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A Typological Study of Music Listening Behaviors in the Digital Age

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Abstract: Based on music theory, this study focuses on the representation of “auditory culture” and “auditory diversity” in the typology of music listening behaviors, and explores the practical paths of music education for Korean students studying in China under the background of digitalization. By using the Songle digital music analysis tool, it helps Korean students in China to deeply understand the differences in auditory culture between China and Korea, such as the unique acoustic phenomena of “breath-sound expression of emotions” in China and “shouting resonance” in Korea, and systematically examines the application value of the above-mentioned scheme in music creation, precise digital strategy dissemination, and personal auditory culture.

Keywords: Auditory culture; Auditory diversity; Music listening behavior; Korean students studying in China in universities



1. Introduction

With the continuous improvement of music theory, the typology of music listening behavior has gradually become a research field that attracts much attention. Music listening is not only a way for people to perceive and experience music, but also an important means for people to understand music culture and express emotions (Lee et al., 2025). The formation of auditory diversity is influenced by multiple factors, including personal factors such as musical literacy, musical preferences, and emotional states, as well as social factors such as cultural background, social environment, and the development of the music industry (Han and Lin, 2022). These factors interact with each other, jointly constituting the diversity of music listening behavior. This article, from the perspective of music theory, explores the manifestation of “auditory culture” and “auditory diversity” in the typology of music listening behavior, with the aim of providing theoretical support and practical guidance for music creation, dissemination, and reception.

In the context of the digital age, for the music education of Korean international students in Chinese universities, the obstacles in cross-cultural listening can be eliminated through the digital comparison of auditory cultures. By integrating the core auditory cultural resources of China and South Korea, such as the refined timbre library of “silk and bamboo music” in Chinese folk music and the narrative vocal archive of “Pansori” in South Korea, and using digital technology to analyze the core differences between the two auditory cultures, such as the acoustic characteristics of “breath control to convey emotions” in China and “shouting resonance” in South Korea (Lee et al., 2021). Digital technology can enable students to experience the leisure listening scene of “Jasmine Flower” in a Chinese Jiangnan teahouse or the social listening atmosphere of “Arirang” in a traditional Korean village in an immersive way, thereby concretely perceiving the generation logic of listening behavior in different cultural contexts, laying the foundation for subsequent exploration of the “correlation between auditory culture and listening types”, closely aligning with the core research propositions in the field of “auditory culture” and “auditory diversity”.



2. Music Listening Behavior and Auditory Diversity

Music listening behavior is an indispensable part of human culture, reflecting people's aesthetic concepts, emotional expressions, and cultural inheritance (Jiang and Zhu, 2018) . In auditory culture, music listening behavior is regarded as a special cultural phenomenon. It is not only the perception and experience of music but also the recognition and inheritance of music culture.

2.1. The Cultural Value of Music Listening Behavior

In the field of musicology, music listening behavior is considered a core link in the process of music reception. Different types of music listening behavior reflect different cultural backgrounds and aesthetic concepts. In Western classical music, focused listening is a common type of music listening behavior, which requires the listener to be fully concentrated and carefully analyze the elements such as the structure, melody, and harmony of the music in order to better understand and appreciate the musical work. In contrast, in the field of popular music, the casual listening mode is more prevalent. Listeners often focus more on the entertainment value and fashionable elements of the music rather than conducting in-depth analysis.

Auditory diversity refers to the different ways and preferences people show in the process of music listening. This diversity is not only reflected in the choice of music types and styles but also in the ways and purposes of music listening (Jiang and Zhu, 2018) .

From the perspective of music types and styles, people's music listening behavior is diverse. Different listeners prefer different types of music, such as classical music, popular music, and ethnic music. This diversity reflects people's different aesthetic concepts and cultural backgrounds. At the same time, different music types and styles also correspond to different types of music listening behavior, such as focused listening and casual listening. From the perspective of the ways and purposes of music listening, people's music listening behavior is also diverse. Some people prefer to immerse themselves in music alone, feeling the shock to their souls and emotional resonance; while others enjoy sharing music with others and experiencing the joy and resonance together (Song, 2018) . In addition, the purposes



of music listening also vary. Some people listen to music to relax and relieve stress; while others do it to learn music knowledge and improve their musical literacy.

2.2. Classification of Music Listening Behavior

According to the characteristics and purposes of music listening behavior, it can be divided into four types: focused listening, casual listening, emotional listening, and social listening.

2.2.1 Focused Listening

It refers to the listener's full concentration on the music, carefully analyzing the structure, melody, harmony, and other elements of the music in order to better understand and appreciate the musical work.

Focused listening requires the listener to immerse themselves completely in the music and focus their attention highly on the music itself. They will conduct in-depth analysis of the core elements such as the structure framework, melody progression, and harmony changes of the music with a rigorous and meticulous attitude. Through this in-depth exploration, the listener can grasp the internal logic and artistic charm of the musical work more comprehensively and accurately, thereby achieving a deeper understanding and appreciation of the musical work. For example, when listening to classical music, focused listeners will carefully listen to the transitions between each movement, feel the interweaving and dialogue between different instruments, and thus appreciate the rigorous and exquisite beauty of classical music.

2.2.2 Casual Listening

It refers to the listener's music listening while relaxing, resting, or engaging in other non-music-related activities, mainly pursuing the entertainment and relaxation effects of the music.

Casual listening usually occurs when the listener is in a relaxed or resting state, or is engaged in activities not directly related to music. At this time, music plays the role of a companion, and the listener mainly pursues the entertainment and relaxation effects brought by the music. They do not deliberately analyze the technical aspects of the music but simply immerse themselves in the relaxed atmosphere created by the



music, allowing their body and mind to be soothed and delighted. For instance, during the lazy afternoon, brew a cup of hot tea, lean back on the sofa, and play some gentle pop music at random. In the soothing melody, forget the fatigue and pressure of life.

2.2.3 Emotional Listening

It refers to the listener expressing or experiencing emotions through music, choosing music works that match their personal emotional state to listen to.

The core of emotional listening lies in the listener expressing or experiencing their own emotions through music. They will choose music works that match their current emotional state to listen to. When people feel sad, they might choose to listen to some songs with sad melodies and touching lyrics, finding emotional resonance in the music and releasing inner pain; while when people are in a good mood, they tend to listen to cheerful and lively music, further strengthening and elevating their positive emotions. Through this way, music becomes a refuge and outlet for people's emotions.

2.2.4 Social Listening

It refers to the listener listening to music together with others in social settings, sharing the joy and feelings brought by music, and promoting social interaction and cultural exchange.

Social listening mainly occurs in social settings where listeners listen to music together with others and share the joy and unique feelings brought by music. In this context, music becomes a bridge for promoting social interaction and cultural exchange. People can enhance mutual understanding and friendship by discussing their preferences for music and sharing their interpretations of certain songs. For example, at music parties, music festivals, and other events, people gather together, sway and cheer to the rhythm of the music, and immerse themselves in the ocean of music. This shared experience can bring people closer together and create a harmonious and joyful social atmosphere.

2.3. Practical Application Value of Typology of Music Listening Behaviors in the Digital Age



The research results of the typology of music listening behaviors not only have practical application value in music creation, dissemination, and reception, but also in music education, where by cultivating students' listening abilities, it can enrich their perceptual abilities and enhance their musical cultural literacy.

2.3.1 In Music Creation

Understanding the different types of music listening behaviors of various audiences can help music creators more accurately understand the needs and preferences of their listeners, thereby creating music works that better resonate with their hearts (Bijsterveld, 2018) .

To promote Korean students in China's perception of auditory diversity, the Songle application developed by the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology in Japan can be used (Goto et al., 2011) . Select Chinese folk music works such as "Moon Reflected on Second Spring" and Korean traditional music such as "Ling Shan Hui Xiang", and automatically analyze their structural features, such as the "introduction, theme, variation" structure of "Moon Reflected on Second Spring" and the "beginning, continuation, transition, conclusion" structure of "Ling Shan Hui Xiang", and mark the core musical elements in a visualized graph form, such as melodic lines and harmonic progressions. When Korean students listen, the tool will provide real-time "cultural annotations", such as the Chinese "expressing emotions through sound" aesthetic shown by the sliding tones of the erhu in "Moon Reflected on Second Spring", and the Korean "ethereal and poetic" aesthetic reflected by the overtones of the gayageum in "Ling Shan Hui Xiang". Through this approach, it can guide students to deeply understand the cultural connotations while analyzing the music structure, thereby strengthening their cross-cultural focused listening ability (Wang, 2025) .

At the same time, it can also present a Chinese folk song "Jasmine Flower" adapted to the rhythm of Korean K-pop, and a version of the Korean folk song "Gugirang" incorporating the sound of the Chinese bamboo flute. Based on a machine learning model, the system flexibly adjusts the proportion of Chinese and Korean cultural elements according to the user's cumulative listening time and the frequency of song switching. The initial plan is to have Korean cultural elements as the main part, accounting for 70%, and Chinese cultural elements as the auxiliary part, accounting for 30%, and gradually fine-tune the proportion parameters as the user's



adaptability increases to achieve the best integration effect. At the same time, a subjective listening experience evaluation function is set up, allowing students to mark a “relaxation level” index from 1 to 5. The system then optimizes the recommendation algorithm in real time based on this, transforming the leisure music experience into a bridge that leads listeners to deeply perceive the rich diversity of Chinese and Korean auditory cultures.

2.3.2 In Music Dissemination

Understanding the different types of music listening behaviors of various audiences can help music disseminators formulate more effective dissemination strategies and improve the effectiveness and influence of music dissemination (Bai, 2023) .

For the research on music dissemination strategies for Korean students studying in China, a precise digital dissemination strategy can be constructed. By analyzing their music listening behavior data, especially the characteristic of preferring “social listening”, we can precisely push cross-cultural fusion works suitable for group sharing on cross-border social platforms such as Chinese and Korean student online communities. For example, a mixed version of “Jasmine Flower” and “Arirang” sung by Chinese and Korean students. At the same time, a “structured listening guide” is configured, using the Songle application to clearly mark the Chinese and Korean auditory cultural identifiers in the works, guiding the audience to focus on the cultural fusion nodes, thereby expanding the breadth and depth of cross-cultural music dissemination.

2.3.3 In Music Reception

Understanding an individual’s music listening behavior type can help listeners fully appreciate the charm of music and thereby enhance their musical literacy and aesthetic ability (Wang, 2014) .

To promote the social listening of Korean students studying in China, a “cloud-based Chinese and Korean festival music social platform” can be constructed. Using the Songle software with the core social theme of “reunion and celebration”, a special activity of “Spring Festival - Chuseok Joint Listening” can be set up. The Chinese side chose the Guangdong music “Step by Step Higher”, whose cheerful



high-pitched melody and brisk rhythm interpret the auditory cultural characteristics of the Spring Festival, namely “joyful reunion”. The Korean side selected the traditional agricultural music “Song of Abundant Harvest” for Chuseok, using the “dum dum” rhythm of the long drum and the “sweeping strings” timbre of the gayageum to convey the auditory cultural connotations of Chuseok, namely “harvest and reunion”. During the event, Chinese and Korean students can listen to the mixed version of the music online simultaneously, such as the high-pitched melody of “Step by Step Higher” combined with the rhythm of the long drum in “Song of Abundant Harvest”, and mark the social interaction points through the “real-time auditory annotation” function: Korean students can mark “the rhythm of the long drum evokes their association with the Chuseok ancestral worship ceremony”, and Chinese students can mark “the high-pitched melody brings back memories of the Spring Festival temple fair”. The platform also supports the “co-creation of festival listening lists” function, where both sides can jointly select fusion works with a festive atmosphere, such as the adaptation of “Song of Abundant Harvest” with Chinese suona, and conduct in-depth discussions on the theme of “how to convey festival blessings through music listening”. This model not only enables Korean students to perceive auditory diversity through cultural resonance but also deepens cross-cultural social practice through music as a medium.

3. Conclusion

This paper, from the perspective of music theory, explores the manifestations of “auditory culture” and “auditory diversity” in the typology of music listening behaviors. Through the classification and analysis of music listening behaviors, it reveals the cultural significance and diversity behind different types of listening behaviors in the digital context, and discusses the practical application value of these behavior types in music creation, dissemination, and reception. Future research can further explore the interaction mechanisms between music listening behavior types and music culture, music dissemination, etc., providing new ideas and directions for the development of musicology.

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