

# **COMPILED GUZHENG TEACHING MANUAL FOR ZHAOYI GUZHENG ART CENTER FOR DALIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**Wang Shengran<sup>1</sup>, Chutasiri Yodwised<sup>2</sup>**  
Faculty of Music, Bangkokthonburi University,<sup>1-2</sup>  
China,<sup>1</sup> Thailand<sup>2</sup>

**Email:** 934215840@qq.com<sup>1-2</sup>

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## **Abstract**

The Guzheng, a traditional Chinese musical instrument with over 2,500 years of history, serves as a bridge connecting music, culture, and philosophy. Its rich tonal qualities and expressive techniques reflect the core values of Chinese aesthetics, including harmony, balance, and emotional depth. This study focuses on the development of a Compiled Guzheng Teaching Manual for elementary students at the Zhaoyi Guzheng Art Center in Dalian, aiming to provide a structured and effective approach to beginner-level Guzheng education. By integrating theoretical knowledge, technical training, and cultural appreciation, the manual not only enhances students' musical abilities but also fosters a deeper connection to Chinese heritage, beliefs, and artistic traditions. The purpose of this study is to compile a set of practical and efficient guzheng teaching manual for the young students of Dalian Zhaoyi Guzheng Art Center, in order to meet the learning needs of beginners and optimize the teaching effect. The research methodology was mixed-method research. The design of the manual is based on children's cognitive characteristics and learning ability, combined with the teaching characteristics of traditional Chinese guzheng art, and integrated with modern teaching concepts and methods. By analyzing the age characteristics and learning habits of young students, the manual includes the following contents: basic guzheng knowledge, simple music theory, common fingering exercises, classical music appreciation and performance, fun exercises and learning incentive mechanism. Each module is equipped with detailed teaching steps,

illustrations, and teacher suggestions to improve the ease of use for teachers and students. The manual also focuses on cultivating students' artistic interest and learning initiative, stimulating children's creativity and expression through gamified learning and situational teaching. The compilation of this manual aims to improve the quality of teaching, promote the development of students' interest and skills in Guzheng, and provide systematic and standardized guidance for the teaching of art centers, so as to further promote the popularization and inheritance of Guzheng art.

**Keywords:** Guzheng teaching manual; Dalian primary school students; Zhaoyi Guzheng Art Center

## Introduction

Guzheng with its rich history spanning over 2,500 years, stands as one of China's most significant traditional musical instruments. In recent years, there has been a remarkable surge in interest in learning this ancient instrument, both within China and internationally, reflecting the growing global appreciation for traditional Chinese culture and music (Wang, 2019).

As part of China's outstanding traditional music culture, the Guzheng is a musical instrument that many parents encourage and support their students to learn. Learning the Guzheng is not only a kind of inheritance of traditional Chinese culture, but also has many advantages and functions. Chinese traditional culture is profound and profound, Guzheng through the precipitation of history, not only is the cohesion of the spirit of the Chinese nation, but also the crystallization of the wisdom of the ancient people, it is worthwhile to carry forward the inheritance. Learning the Guzheng can improve one's ability to appreciate and express music. With its beautiful sound and rich repertoire, the Guzheng allows learners to experience the charm of music in practicing, and enhances their understanding and love of music and art. At the same time, learning and mastering the Guzheng is not a quick fix, but requires a long time of practice and unremitting efforts. This process can exercise the patience, perseverance and persistence of the learners, and also helps to improve the concentration level. It has a positive impact on improving study and work efficiency. To summarize, learning Guzheng not only develops musical skills,

but also promotes the overall development of an individual in many ways (Liu, 2018).

This increasing popularity has led to the establishment of numerous specialized teaching institutions, including the Dalian Zhaoyi Guzheng Art Center, which has become a prominent center for Guzheng education. Traditional Guzheng instruction has historically followed the master-apprentice teaching model, known as "Kou chuan xin shou" (oral transmission and heart-to-heart teaching), which has preserved the authenticity of playing techniques and musical interpretation through generations (Liu, 2016). However, in today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, this traditional approach faces significant challenges. The contemporary learning environment, influenced by technological advancement and changing student preferences, demands more structured and accessible teaching methods. Recent research by Thompson indicates that modern students benefit significantly from well-designed instructional materials that combine traditional techniques with contemporary teaching approaches.

The Dalian Zhaoyi Guzheng Art Center, while maintaining the essence of traditional teaching methods, has recognized the need to adapt to these modern educational requirements. The center has observed that students increasingly seek flexible learning options. However, the current lack of standardized teaching materials, particularly for elementary students, poses significant challenges in maintaining consistent educational quality across different learning formats (Chen, 2024).

The absence of standardized teaching materials specifically designed has become increasingly problematic at the Dalian Zhaoyi Guzheng Art Center. Students enrolled in teaching often struggle to maintain proper technique and progression without immediate instructor feedback. This situation is particularly challenging for elementary students who require clear, systematic guidance in developing fundamental skills.

## Research Objectives

- 1.To study Guzheng playing method.
- 2.To write elementary Guzheng manual for student at Dalian Zhaoyi Guzheng Art Center.
- 3.To use Guzheng manual for students in experimental Group.
- 4.To evaluate by using Guzheng manual.

## Literature Reviews

Jiang and Li (2022) argue that quality education emphasizes the holistic development of students in moral, intellectual, physical, and aesthetic domains, which has elevated the role of arts education and sparked a growing interest in learning the Guzheng. However, Guzheng education requires a systematic approach, prompting teachers to innovate in their teaching concepts and methods, employing techniques that are accessible and engaging for children to achieve more effective results. The paper primarily discusses the significance of Guzheng education for children and effective teaching methods, aiming to provide useful references for enhancing the quality of Guzheng instruction for young learners. The paper is divided into two main sections: the significance of Guzheng education for children and an analysis of effective teaching methods for children's Guzheng education. The first section covers aspects such as promoting intellectual development in children, advancing the introduction of traditional Chinese instruments, and enhancing children's aesthetic appreciation. The second section addresses methods such as fostering interest in learning, adhering to a logical and systematic teaching approach, and supporting the individual development of young children.

Exploring Teaching Methods for Guzheng Majors in Vocational Colleges by Gao, Y. (2022), argues that the Guzheng, as one of China's traditional musical instruments with a long history, is beloved by the public. In vocational colleges across China, music programs now include dedicated Guzheng courses. Guzheng instruction offers significant advantages for students' personal development and cultural literacy, and it serves as a medium for students to inherit and appreciate traditional Chinese culture. Through the study of the Guzheng and exposure to its rhythms, students can experience the

charm of the arts. The paper is divided into two main sections: the current state of Guzheng education in vocational college programs and effective teaching methods for Guzheng instruction within these music programs. The first section includes insights on appreciating Guzheng compositions to understand the emotions behind their creation, integrating diverse teaching methods to enhance effectiveness, fostering teacher-student interaction to deepen understanding, selecting suitable material to emphasize foundational courses, and innovating course content to enrich the overall classroom experience (including practical training to build performance experience, expanding lesson content to encourage teaching innovation, and incorporating cooperative learning to improve teaching efficiency).

In paper *An Analysis of Teaching Methods for Guzheng Majors* by Yang, Y. (2021), argues that the Guzheng, with its long history, beautiful tone, lingering melodies, and unique charm, has produced many classic pieces while also inspiring new compositions utilizing modern compositional techniques. This diversity has led to various playing styles that satisfy people's aesthetic needs on a spiritual level. In recent years, Guzheng art has experienced rapid development, with music creation becoming increasingly rich, professional talent emerging, and the number of learners significantly rising. The main content of the paper includes sections on the practice and mastery of techniques, the understanding and practice of music, the enhancement of quality and cultural literacy, and diverse and engaging teaching methods. The first section focuses on the practice and mastery of techniques; the second on the understanding and practice of music; the third on the enhancement of quality and cultural literacy; and the fourth on engaging and varied teaching methods.

*Research on Teaching Methods for Guzheng Learners of Different Age Groups* by Li, J. (2018), argues that with the development of the times and the public's increasing appreciation of the Guzheng, interest and enthusiasm for traditional Chinese instruments have been steadily rising. Based on her extensive teaching experience with Guzheng learners, Li summarizes effective teaching strategies tailored to Guzheng enthusiasts across different age groups. The paper provides an overview of the Guzheng and its various schools, the current state of Guzheng education, and specific teaching methods aimed at learners ranging from children and adolescents to adults. As educators, Li emphasizes the importance of adapting teaching approaches to individual

learners to foster a lasting interest in the Guzheng, encouraging more people to learn this traditional instrument and to participate in the preservation and promotion of Chinese folk music, ensuring the continuity of China's traditional musical heritage.

## **Research Methodology**

This research adopts a mixed of qualitative and quantitative research methods. It purposed to achieve the objectives of research about learning Guzheng knowledge and skills, instruction “Guzheng manual”, experimentation and evaluation. Qualitative research is to study the document about Guzheng and interview the three key informants and analysis the data by descriptive analysis; Quantitative research is to do the teaching experiment by using “Guzheng teaching manual” and analysing data by percentage statistic bases on the hypothesis.

## **Results**

**To study Guzheng playing method:** The Guzheng is a traditional Chinese musical instrument with a long history and deep cultural heritage. An understanding of its core concepts and theoretical foundations is a prerequisite for effective teaching. The unique charm of the Guzheng lies in its ability to combine melody, rhythm and expression to create an extremely infectious musical effect. Understanding the theoretical knowledge of the Guzheng, such as the structure of the Guzheng, tuning system, tuning modes, playing techniques and performance styles, helps students to grasp its historical and musical significance. The development of Guzheng skills requires scientific and systematic training. Basic training includes key aspects such as correct hand shape, fingering and pitch control. Advanced training focuses on the mastery of complex techniques, such as yaozhi and huayin, which are essential to the interpretation of diverse repertoire. Through continuous practice, students not only improve their technical skills, but also gain a deeper understanding of the expressive power and artistic connotations of the Guzheng.

Effective Guzheng teaching requires targeted teaching methods that incorporate students' abilities and needs. For beginners, teachers should focus on the cultivation of basic skills and help students build muscle memory and basic musical cognition through repetitive exercises. Simple melodies can be introduced to develop students' sense of pitch and rhythm. As students' level increases, more challenging pieces can be introduced to enhance students' technical skills, musical expression and interpretation. Interesting teaching methods can effectively enhance students' interest and participation. Incorporating the cultural and historical context of the Guzheng helps students connect with the art form's traditional roots. For example, teachers can analyze the structure and style of classic Guzheng works while organizing performance workshops or concerts to improve students' practical skills and stage presence.

**To write elementary Guzheng manual for student at Dalian Zhaoyi Guzheng Art Center:** By studying the learning needs and teaching characteristics of elementary students at Dalian Zhaoyi Guzheng Art Center, the researcher has gained a comprehensive understanding of the basic framework and effective strategies for teaching the Guzheng at the elementary level, especially how to gradually improve the students' Guzheng playing ability and musical literacy under the mode of combining theoretical learning and practical performance.

This manual is divided into eight chapters. The researcher has selected the basic knowledge of Guzheng and seven classical pieces to design a Guzheng course manual suitable for beginners, including seven classical pieces, including Guanshan Yue, Little Bird to the Phoenix, The World's Greatest Commonwealth, The Lyrics of the Western Chamber, Embroidered Gold Plaque, The Most Glorious of Labor, and The Evening of the Fisherman's Boat, which covers the theoretical introduction to each piece as well as the specific steps for learning and playing. Chapters 1-4, each with 1 lesson, have a 40-minute lesson time, and chapters 5-8, each with 2 lessons, have an 80-minute lesson time.

**To use Guzheng manual for students in experimental Group:** In order to assess the effectiveness of teaching the Guzheng Course Manual, the researchers conducted an experimental study with 20 elementary students from a sample of 60 learners. The whole experimental teaching lasted 16 weeks and

covered eight chapters of the Guzheng Course Manual. The researchers arranged formative and summative tests at different stages: the first formative test was conducted in the 5th week of course learning, the second formative test in the 10th week, and the third formative test in the 13th week. Summative tests and performance tests were conducted in the 16th week to examine the students' overall mastery of the course content as well as their practical playing ability.

**To evaluate by using Guzheng manual:** The research hypothesis states that before the course, the students' scores were not higher than 70%. After the course, their Guzheng skills improved significantly and their final exam scores were no less than 80% of the total score. The above data shows that the average score of the summative test was 85.4, and the average score on the playing test was 4. 5, both of which meet the study's hypothesis that secondary school students achieve more than 80% of the total score after the course of study. This data meets the expectations of the research hypothesis and proves that the instruction manual is effective and that the manual can be studied by more students. The above results show that this strongly demonstrates that the manual effectively enhances students' music learning abilities. The success of this manual can serve as a reference for other schools and institutions to teach music courses.

## Discussions

According to the research objectives, before compiling the Guzheng Course Manual, we discussed the playing methods of the Guzheng as follows:

As one of the traditional Chinese Musical Instruments, Guzheng has a long history and profound cultural accumulation, and its performance art has been developing from the Han Dynasty to the modern times. With its melodious melody, rich expression and unique timbre, Guzheng has become an important representative of traditional Chinese music. The early Guzheng works are mostly based on the five-tone mode, with beautiful and simple melody. In the Tang and Song dynasties, Guzheng was gradually integrated into literati's elegant music and became an important tool to express emotions. Modern Guzheng performance not only retains traditional techniques, but also absorbs



many modern music elements to further enrich and enhance its technology and expression (Liu, 2018).

There are significant differences in technique and style between Chinese and foreign plucked instruments. The Chinese plucked instrument represented by the Guzheng pays attention to the expression of melody and the transmission of emotion, and its playing techniques are based on supporting, wiping, hooking, picking, shaking fingers, etc., emphasizing the coordination of left and right hands. The left hand mainly enhances the delicate expression of the melody through intonation, glissando and other techniques, while the right hand is responsible for picking the string to create a clear and soft tone. In contrast, Western plucked instruments (such as the harp and guitar) focus more on multi-part harmonic effects and flexibility of fingering. Chinese Guzheng performance pays more attention to the shaping of timbre and the continuity of melody. For example, the use of Guzheng finger shaking technology makes the work more fluid and continuous, showing a strong Oriental charm (Zhang, 2024).

The teaching of Guzheng performance focuses on the following aspects: basic skills training, music expressive force training, cultural background understanding and overall stage expressive force improvement. First of all, the basic skills training includes the standard exercises of the right-hand fingering (support, wipe, hook, etc.) and the mastery of the left-hand intonation, glissando, kneading and other skills. These techniques are the core of Guzheng performance, and students gradually form muscle memory through repeated exercises, thereby improving the stability and accuracy of the technique. Secondly, the cultivation of musical expressiveness requires students to pay attention to the layered sense of melody and the transmission of emotion when playing. For example, in the repertoire of "Fishing Boat Singing in the Evening", the use of glissando and tone is used to express the peaceful mood in the work.

In Guzheng teaching, the understanding of cultural background is particularly important. Many classic Guzheng works carry rich historical and cultural information, such as Guan Shanyue, which expresses the nostalgia of ancient soldiers, and Xixiang Ci, which shows the romantic feelings of classical literature with a soft melody. In teaching, teachers need to help students deeply understand the creation background and musical connotation of the works, so

that students can not only accurately express the technical details of the works, but also convey the cultural flavor (Wang, 2019).

In addition, the teaching of Guzheng should pay attention to students' comprehensive performance and stage performance. For example, by organizing group rehearsals and public performances, students can adapt to the form of stage performance and improve their performance confidence and teamwork ability. At the same time, teachers can design different teaching strategies according to each student's ability level through personalized guidance, so as to help students make comprehensive progress in timbre control, rhythm grasp and emotional expression.

In practical teaching, teachers should adopt a variety of teaching methods, such as segmented practice, voice part practice and background analysis of works. For pieces of different difficulty, teachers should gradually guide students from the basic skills to master the difficult skills, and finally achieve a comprehensive understanding and interpretation of the art of Guzheng (Ding, 2020).

## **New Knowledges**

The Guzheng Course Manual aims to provide teachers with a comprehensive guide to help them design teaching strategies that are compatible with the learning of elementary students, which will allow for better assessment of students' progress and inspire a love of the Guzheng. Combining theoretical knowledge, Guzheng skills and cultural heritage will not only realize the all-round development of students, but also ensure the perpetuation and innovative development of this valuable art form. Designed with the integration of theory and practice at its core, the Guzheng Course Manual helps elementary students to achieve overall progress in pitch control, rhythm mastery, fingering application and musical expression through the learning of the basics in Chapter 1 and the step-by-step study of classical repertoire in Chapters 2 to 8. The manual focuses on the cultivation of students' learning interests, and the repertoire choices cover a wide range of styles, which not only enriches students' learning experience, but also strengthens their sense of identity and love for the

art of Guzheng. In the future, this manual will be continuously optimized through teaching feedback to better serve the practice of Guzheng art education.

## Conclusions

The findings of this study highlight the importance of systematic and scientific training in Guzheng playing methods, emphasizing both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. The development of the elementary Guzheng manual at Dalian Zhaoyi Guzheng Art Center provides a structured approach to beginner instruction, combining theoretical understanding with progressive skill development. The experimental study confirms the effectiveness of this manual, as students in the experimental group demonstrated significant improvement in their Guzheng performance, surpassing the research hypothesis with an average summative test score of 85.4 and a playing test score of 4.5. These results validate the manual as a practical and efficient teaching tool, offering a valuable reference for music educators and institutions seeking to enhance Guzheng instruction. The success of this study underscores the importance of integrating structured teaching methods with cultural and historical context to foster a deeper appreciation and mastery of the Guzheng.

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