embracing the "difference" can be done. For this reason, neither students nor teachers should feel that they must reproduce an "authentic" performance of world music. Thus, she suggested that classroom teaching must not focus on imitating the original music as accurately as possible. Although the authenticity of music or correctness of the information is important, teaching world music is more about letting students understand how music functions in other cultures, how different emotions and ideas can

be conveyed, and where the differences come from. Wu (2012) narrowed down the focus of teaching world music into three questions: 1). *How does it work?*; 2). *Is it different from our music culture?*; 3). *Why and how is it different?* (Wu, 2012, p.310). Szego (2005) proposed, “while authenticity is a very valuable guiding principle, it is a rather elusive object” (Szego, 2005, p.214). As a multicultural music educator, the goal is to be “cognizant of what we are doing by teaching the music of cultures other than our own, and of who and what is being represented, and how these representations might be interpreted” (Szego, 2005, p.214).

Additionally, Schippers (2010) acknowledged that “authenticity is an elusive and particularly laden concept” (Schippers, 2010, p.53). Evidently, the challenge for music educators “is to develop an understanding that is sensitive to culturally diverse realities but workable within specific educational environments” (Schippers, 2010, p. 41). He also believed that the relationship between the original and the new reality in each area can be represented by two circles that may completely overlap, partly overlap, or not at all overlap. Subsequently, he presented various approaches to authenticity as a continuum, ranging from reproduction to originality. “...the task of the educator is one of making choices of ‘strategic inauthenticity’” (Schippers, 2010, p.52).

### 3. Methodology

The researchers used semi-structured interviews to have in-depth conversations about the participants' perspectives in order to accumulate data. According to Smith (2005), a semi-structured conversation is the most effective way to gain the understanding and perceptions of participants in a study.

Nine participants were recommended by music teaching and research staff from different provinces and regions in mainland of China. The participants in this study consist of four females and five males. Except for one teacher with a master's degree, the other eight teachers have bachelor's degrees. In addition, their teaching experience ranged from 3 to 30 years, with an average of 14 years. Six teachers worked in secondary schools and three were working in primary schools. All participants interviewed in this study are Chinese nationals.

Each participant completed a semi-structured interview that consists of four questions. The interviews took 10 to 15 minutes, and the study was conducted from October to December 2019. The names of the teachers were replaced by codes in this study. For example, NN1 refers to the first teacher interviewed by the researchers in Nanning city.

### 4. Results and Discussion

#### 4.1. Question 1: Is authenticity often a concern in your world music teaching practice? Why?

In the interviews with nine music teachers in this study, three (SD1, NC1, & NN1) made it clear that they had not focused on the issue and just followed the textbook to complete the teaching plan. This is consistent with Volk's (1998) assertion whereby people are likely to assume that music printed in textbooks must be accurate.

However, Teacher JS2 offered an alternative explanation: “I have not paid particular attention to this issue. Elementary school students will laugh when they listen to the

*original music. I think they should be given more 'staged' music in elementary and middle school, and more 'original' music in high school.*" The expression of Teacher JS2 involves another question that music teachers need to consider: when to start teaching world music? Some music educators believe that children should get in touch with world music as early as possible. Early contact will familiarize children with the sounds of these musics and prevent them from having a negative attitude towards foreign music genres (Campbell & Yung, 1995). Nonetheless, the opposite view was put forward by Smith (1983); because understanding foreign culture is difficult, multicultural music education is, therefore, not suitable for very young children and it should only begin when students are mature enough. Teacher JS2's view was consistent with Smith (1983)'s.

Teacher GZ1 stated that he respects authentic music, while the other four teachers were concerned about the issue of authenticity. One of the teachers, code-named NN2, believed that authentic music could only be used for general appreciation and understanding for the current junior high school students. In addition, its implementation of actual singing and performance is rather complex because students tend to prefer popular music. As a teacher, she presents authentic works to the students and encourages them to recreate music as they like. Meanwhile, Teacher JS1 was aware of distinguishing the authenticity of the audio material provided in the textbook. When she encountered a piece of music that was performed on the stage rather than in its original context, she would explain it to her students. Another teacher, code-named YL2, expressed a similar view that he would clearly distinguish between "authentic" music and music created with ethnic elements; he would also explain it to his students in class. Additionally, Teacher YL1 stated: *"I am concerned about this issue, but I am constrained by my ability and the limited relevant materials collection."*

#### **4.2. Question 2: Do you think the music of Chinese minorities is authentically presented in your textbooks? Do you believe they are modified according to the Han or Western music rules?**

Among the nine interviewees, three perceived that the music of Chinese minorities is authentically present in textbooks. Teacher GZ1 stated that, while some folk songs are arranged in the symphonic form, he did not consider them "unauthentic" presentations. Meanwhile, Teacher NN1 stated that ethnic music is more or less changed when incorporated into textbooks, probably because the editors considered the singing ability of students at primary school age, but that does not mean that the music is "unauthentic." Teacher JS2 also gave examples of "authentic" music presented in the textbooks he used.

While Teacher SD1 stated that she had never thought about this question, Teacher YL1 stated that he did not overthink this question; however, he perceived that the music in the textbooks has been adapted. Moreover, Teacher NN2 noted that in the audio materials provided by the teaching reference materials, the Japanese folk song "Sakura" is sung entirely in Chinese, and no Japanese version is available. Teacher JS1 also stated that *"the audio-visual materials in primary and secondary school textbooks are usually 'staged,' while in high school textbooks, they are usually 'original.' The textbook writers might have considered the students' cultural understanding and acceptance at different ages."* She always collected some "original" works to supplement the classroom in her teaching practice.

Three interviewees believed that the music of Chinese minorities has been modified when they are presented in textbooks and the supporting audio materials. Teacher NC1 mentioned that many minority songs are sung in Mandarins rather than in their ethnic language. Meanwhile, according to Teacher NN2, when the music of ethnic minorities was recorded as music scores and included in the textbooks, it lost something because some things could not be accurately expressed with music scores. Teacher YL2 believed that the music of ethnic minorities in the textbooks had been assimilated by “Han” nationality or Western music and the people who compiled the minority music into the textbooks might not be of that ethnic group. These people presented minority music with their ethnic prejudice but failed to show it fully and truthfully. He also criticized the use of Western choral singing to teach minority songs in textbooks; an ethnic minority solo song was adapted into a Western-mixed chorus. He believed that, in appreciating and listening to this sound effect, students learned Western music culture rather than the minority music culture. The statements of Teachers NC1, NN2, and YL2 echoed the research results of [Zhang \(2015, 2017\)](#) and [Deng \(2017\)](#).

**4.3. Question 3: Some educators consider that “the easiest way to solve the authenticity problem is to rely on the culture itself. Whatever the culture bearers say is their music is their music,” do you agree with this view? Have you ever invited a culture bearer to your classroom?**

Five of the nine interviewees (SD1, NC1, NN2, JS2, & YL1) agreed with this view and believed that culture bearers' opinions should be respected. Teacher NN1, in addition to coordinating with this view, also believed that “authentic” music could not be judged solely by a culture bearer because there is a factional problem. The music of different factions that belong to the same culture may have slight differences but much in common, and the boundaries that define each other were unclear. In this case, many culture bearers of different factions may think that it was their music to begin with and even create disputes. Teacher NN1's explanation echoed [Klinger's \(1996\)](#) point of “multiple authenticities.”

Three interviewees, however, disagreed with this view. Two of them (GZ1 & YL2) believed that the identification of the authenticity of an ethnic's music should not only depend on its inheritor but also on the collective members of the ethnicity. The remaining teacher, Teacher JS1, trusted textbook writers to keep the music as “authentic” as possible.

All nine teachers interviewed in this study stated that they had never invited a cultural bearer into the classroom. Teacher NN2 noted that this would be difficult to achieve, particularly if the Education Bureau does not take the lead and only relies on individual teachers. Teacher JS1 stated that she would like to invite an inheritor to the classroom; however, this would require financial and administrative support. Teacher YL2 also believed that inheritors are not invited to the school because there are few authentic bearers.

**4.4. Question 4: Is the absolute authenticity of world music achievable in your class?**

Three of the nine interviewees (NN1, NC1, & YL2) perceived that achieving the absolute authenticity of world music in the classroom is possible but difficult. Teacher NN1 believed that this mainly depends on textbook editors, while Teacher NC1 perceived its

reliance on the teacher's ability. However, the other six teachers (GZ1, SD1, NN2, JS2, JS1, & YL1) deemed it impossible to achieve the absolute authenticity of world music in the classroom. For instance, Teacher SD1 believed that the pressure came from students who did not like world music and only liked pop music. Additionally, Teacher NN2 thought of three reasons for this circumstance: the limitation of the teacher's knowledge; the lack of relevant resources, and the restriction of class hours. Likewise, Teacher JS1 also gave three reasons:

- i. It was challenging to collect authentic audio-visual materials.
- ii. It was difficult for teachers to restore the cultural context of certain music in class.
- iii. The teacher feared letting students imitate singing methods in some cultures to avoid damaging their vocal cords.

Meanwhile, Teacher JS1's attitude and handling of singing methods were the same as those observed by [Klinger \(1994\)](#) when music teacher Angela taught children to sing African songs. Overall, the teachers believed that absolute authenticity is impossible in the classroom, which is consistent with [Johnson \(2000\)](#) and [Fung \(1995\)](#) for the same agreeable reasons.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Some Chinese music teachers admitted that they did not often think about authenticity when teaching world music. However, some teachers were sensitive to the authenticity of world music and they could distinguish "authentic" music from music created with ethnic characteristics and explained it to their students. The teachers also expressed that "authentic" music could only be appreciated in class but could not be sung or played because the students tended to prefer pop music or because the teachers have limited ability and teaching materials.

While some teachers believed that the presentations of world music in textbooks are authentic, some teachers had not carefully considered this issue and some perceived that its presentations in books are not authentic and were "Hanized" or "Westernized." In terms of whether world music teaching could achieve absolute authenticity, a third of the teachers interviewed stated that it could, while others deemed it impossible. It is worth considering that the teachers only described the dilemma they faced, not how to solve it.

Teachers should objectively understand the value of culture bearers in ensuring the music's authenticity. On the one hand, there are many positive attributes of using culture bearers; however, on the other hand, there are some disadvantages. For instance, using one culture bearer does not solve "multiple authenticities" and many culture bearers face pedagogical challenges because they have little or no training or experience working with children. The teaching administration should provide policy and financial support for inviting culture bearers, and music teachers should assist the culture bearers in organizing teaching.

World music education seeks authenticity to maintain the uniqueness and purity of the music of different cultures. However, in a world that is no longer isolated from each other due to colonial history, foreign intervention, immigration, and technology, various cultures are inextricably linked with the influence and effect of modern lifestyle and conscious communication. Hence, authenticity can no longer exist as a static concept,

which is accompanied by cultural changes. To solve the relationship between authenticity and change, music educators can adopt the diachronic approach proposed by Santos (1994). Under the premise of grasping the principle of change, teachers can link the musical characteristics of each culture with a retrospective of their known origins, examining the dynamic time course.

Furthermore, in creating music-listening experiences in the classroom, teachers should still try to use recordings made by indigenous people or recognized scholars with original traditional instruments. In addition, they should present materials about musical cultures based on authoritative and thorough research. The teachers can also use student participation activities to promote musical sensitivity, such as actual music-making. Besides, during all classroom activities, from discussions to using instruments to learning voice production, the teachers should make the musical experience as authentic as possible (Fung, 1995).

In dealing with the authenticity of world music, teachers should also clarify whether the purpose of using world music is to support music education or to focus on music in its authentic culture. Whatever world music style is used, the musical and social contexts of the music naturally become a classroom context. Music educators need to be conscious of the changing contexts of music, typically from the indigenous context to the classroom context. Perhaps, teachers can further go beyond the authentic/inauthentic dichotomy and the authenticity/compromise continuum to look at each musical interaction in its specific context. When interacting with any musical processes and products, it is best to think this way: *"How was this music produced? For whom? By whom? In what context? For what purpose? With what influences?"* (Johnson, 2000, p.284). Hence, to realize the authenticity of world music teaching, teachers need to choose what Schippers (2010) calls "strategic inauthenticity."

### **Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate**

The researchers used the research ethics provided by the University of Malaya Research Ethics Committee (UMREC). All procedures performed in this study involving human participants were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committee. Informed consent was obtained from all participants according to the Declaration of Helsinki.

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The authors reported no conflicts of interest for this work and declare that there is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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