



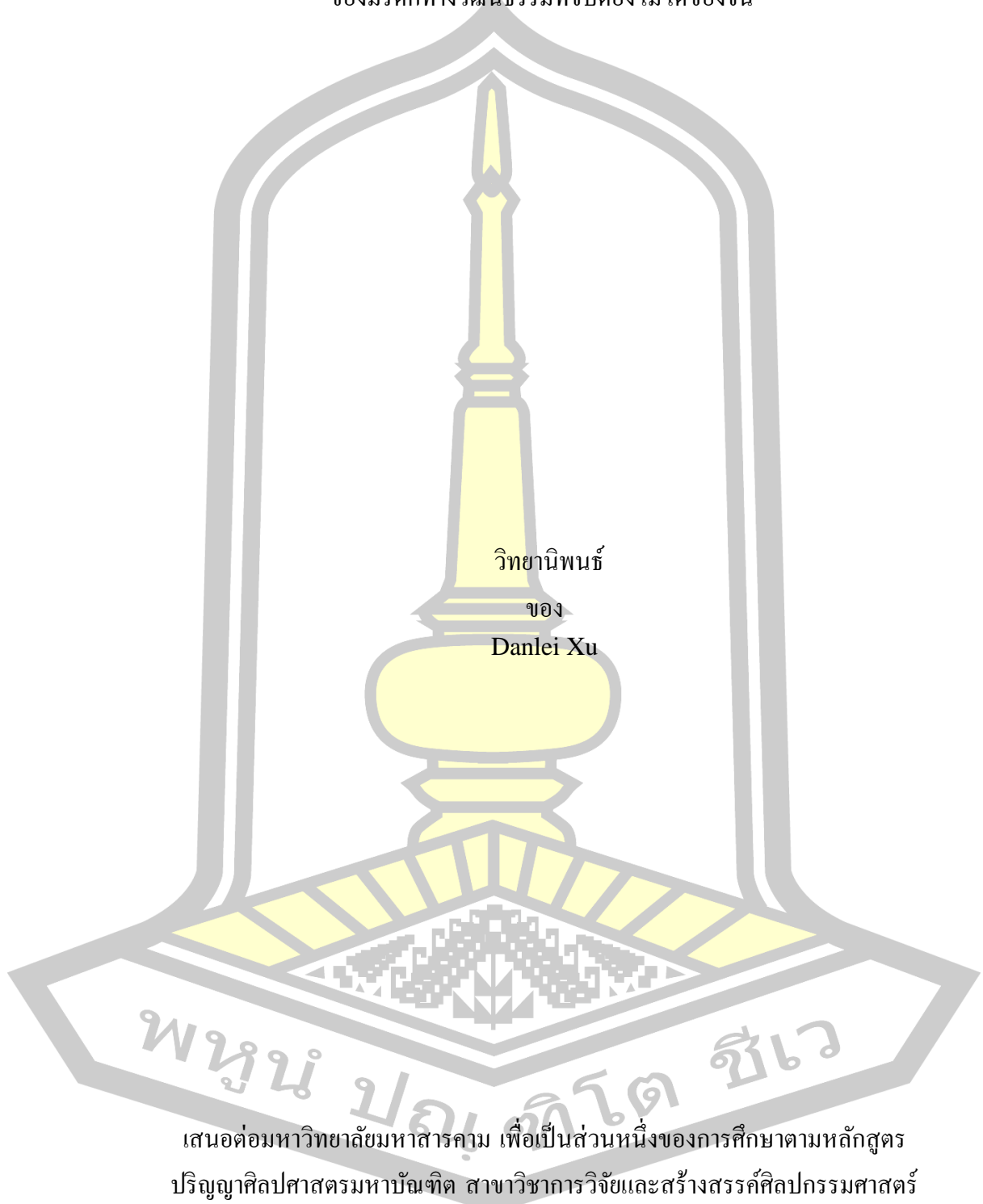
Guangdong Lion Dance: Cultural Identification of Lingnan Traditional Folk Dance in  
the Context of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage

Danlei Xu

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for  
degree of Master of Arts in Fine and Applied Arts Research and Creation  
June 2024

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### ABSTRACT

The Guangdong Lion Dance, a symbol of Chinese cultural heritage, is the subject of this investigation, which aims at uncovering its history, developments and evolutions up to now and into the future. This time-honored folk dance, which has its roots in Lingnan, represents centuries of tradition, creativity, and cultural identity, and this study is driven by the following objectives; 1) To study the history and development of the Lion Dance; 2) To study the role of the lion dance in shaping cultural identity of people Lingnan Region, Guangdong; 3)To study the efforts by local authorities in preserving and inheriting the intangible heritage of the Lion Dance recommend future actions critically. Maintaining the cultural core of the Lion Dance is difficult as modernization and globalization change China. In the framework of Chinese intangible cultural assets, this study thoroughly examines its historical development, contribution to the formation of regional identity, and preservation. This study fills in gaps in the literature by examining cross-regional impacts, cultural symbolism, and preservation initiatives. By filling in these knowledge gaps, our research improves our comprehension of the dynamic evolution of the Lion Dance and its significant significance in a changing world. This dissertation sheds light on the Lion Dance's function as a cultural asset that appeals to both older and younger generations through its multifaceted examination.

**Keyword :** Guangdong Lion Dance, Chinese cultural heritage, Lingnan Intangible cultural assets, Cultural identity

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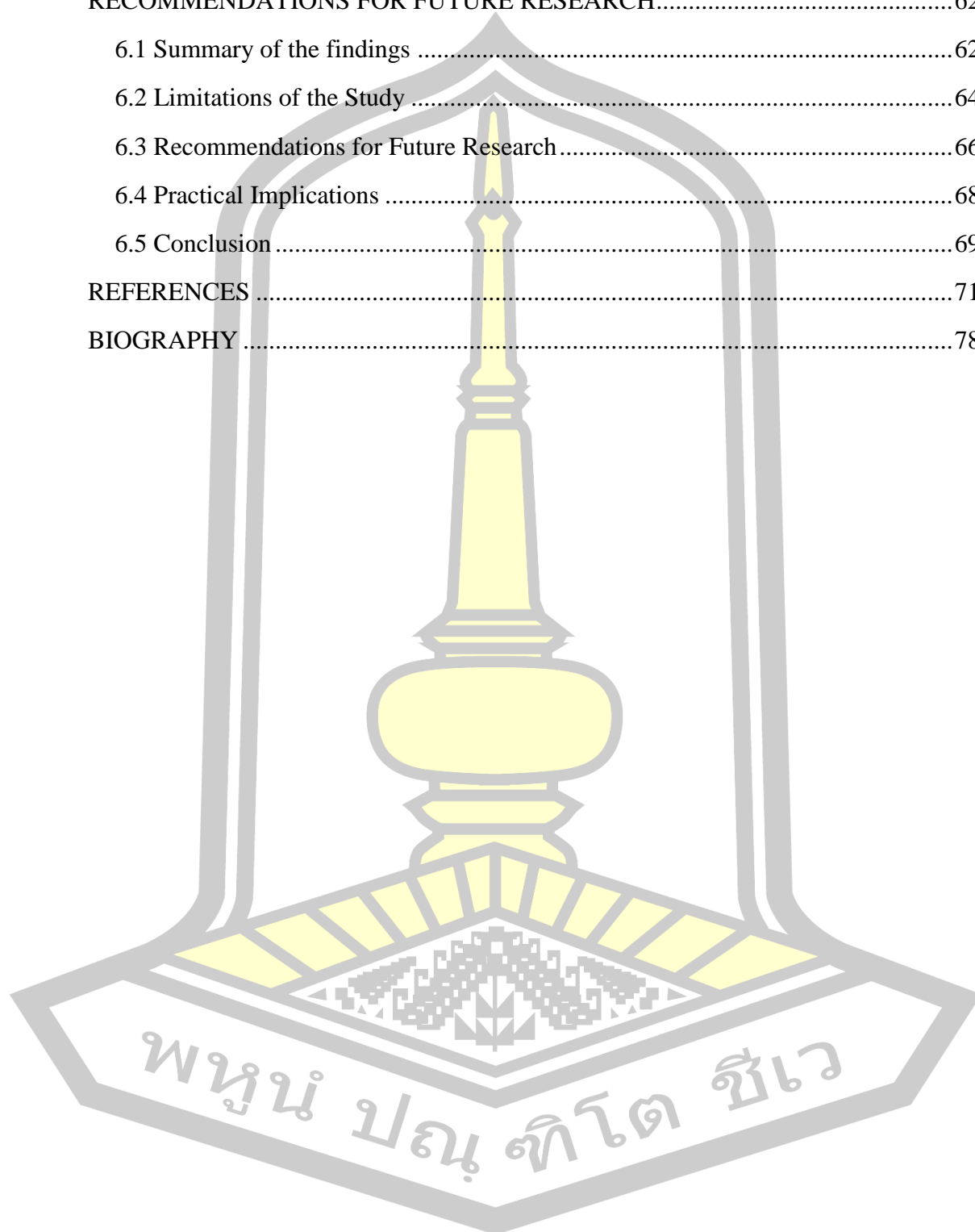
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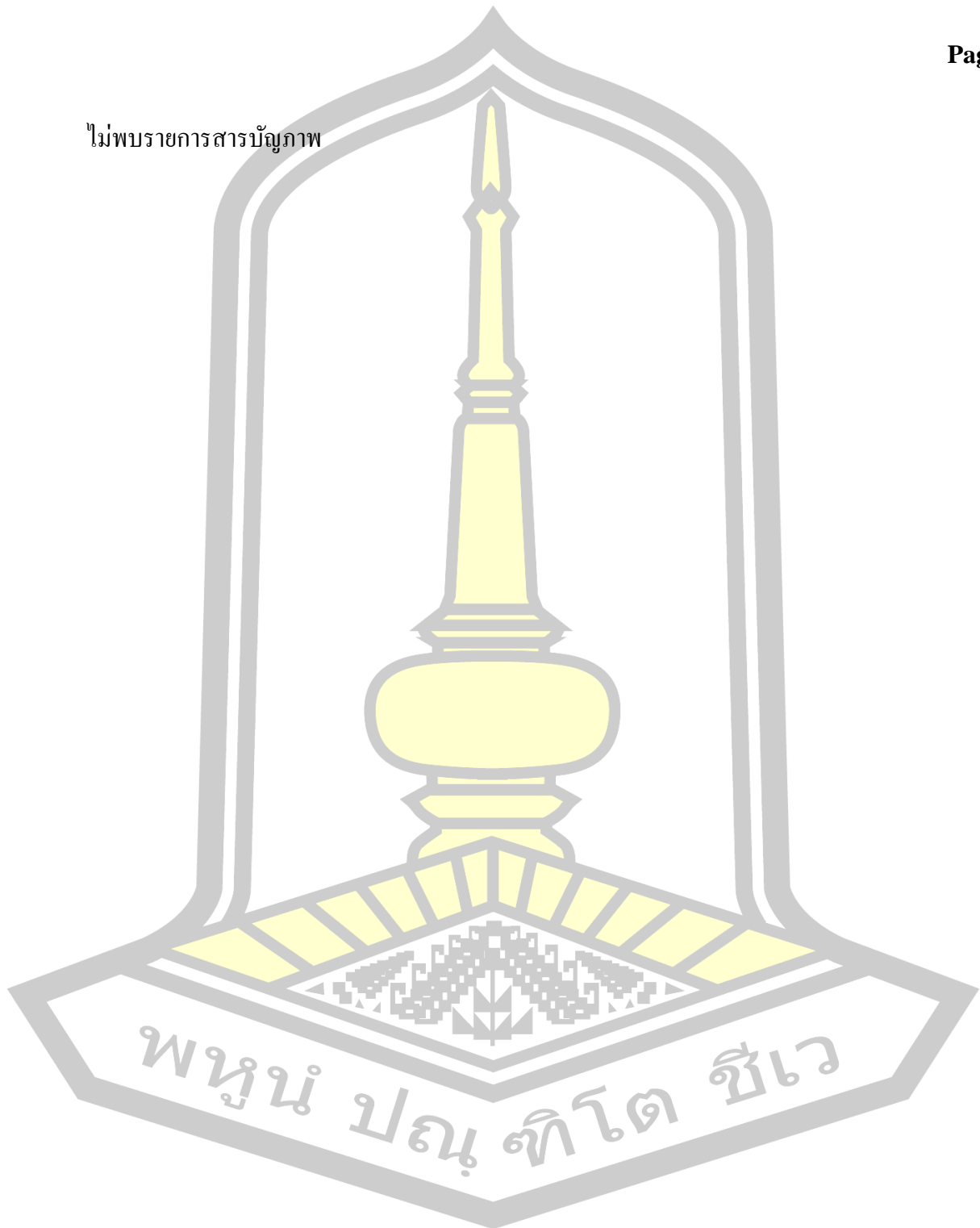
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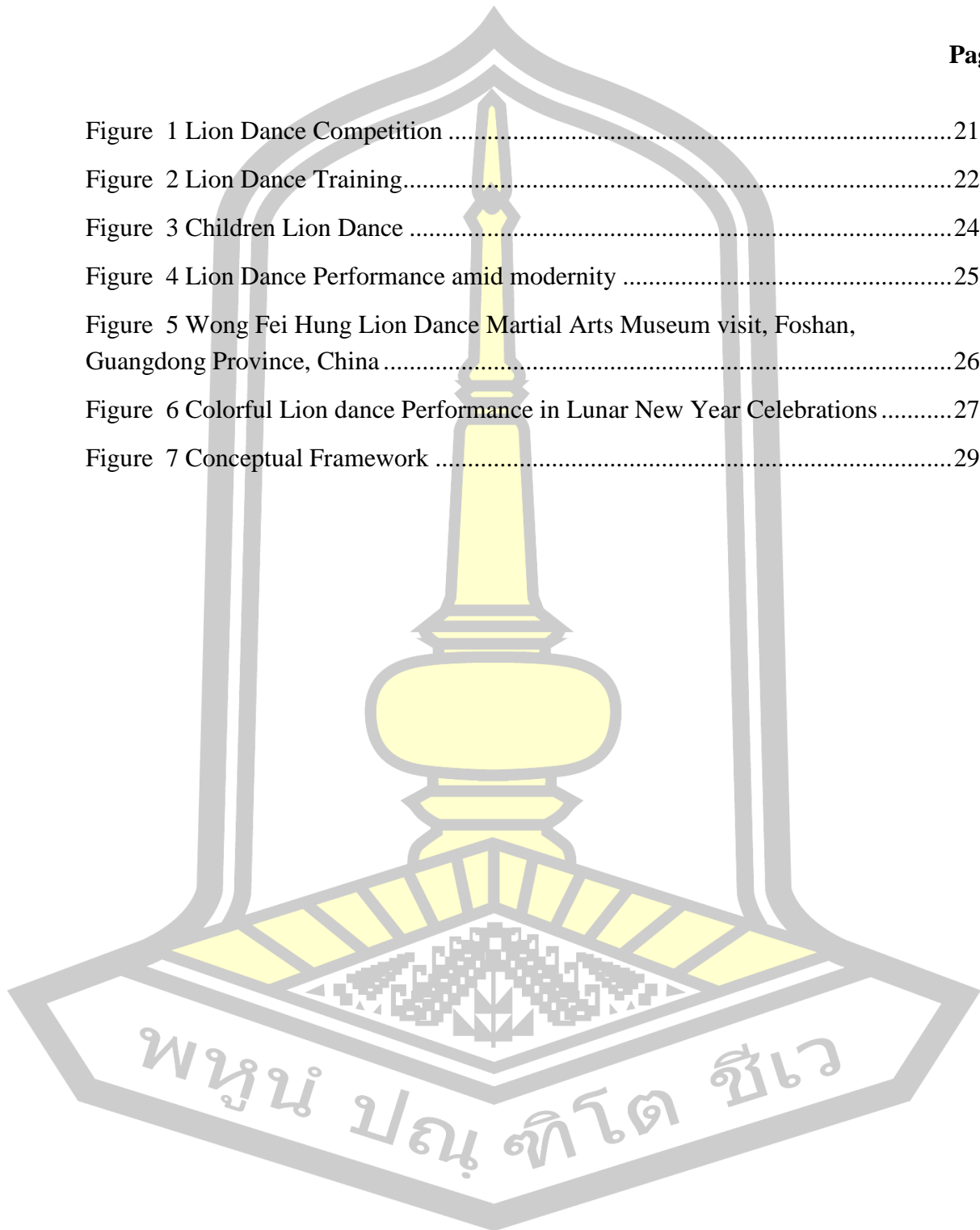
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# CHAPTER 1

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Lion Dance

The Guangdong Lion Dance is revealed as a glorious chronology woven from the colorful threads of Chinese cultural legacy, and its significance resonates far beyond the Guangdong province's borders to cover all of Chinese society. The piece of art that just began as a mere skill part of the Chinese martial art has significantly changed over the years, changing to a more artistic art as well as being used as a sport. Ever since it began being performed, the art has presented a very interesting story, where it can be originally be traced back to the Lingnan region, a geographical and cultural hub that has fostered the dance's development for ages. Therefore, looking into this dance reveals an interesting history that can be used to describe the cultural identity, not only for the people of Lingnan but to the whole world where this dance is being practiced today.

The Guangdong Lion Dance's attraction reverberates through its mesmerizing performances, which reveal an art form of unmatched beauty and complexity. Every thread on a painstakingly made lion costume serves as a testament to the artists' commitment to preserve a palpable link to the past. The dance's powerful choreography, a well-orchestrated symphony of leaps, turns, and rhythmic steps, goes beyond simple movement to tell stories with deep cultural resonance. According to Ang (2020, p. 1368), the lion's animated motions are evidence of the harmony between form and spirit, evoking the essence of fantastical creatures and bringing a well-known story to life. The music itself mimics the rhythm of history, a rhythmic representation of the dance's essence with the potential to arouse emotions and revive hidden memories, accompanied by intricate melodies that intertwine with the dance's every action.

The ancient Guangdong Lion Dance, despite its timeless elegance and alluring attractiveness, has faced a significantly faced a challenge whereby the present day dynamics are affecting the way it is being perceived. Throughout the history of this dance, as practiced by many generations, the dynamics of the present day, such as the aspect of urbanism that has affected some of the traditional practices. The sophisticated dance that has mesmerized viewers for ages now faces an existential threat that, if not carefully preserved, could fade into obscurity. Paradoxically, there is a great chance for regeneration and reinvention inside this dilemma. The Guangdong Lion Dance has opportunities to evolve into a living bridge that connects generations, cultures, and continents thanks to the complexity of the current world (Ang, 2020, p. 1368). The Guangdong Lion Dance emerges as a tangible example of cultural resiliency in this environment of rapid change. It must navigate the perilous waters of tradition and innovation, adapt to evolving societal currents while preserving its inherent essence, in order to survive. As a result, the story of the Guangdong Lion Dance, which has its roots in the soils of Lingnan, is echoed throughout the larger global narrative of intangible cultural assets. The lion dance is a tribute to the continuing power of cultural expression, building a route that both honors the past and reveals the future as tradition and modernity merge in a complex dance of their own.

Lingnan emerges as a compelling canvas decorated with the delicate outlines of its distinctive geographical features and painted with the hues of local customs. This area, which is located in China's southernmost provinces, goes beyond simple geography to serve as a live example of how civilizations may coexist. Lingnan's geographical location, nestled between beautiful mountains and the South China Sea's lapping waves, has been crucial in forming its identity (Cui and Zhong, 2020, p. 327). The Guangdong Lion Dance finds its beginning and purpose in the character of Lingnan, which has been woven by the dance of history, trade winds, and migratory currents. Due to its maritime heritage, Lingnan has historically served as a meeting place for traders, explorers, and wanderers, serving as a cultural crucible. The sea has enabled an exchange of thoughts, principles, and artistic expressions that reverberate throughout Lingnan's cultural fabric as both a barrier and a bridge (Xiaomo, and Yongqing, 2023, p. 3701). As a result of this complex blending, the Guangdong Lion Dance collects stories that were brought by the tides of trade. It manifests as a living witness to the area's function as a crossroads for human interaction since its form, symbolism, and basic essence are permeated with echoes of faraway regions and various perspectives.

Every step of the dance contains a story that illustrates the complex interplay between regional identity and the larger currents of Chinese culture. The dance, like a prism, refracts Lingnan's cultural light, bringing out its subtle hues while allowing greater Chinese traditions to reverberate and affect it. As the dance develops, it stops being just a performance and starts to mirror the dynamics of the wider Chinese society—its diversity and unity, as well as its stability and change (Xiaomo, and Yongqing, 2023, p. 3701). The exquisite choreography displays the delicate dance between innovation and preservation, while the opulent lion costumes reveal the continuity threads that link the past to the present. Thus, the Guangdong Lion Dance serves as a physical representation of Lingnan's historical development and invites onlookers to interpret tradition and evolution encoded within its mesmerizing movements.

Traditional cultural forms like the Guangdong Lion Dance find themselves at a critical crossroads in an era marked by the unrelenting march of modernity, urbanization, and globalization throughout China's landscapes (Xiaomo, and Yongqing, 2023, p. 3694). This is a place where the currents of tradition and the tides of change converge. The same foundations that have supported these centuries-old activities now face extraordinary difficulties as the landscape changes and cities grow taller. The old traditions that formerly flourished in the center of communities are now threatened by the invasion of new ideals, the rapid pace of technological development, and the constantly changing rhythms of modern living. The dance, with its profound meaning, is in a difficult position as it attempts to strike a delicate balance between preservation and change. The Guangdong Lion Dance faces the challenge of remaining relevant in the perspective of future generations as the fast currents of societal change sweep away the familiar landscapes of the past (Wu et al., 2020, p. 507). The dance's capacity to unite the modern sensibilities that define the present with the revered legacy it represents will determine how long it retains its resonance. It's a dance that takes place both on stage and in the thoughts and hearts of those who watch it and those who must live with its legacy.

The Guangdong Lion Dance has a natural ability to adapt, which has allowed it to change through generations while preserving its essential elements. The dance has the ability to not only survive but also prosper in a setting far different from the one in which it was born by embracing innovation and change. The dance can act as a bridge between the past and the future, acknowledging tradition while welcoming change, allowing younger generations to connect with the eternal principles ingrained in their cultural history (Xiaomo, and Yongqing, 2023, p. 3698). The Guangdong Lion Dance's inclusion in the Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage is a profound pledge of dedication that the heritage of this famous tradition won't be consigned to history in the midst of these crosswinds of change (Ye, 2019, p.23). It is a promise to protect the dance's essence and make sure that its legends, moves, and symbolism endure throughout the ages. This designation acts as a shield and a torch, fending off the gloom of apathy and illuminating the way to a reborn and reshaped future. This declaration recognizes the dance's importance as a storehouse of cultural memory, a window onto identity, and a symbol of the tenacity of human expression. This reflects on the timeless meaning of the ancient dance: just as the lion dances out of the shadows, so too will the dance endure, establishing a connection across time and distance.

### 1.2 Definition of Lion Dance as a Dance

For quite some time, people have not viewed this dance as a dance but a mere artistic expression, where initially it was noted that it was performed as a skill part of the Chinese martial arts. Mostly classified as a dance, Lion Dance sets itself apart with a sophisticated pattern of motions that represent symbolic gestures and cultural stories. As a dance, the Lion Dance is involved in activities which are very essential in creating a choreographic symphony that can be very essential in harmonizing the performer's form and spirit through the dance (Xu et al., 2019, p. 12). For instance, it involves animated motions, whereby the performers use animal motions in form of a dance, leading to the creation of fantastical creatures and storytelling through the matching costumes. The deliberate incorporation of cultural depth into each movement, in addition to the skillful execution of leaps, turns, and rhythmic steps, is very essential in the performance of this dance. One of the things that makes dance so unique as an art form is its ability to tell stories and evoke feelings via physical expression through its performance (Xu et al., 2017, p. 10). Through the different movements expressed within the dance, together with the accompanying costumes, the cultural dynamics of the people of Guangdong are mirrored, making the dance to be used as a canvas for cultural identity.

Additionally, through the way the different movements which are performed with precision and grace, the dance goes beyond the physical performance as leads to the creation of a language that communicates tradition. The dance entails very unique components such as the dance itself, choreography which are characterized by unique leaps, twists as well as rhythmic steps. This components are therefore very vital for the dance because they are only unique to this dance, with no other tradition doing it the way this dance does (Yang and Hsu, 2016, p. 14). Besides the dance as well as physical movements, there is a musical accompaniment which complements the dance, leading to the creation of a cultural resonance. The song's melodies and beats evoke the historical rhythm, creating a soundtrack that matches the lion's movements.



The dance's heartbeat is the music, which heightens its emotional effect and strengthens the bond with the dance's cultural origins (Xu et al., 2017, p. 13). Therefore, the Lion Dance through its movements, choreography and musical accompaniment establishes the dance as a rich and immersive dance form which portrays it as an expression of Guangdong's cultural heritage.

Through the performance of the dance, not just as acrobatics but as a dance, it goes beyond the realm of just a mere performance but comes out as a strong and unique vessel that culturally expresses the people performing it. Every movement, action or even the costumes used are used to portray the culture of the people of Guangdong, and its evolution and changes are used to signify how far the people of Guangdong have come ever since urbanization began taking shape. For instance, during the performance of the lion dance, several symbolic gestures are integrated within its choreography, communicating symbolic interpretations, rituals, and even some shared values among the people. When viewed as a dance, Lion Dance thus transcends its physical form to serve as a cultural ambassador, using the elegant language of movement to convey the intangible elements of identity, belonging, and shared history (Xu et al., 2017, p. 10). Here, the performers engage in lively movements like those of a lion, enabling the people to tell a story that has the ability of connecting and uniting different generations.

### 1.3 Purpose of Research / Objective

This study's main goal is to thoroughly explore the Guangdong Lion Dance and situate it within the larger framework of Chinese intangible cultural heritage.

Therefore, this research aims to:

- 1.3.1 To study the history and development of the Lion Dance
- 1.3.2 To study the role of the lion dance in shaping cultural identity of people Lingnan Region, Guangdong
- 1.3.3 To study the efforts by local authorities in preserving and inheriting the intangible heritage of the Lion Dance recommend future actions critically.

### 1.4 Research question

To unravel the complexities of the Guangdong Lion Dance and its significance within the Chinese intangible cultural heritage landscape, this research seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1.4.1 What is the historical evolution of Lion Dance in Guangdong and how has it developed over time?
- 1.4.2 How has Lion Dance played a role in shaping the cultural identity of people Lingnan Region, Guangdong?
- 1.4.3 What are the gaps regarding the efforts have local authorities in Guangdong for preserving and inheriting the intangible cultural heritage of Lion Dance and how can they be addressed?

## 1.5 Definition of Terms

### 1.5.1 Lion Dance

This is a traditional practice that is performed within the Chinese culture, where the performers mimic a lion's movement, as they wear a lion's costume hoping to bring good luck and fortunes. It is a pugilistic act with a history spanning over 1,500 years. Its performance at auspicious times, like the opening of new stores and businesses, is thought to bring money and good fortune. Due to its link to the stories of Nian, a beastly creature scared away on the eve of Chinese New Year (CNY) by the villagers' loud drumming, the lion dance is also done during this celebration.

### 1.5.2 Intangible Cultural Heritage

Intangible Cultural Heritage refers to cultural practices, traditions, knowledge, and skills that are passed down from generation to generation within a community, involving aspects such as performing arts, oral traditions, rituals, social practices and even festive events.

### 1.5.3 Cultural identity

This is a term that is used in describing the unique characteristics or identities of people or even specific social groups.

### 1.5.4 Globalization

This is a holistic term that describes the way trade and technology has made the globe to become an interconnected as well as interdependent sphere.

## 1.6 Scope of Research

### 1.6.1 Research area

This study is primarily focused on Guangdong province which is mainly characterized by its long and rich history. This is a province which has been characterized by a variety of cultural practices, and with the Lion Dance being a prominent cultural practice in this province, this research shall stand at an advantageous position to unravel the historical evolution, cultural significance and preservation efforts of the Lion Dance.

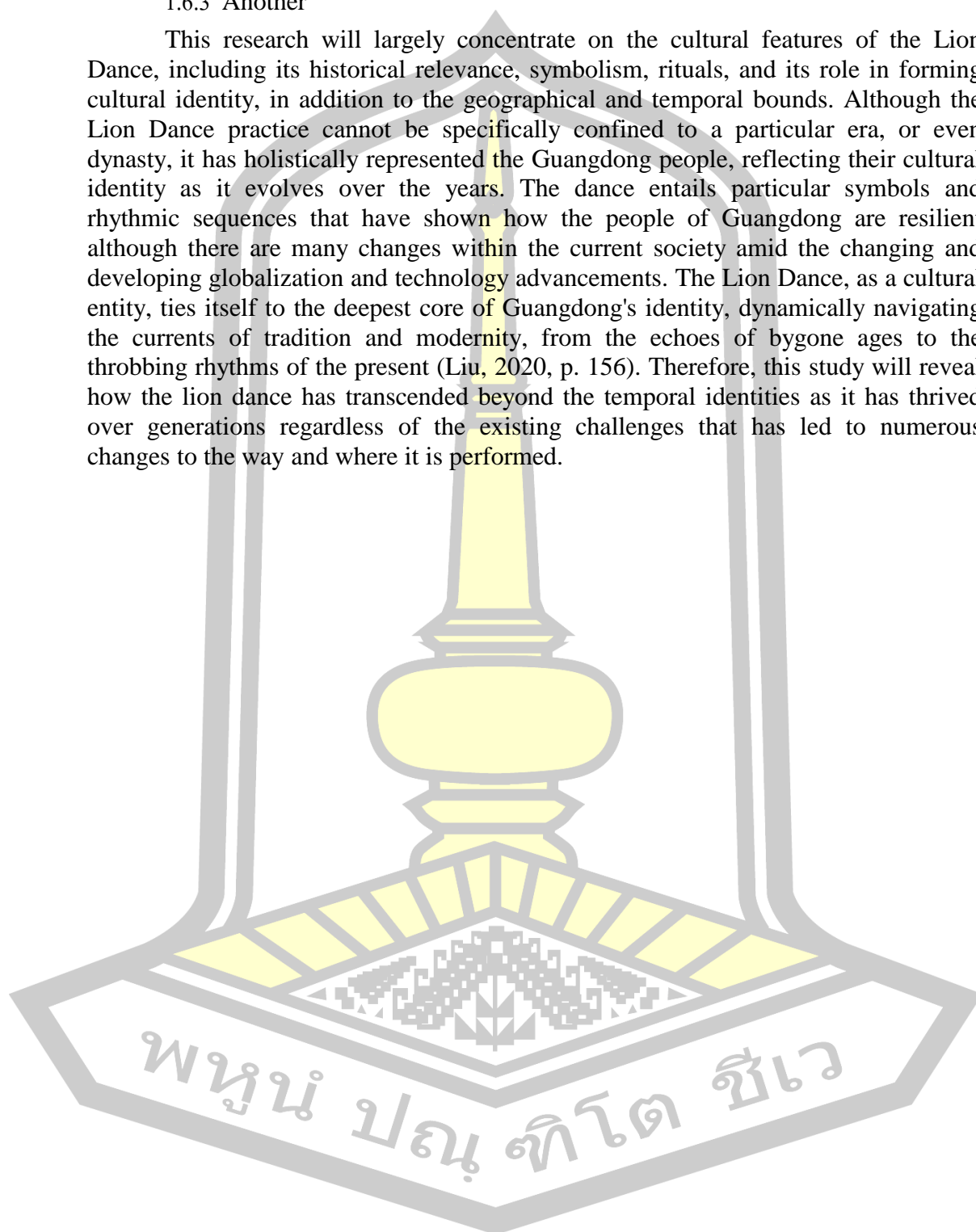
### 1.6.2 Time

The history of the Lion Dance will be examined from its earliest known beginnings in ancient China to the present. As identified, this dance has lasted for over 1500 years ever since it began being practiced, with several changes as time goes by. However, this investigation shall solely focus on the latest years, within the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries as it tries to unravel some of the changes it has undergone as well as the way this dance has shaped the identities of those who practice it (McGuire, 2014, p. 23). Therefore, the study shall uncover some of the challenges it has shaped within this timeframe as well as identify some of the roles of the government as it tries to preserve this culture for the future generations.



### 1.6.3 Another

This research will largely concentrate on the cultural features of the Lion Dance, including its historical relevance, symbolism, rituals, and its role in forming cultural identity, in addition to the geographical and temporal bounds. Although the Lion Dance practice cannot be specifically confined to a particular era, or even dynasty, it has holistically represented the Guangdong people, reflecting their cultural identity as it evolves over the years. The dance entails particular symbols and rhythmic sequences that have shown how the people of Guangdong are resilient although there are many changes within the current society amid the changing and developing globalization and technology advancements. The Lion Dance, as a cultural entity, ties itself to the deepest core of Guangdong's identity, dynamically navigating the currents of tradition and modernity, from the echoes of bygone ages to the throbbing rhythms of the present (Liu, 2020, p. 156). Therefore, this study will reveal how the lion dance has transcended beyond the temporal identities as it has thrived over generations regardless of the existing challenges that has led to numerous changes to the way and where it is performed.



## CHAPTER 2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Population and Sample

The Guangdong Lion Dance is an important cultural heritage of the region, and the key figures and authorities associated to it are the people under inquiry in this study. To ensure this study achieves its desired objectives, it will mainly focus in engaging people who have a history in participating in the Lion Dance to ensure it attains the exact picture of what is under investigation. Therefore, the first individuals to be given attention are the inheritors of the dance that work at the local museum in Guangdong. These are experts that can well explain the evolution of this dance as well as some of the measures that have been placed to ensure the traditional dance continues to exist (Merriam and Grenier, 2019, p. 13). Also, the study shall engage the local ministry culture officials who understand some of the regulations that the ministry have made to facilitate the performance of this piece of art.

The local Ministry of Culture officials offer an official perspective, elucidating policies, programs, and obstacles concerning the intangible cultural heritage of the Lion Dance. Also, the study will not forego the major characters in the performance of the Lion Dance, where the investigation will solely consider performers of this dance (Merriam and Grenier, 2019, p. 29). They will be important in revealing first-hand information and experience on the dance, and thus this will be influential in explaining the current state of this dance. Lastly, the participation of Guangzhou locals guarantees a community-focused strategy, gathering a range of perspectives and encouraging a comprehensive comprehension of the Lion Dance within its cultural context. Therefore, this information used in this study will be obtained from a Guangdong Art Academy expert, a lion dancer, the local people of the Guangdong province as well as officials from the local ministry of culture.

The sample technique selected for this study has been carefully created to incorporate the concepts of accessibility, representation, and diversity, all of which are deeply ingrained in the rich cultural legacy of the Lingnan region and the intricate tapestry of the Guangdong Lion Dance. Diversity is a crucial tenet of the sampling approach in the context of the Guangdong Lion Dance. Through the passage of ages, communities, and geographic borders, this dance style has absorbed a wide range of inspirations and interpretations (Ye, 2019, p. 3). The research intentionally respects the diversity of the Lion Dance's heritage by choosing a diverse group of participants, including inheritors, specialists, and an official. As stewards of generational knowledge, inheritors present historical viewpoints that represent the continuance of the tradition. Experts offer analytical insights that improve our comprehension of the cultural relevance of the dance and are grounded in intellectual interaction. A representative from the local ministry of culture has been included, adding insight from the administration and policy realms and reflecting the dance's larger socio-political setting. The research is sure to capture the diversity of perceptions, motivations, and experiences associated to the dance since it includes individuals who play various roles and hold various places within the ecology of the lion dance.

Another important principle that directs the selection of the sample is representation. The Lion Dance is a significant part of cultural history and has many facets, from artistic performance to the preservation of historical heritage. The research makes sure that each aspect is well represented by involving inheritors, specialists, and a representative. Inheritors, who carry the burden of tradition, offer a close link to the dance's historical origins. The academic viewpoint provided by experts helps to contextualize the dance within a scholarly discussion and offers important insights (Merriam and Grenier, 2019, p. 29). The representative of government and administration provides information on current attempts to protect the Lion Dance as an example of intangible cultural heritage. The range of participants makes sure that the study fully encompasses the dance's cultural, academic, and policy-related facets in addition to its inherent aesthetic features. The sampling technique allows for a thorough investigation of the varied consequences of the lion dance within its cultural context by assuring complete representation.

The accessibility tenet emphasizes how practical the sampling approach is. Despite being widely distributed, the lion dance community frequently congregates around particular networks and institutions. The research assures proximity to key informants by choosing participants from regional museums, the Guangdong Institute of Literature and Art, and the Local Ministry of Culture. This strategy promotes in-depth interaction with people who have valuable insights while also streamlining the data collection process (Martinez-Mesa et al., 2016, p. 329). The selection of participants reflects the ease with which knowledgeable individuals from the Lion Dance community and affiliated institutions could really be reached. The research has the benefit of speaking with people who have firsthand knowledge and experience thanks to an accessible sampling strategy, which deepens and authenticates the findings.

The sample size for this study consists of a carefully selected set of participants, which includes six people in total: inheritors, experts, and an official. In order to strike a compromise between depth of insight and manageable data collecting, this amount was chosen. Based on their close ties to the tradition and their grasp of ancestor knowledge, three inheritors of the Lion Dance were chosen. The requirements include lineage ties that confirm their position as keepers of this tradition and a minimum of 10 years of active participation in Lion Dance performances. This guarantees that the chosen inheritors have seen how the dance has changed over the centuries, creating a historical continuum (Martinez-Mesa et al., 2016, p. 332). Based on their scholarly contributions to the field of cultural heritage, two specialists were chosen. These people have an impressive track record of publishing and research on traditional performing arts and cultural identity. Their eligibility to offer academic insights into the functions and importance of the Lion Dance in creating cultural identity is demonstrated by their selection criteria.

Additionally, one representative was picked based on their function in managing and implementing cultural policy. Their position within the Ministry of Culture and their participation in projects related to the protection of intangible cultural assets are the main considerations. This makes sure that the viewpoints of the official shed light on the government initiatives intended to protect the Lion Dance as an intangible cultural treasure. All participants were chosen based on their sincerity, knowledge, and involvement in the Lion Dance community. By following these

guidelines, the research made sure that the chosen people had the skills and background needed to add valuable insights to the study. This method ensures that the information gathered is comprehensive and accurately reflects the many facets of the cultural history of the Guangdong Lion Dance.

## 2.2 Instrumentation

Only qualitative data will be used within this study, whereby the study shall solely focus on providing detailed information from qualitative interviews as well as document analysis. Firstly, the qualitative interviews shall be structured in a way that they will effectively collect the required information that can be essential for this study. For instance, these interviews will have questions that delve into personal experiences, perspectives as well as reflections from the participants of the study (Finefter-rosenbluh, 2017, p. 19). Speaking with representatives of the Ministry of Culture will provide insight into the government's viewpoint as they dissect programs, policies, and difficulties pertaining to the Lion Dance's intangible cultural legacy. The qualitative interviews will also be structured to entail conversations with the dancers that will share their lived experiences, and thus, this will enable the study to create a current understanding on the state of this dance. As a result, the qualitative interviews provide a lively and thorough method for revealing the complex stories that, from various angles, characterize the Guangdong Lion Dance heritage.

The approach of document analysis used in this study include a methodical examination of historical records, cultural artifacts, and other written sources in order to glean contextual information that advances our understanding of the cultural heritage of the Guangdong Lion Dance. In order to enhance the research findings, this methodological technique enables the integration of historical narratives, cultural symbolism, and archival materials (Kayesa and Shung-King, 2021, p. 23). Finding a wide variety of sources that are relevant to the research goals is the first stage. These sources span the history of the Lion Dance and its cultural relevance and include documents, images, manuscripts, artwork, and written narratives. Following the identification of the sources, a theme coding and categorization procedure is used. Each source is carefully examined, and pertinent narratives, patterns, and motifs are found. Important elements including historical occurrences, cultural contexts, symbolic meanings, and the development of the dance are all covered by these subject codes.

The themes are then interpreted in light of their respective historical and cultural backdrops. The research offers important insights into how the Lion Dance has changed through time and how it has been knitted into the fabric of Lingnan's cultural legacy by looking at the sources through a cultural and historical perspective. A cross-source validation approach is used to increase the findings' veracity and credibility. This entails contrasting and comparing the ideas gleaned from many sources in order to spot recurring themes, variations, and more data. The reconstruction of historical tales and timelines pertaining to the development of the Lion Dance is made possible by document analysis. To build a coherent and thorough historical account, this entails putting disparate material from diverse sources together (Wang et al., 2019, p. 106). The conclusions drawn from document analysis are combined with data from various qualitative and quantitative sources, including



surveys and interviews. The story of the research is enhanced with historical nuance and cultural relevance thanks to this integration, which offers a comprehensive understanding of the cultural heritage of the Lion Dance.

### 2.3 Data Collection

A crucial feature of this study's methodology is the direct primary data collection from participants, inheritors, specialists, and a representative of the government. This method makes it easier to gather first-hand observations, stories from the ground, and viewpoints from specialists to provide a comprehensive understanding of the cultural history of the Guangdong Lion Dance. Primary data collection is distinguished by its breadth, authenticity, and direct interaction with important stakeholders (Amaya et al., 2015, p. 432). Choosing and enlisting individuals who accurately represent the various facets of the Lion Dance community is the first stage. Lineage relationships and activity in nearby museums are used to identify inheritors. For their scientific contributions, experts from the Guangdong College of Literature and Art are picked, whilst a representative from the local ministry of culture is chosen for their administrative position. Each participant provides their informed consent prior to the start of data collection. This entails providing a clear description of the study's goals, procedures, and possible ramifications. To make sure that participants are at ease and educated about their involvement, ethical aspects including privacy protection and cultural sensitivities are thoroughly covered.

Face-to-face one-on-one interviews are the main method used to gather data for this investigation. These interviews take place in environments that encourage candid conversations and introspection. The researcher has conversations with participants about a range of topics related to the research issues, such as the historical development of the Lion Dance, its significance in defining cultural identity, and preservation efforts. In-depth narratives and insights are intended to be elicited during the interviews. Participants are encouraged to share personal experiences, historical anecdotes, cultural symbolism, and opinions on preservation by using open-ended questions. The participatory format of the interviews enables the researcher to go deeper, explore nuanced viewpoints, and document the intricate cultural legacy of the Lion Dance (Azungah, 2018, p. 390). The interviews are properly recorded with data using a variety of methods. A thorough record of participant replies, observations, and nonverbal indications is kept by the researcher. Additionally, with the participants' permission, interviews may be audio recorded to guarantee accuracy throughout transcription. By incorporating additional qualitative data sources, such as document analysis and expert perspectives, the primary interview data is further enhanced (Azungah, 2018, p. 389). The thoroughness and veracity of the research findings are improved by the triangulation. The researcher exercises reflexive techniques while conducting interviews, recognizing their positionality and potential biases. This self-awareness helps to identify potential trends that might be influenced by the researcher's perspective and to interpret data in a transparent manner.

## 2.4 Data Analysis

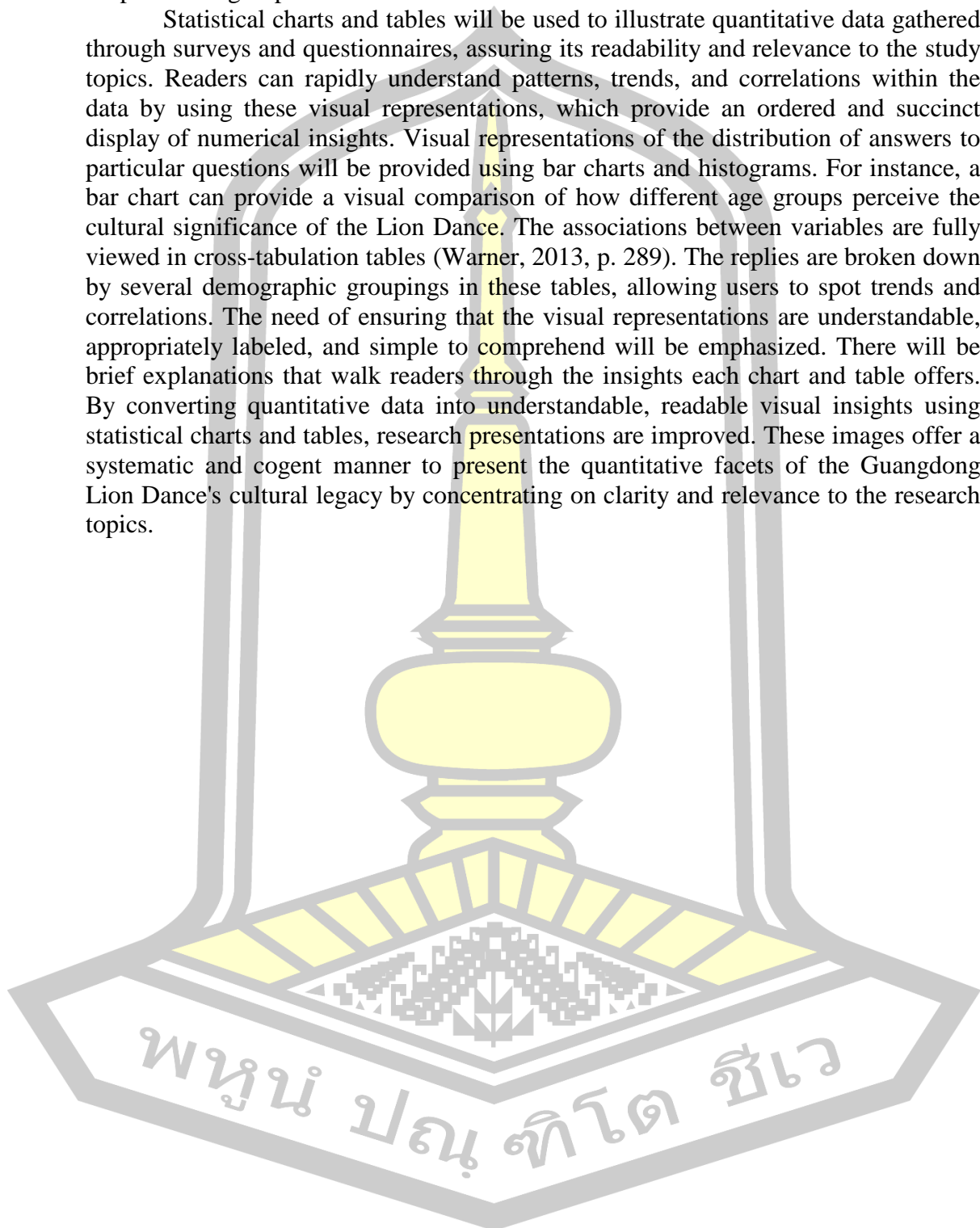
In order to draw meaningful conclusions from the qualitative information gathered through in-person interviews with inheritors, specialists, and a representative, qualitative data analysis is crucial. Therefore, this study shall deploy thematic analysis where various themes obtained from the qualitative interviews will be analyzed. Here, coding, categorizing, and evaluating the participants' rich narratives and views are all part of this method's systematic approach. The first phase entails segmenting the interview transcripts into manageable chunks and picking out significant words, phrases, and ideas. After that, the initial codes are categorized into overarching themes that include recurrent concepts, stories, and viewpoints (St. Pierre and Jackson, 2014, p. 716). These themes naturally arise from the data and capture the many facets of the cultural heritage of the Lion Dance. The research questions are aligned with the main categories into which the themes are further divided. To depict the various facets of the dance, themes including historical evolution, cultural symbolism, and preservation efforts are divided into distinct categories. Patterns, variations, and linkages both within and across categories are discernible through classification (Clarke and Braun, 2017). Each category is evaluated in light of the study's goals and the accounts of the participants. This entails going further in-depth with each theme's underlying implications, meanings, and situations. The interaction of historical, cultural, and personal aspects is taken into account during interpretation. This analysis method draws insights from participant narratives, historical background, and cultural symbols through the use of classification, categorization, and interpretation, adding to a thorough investigation of the dance's importance. This thematic coding process will entail dynamic interplay of the obtained data as well as any emerging patterns, and this shall be essential in bringing out any recurring narratives. This method will enable the study to go beyond the things that are only seen in the surface-level observations, and thus, it will lead this study to create an understanding on the prevailing cultural symbols, historical context and individual perspectives on the Lion Dance performance (Clarke and Braun, 2017, p. 298). The first step in producing insightful findings is thematic coding, which prepares the ground for further data analysis phases. It's a process of transformation that turns unstructured material into an understandable story that is well-organized, laying the groundwork for a comprehensive investigation of the cultural roles, historical development, and current relevance of the Guangdong Lion Dance.

## 2.5 Research presentation

Narrative descriptions that vividly capture participants' perspectives and insights will be used to provide qualitative findings from in-person interviews with inheritors, specialists, and a representative. Readers will be able to become fully immersed in the depth of participants' personal experiences, historical tales, and cultural interpretations thanks to these narrative descriptions, which will bring to life the varied facets of the Guangdong Lion Dance's cultural legacy. The stories will be written to preserve the veracity of the participants' voices, fusing their experiences, feelings, and points of view (Kiger and Varpio, 2020, p. 897). This method of presenting allows for a subtle examination of the dance's meaning, illuminating the

interaction of cultural symbols, historical background, and personal ties that have shaped its long impact.

Statistical charts and tables will be used to illustrate quantitative data gathered through surveys and questionnaires, assuring its readability and relevance to the study topics. Readers can rapidly understand patterns, trends, and correlations within the data by using these visual representations, which provide an ordered and succinct display of numerical insights. Visual representations of the distribution of answers to particular questions will be provided using bar charts and histograms. For instance, a bar chart can provide a visual comparison of how different age groups perceive the cultural significance of the Lion Dance. The associations between variables are fully viewed in cross-tabulation tables (Warner, 2013, p. 289). The replies are broken down by several demographic groupings in these tables, allowing users to spot trends and correlations. The need of ensuring that the visual representations are understandable, appropriately labeled, and simple to comprehend will be emphasized. There will be brief explanations that walk readers through the insights each chart and table offers. By converting quantitative data into understandable, readable visual insights using statistical charts and tables, research presentations are improved. These images offer a systematic and cogent manner to present the quantitative facets of the Guangdong Lion Dance's cultural legacy by concentrating on clarity and relevance to the research topics.



## CHAPTER 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.1 Introduction

The investigation of the Guangdong Lion Dance's historical origins, its transforming voyage across regional borders, and its lasting relevance in a world that is rapidly shifting is necessary to fully grasp the intricate cultural creation it has woven. This chapter digs into the body of available information and invites us to travel the lanes of academic debate that shed light on this traditional folk dance's many facets. This literature review attempts to uncover the complexities of meaning, symbolism, and significance woven within the history of the Lion Dance by interacting with a wide range of studies, academic assessments, and cultural tales. This study sets out on a journey across time and space, documenting the dance's historical development, examining its impact on local identity and larger cultural currents, and illuminating the painstaking efforts made to conserve the dance's unique qualities as a living cultural asset. The literature review also explores current issues and opportunities, examining how well the dance connects with contemporary audiences and its cross-cultural influence. This chapter essentially acts as a scholarly compass, guiding us through the seas of information as we explore the rich and dynamic history of the Guangdong Lion Dance.

### 3.2 Historical Evolution of Lion Dance: Origins and Spread

#### 3.2.1 Historical origins of Lion Dance in China

The Guangdong Lion Dance's historical roots may be traced to the earliest periods of Chinese civilisation, when myths, tales, and cultural practices came together to create a mesmerizing art form that is still in demand today. This dance's intricate weave of ritual, symbolism, and storytelling is evidence of its long history within China's historical timeline. Its roots can be discovered in the deep roots of Chinese mythology and tradition, where stories of legendary monsters and village survival stories intersect. This is according to a study by Ying and Chiat (2016, p. 135). The roots of the Lion Dance were sowed within this intricate story, growing as a response to the difficulties presented by a legendary beast known as "Nian." Ying and Chiat (2016, p. 136) also pointed out that the Nian tormented settlements throughout the prehistoric era, devouring livestock and instilling dread among the inhabitants. Ancient people discovered this vicious creature's weaknesses, including its dislike of loud noises and the color red, while searching for a way to drive it away (Liu, 2020 p. 157). This insight led to an original idea that forms the basis of the Lion Dance. The dance developed as a sign of triumph over adversity and a protector against evil powers by incorporating the elements of percussion music, vivid red clothing, and intricate choreography.

The path of the Lion Dance was woven into the cultural and social currents of the era as history unfolded its tapestry. It rose to popularity as the focal point of many Chinese festivities, but especially the Spring Festival, or Chinese New Year. These celebratory events acted as platforms for cultural transmission and societal bonding in addition to providing entertainment (Liu, 2020, p. 157). The Lion Dance developed and changed as China advanced through the dynastic centuries, with each variation reflecting the dominant ethos, conventions, and aesthetics (Wilcox, 2020, p. p. 35).



The Lion Dance's tale reflects the passage of time and the resilience of tradition, from its mythological beginnings to its current status as a beloved cultural activity (Ying and Chiat, 2016, p. 143). Its ability to act as an engine for both continuity and innovation, capturing the core of China's historical consciousness, can be credited with its durability. The millennia-old history of the Lion Dance provides a window into the close relationship between culture, mythology, and the human spirit—an unchanging theme that permeates all of the dance's spellbinding performances.

### 3.2.2 Development of Lion Dance

The southernmost province of China, Guangdong, was instrumental in fostering and perfecting the art of the lion dance and turning it into a distinctive cultural symbol that reflects the region's dynamic identity. The evolution of the lion dance in Guangdong, according to Burstein (2014, p. 133), is evidence of the region's distinctive historical, geographical, and sociocultural influences. This resulted in a variation of the dance that is not only complicated artistically but also profoundly reflective of the local ethos. The history of the Lion Dance in Guangdong over centuries shows a remarkable synthesis of local customs and outside influences. Guangdong developed into a melting pot of various cultural aspects as a result of its region's rich tapestry of trade, migration, and cultural interchange (Han and Beisi, 2015, p. 239). The choreography, attire, and musical accompaniment of the Lion Dance all reflect these various influences. Due to the province's proximity to the sea and its significance as a trading hub along the maritime Silk Road, foreign creative nuances were more easily incorporated, creating a dance style that symbolizes a combination of native essence and global flair.

Guangdong developed into a fusion of various cultural aspects as a result of its region's rich point of trade, migration, and cultural interchange (Han and Beisi, 2015, p. 241). The choreography, attire, and musical accompaniment of the Lion Dance all reflect these various influences. Due to the province's proximity to the sea and its significance as a trading hub along the maritime Silk Road, foreign creative nuances were more easily incorporated, creating a dance style that symbolizes a combination of native essence and global flair. It demonstrates how the dance may change while preserving its core characteristics, adapting to shifting social settings without losing its original cultural expression. The Lion Dance is a cultural time capsule that captures Guangdong's history, interactions with the outside world, and the rich layers of tradition that have influenced the development of its art (Chen, 2022, 561). This complex dance style continues to be a representation of Guangdong's identity and a living example of the region's capacity to embrace change while retaining the essence of its cultural heritage.

### 3.2.3 Influences on the evolution of Lion Dance across different regions

The dance's development throughout various places is evidence of the complex interaction between tradition and invention, local influences and global forces, which finally shaped the varied tapestry of Lion Dance customs we see today. Ismail (2016, p. 74) claims that the vast cultural mosaic of Southeast Asia provided a favorable environment for the Lion Dance to flourish. Chinese techniques and indigenous traditions' influences merged to create distinctive varieties that represent a synthesis of cultures. Here, the dance combined ancient practices with indigenous ideas and aesthetics to create a physical representation of cultural unity. Beyond its original symbolism, the Lion Dance played a more significant role in celebrations \ bringing

together diverse groups of people in a festive mood. The Lion Dance, on the other hand, took on a distinct function in North America and Europe, serving as a link between Chinese populations living abroad and their cultural history (Wilcox, 2020, p. 34). The dance needed to be able to resonate with audiences who were not familiar with its significance as well as maintain its traditional essence in order to adapt to these new contexts. The Lion Dance evolved into a representation of cross-cultural exchange as it gained prominence in multicultural contexts, inspiring curiosity and understanding among a variety of audiences.

The lion dance evolved in response to changes in the socio-political environment. For instance, the dance saw a renaissance in post-colonial Hong Kong, where it became a potent symbol of regional identity. It changed from a traditional performance to a vibrant urban spectacle, reflecting the shifting expectations of city dwellers (Li, Li, and Yan, 2018, p. 173). On a global level, the resurrection of the Lion Dance coincided with a rise of interest in traditional arts, which was motivated by a desire to connect with cultural legacy in an increasingly digital world. The Lion Dance has evolved throughout several places, demonstrating its ability to span cultural boundaries while yet being firmly established in tradition (Li, Li, and Yan, 2018, p. 174). The dance adjusts as it interacts with various contexts, absorbing influences from its surroundings while maintaining its essential qualities. The Lion Dance exposes its everlasting fascination as a cultural phenomenon that connects the past and the present, the local and the global, and the traditional and the contemporary through these complex storylines of adaptation, reinvention, and continuation.

#### 3.2.4 Lion Dance as Intangible Cultural Heritage: Changes and Continuity

The practice and perception of the lion dance have changed and remained consistent since it was designated as an intangible cultural treasure. The Lion Dance had a significant cultural impact on Guangdong and other areas before it received attention. It was performed during festivals, temple ceremonies, and community activities, primarily as a symbol of safety, prosperity, and cultural identity, according to Hassan (2014, p. 143) investigation. The dance included ornate costumes and ceremonies that were strongly ingrained in regional customs. When the lion dance was designated as an intangible cultural heritage, it underwent alterations in many areas. First, it received official endorsement and backing from cultural leaders, which prompted greater recording, preservation, and transmission initiatives (Hassan, 2014, p. 143). This transfer from unofficial community practice to official heritage recognition was a major change. Second, the Lion Dance changed in response to urbanization and globalization, claim Chen et al. (2020). Performances were held at commercial and international events in addition to more traditional venues. As a result, contemporary adaptations started to appear that included components to appeal to a wider population (Chen et al., 2019, p. 36). Formalization and modification came about as a result of the lion dance's designation as an intangible cultural asset. Although there have been adjustments to fit modern situations, the Lion Dance's fundamental cultural value has not changed. This dynamic development demonstrates the adaptability of intangible cultural heritage in a shifting environment.

Audience demographics and performance situations have changed as a result of the lion dance's development as an intangible cultural property. According to McGuire (2015, p. 41), the Lion Dance has historically been performed most frequently in remote villages and temples, where it is strongly ingrained in the

customs and beliefs of the region. However, there has been a noticeable change in performance contexts since they were recognized as intangible cultural assets. Nowadays, lion dance is frequently observed at contemporary occasions like corporate openings, cultural celebrations, and international exhibitions. Additionally, younger generations are participating in the Lion Dance more frequently both as participants and spectators, which represents a demographic shift (Huang, 2022, p, 35). The variations in performance settings demonstrate how easily Lion Dance may be adapted to meet the needs of modern audiences worldwide. Its participation in contemporary events demonstrates its ongoing appeal and capacity to unite tradition and business. Additionally, Huang (2022, p. 36) claimed that the participation of younger generations guarantees the survival of the Lion Dance. Their involvement and enthusiasm help to keep this traditional practice alive. The changing performance environments for the Lion Dance and its rising recognition among younger generations serve as examples of the cultural vitality of intangible heritage. It demonstrates that while flexibility is important, the Lion Dance's core nevertheless appeals to all audiences and environments.

Despite these modifications, several aspects of the lion dance have persisted, maintaining its cultural character. The elaborate dance, use of percussion and music, and symbolic roles of lions have all been preserved in Lion Dance performances (Ying and Chiat, 2016, p. 137). These essential components carry blessings, ward off bad spirits, and sustain the dance's cultural significance. The maintenance of these components demonstrates the dedication to preserving the authenticity and soul of Lion Dance. While modifications have been made, they are frequently added on top of the classic structure to preserve the dance's cultural identity. The persistence of crucial aspects in the Lion Dance, according to Ying and Chiat (2016, p. 138), emphasizes its cultural relevance and highlights its capacity to change while remaining firmly rooted in tradition. It demonstrates the harmony between preservation and adaptation that distinguishes a thriving intangible cultural heritage.

### **3.3 Lion Dance and Cultural Identity**

#### **3.3.1 Cultural significance of Lion Dance in shaping regional identity**

The "Regions South of Five Rivers" in China, that have carried its legacy around the world, have been profoundly shaped by the Lion Dance and its intricate symbolism, mesmerizing performances, and cultural significance. The movements, stories, and collective memory of these groups are profoundly connected, which is at the core of its cultural relevance (Liu, 2020, p. 157). The Lion Dance is an integral part of daily life in the "Regions South of Five Rivers," which include the provinces of Guangdong and Guangxi. Each subtle movement of the lion's dance carries cultural resonance; it is a living archive of stories, myths, and histories. The dance's symbolic relationships with its surroundings arouse ideas of security, procreation, and harmony—values that are incredibly meaningful to the neighborhood. These symbolic layers repeat historical battles, victories, and the collective spirit of these locations, resonating with the regional identity (Li, 2017, p. 291). The performances of the Lion Dance at festivals and other festive events strengthen the ties that bind the community together and foster a feeling of shared heritage that cuts across time and distance.

The Lion Dance flourishes within Chinese populations living abroad, connecting their chosen countries with their ancestral origins. This is true even though China is geographically separated from these communities. As it visits distant coasts, this powerful dance assumes new layers of meaning, symbolizing both a tribute to the country and a statement of cultural continuity. According to Hou (2013, p. 34), the lion dance transforms into a symbol of nostalgia, a concrete link that binds generations to their ancestry and promotes a sense of solidarity among participants. The dance's movements, hues, and music serve as a living memory, narrating tales of tenacity, flexibility, and fortitude in the face of uprooting.

### 3.3.2 Symbolism and rituals associated with Lion Dance

The Lion Dance contains a complex mosaic of symbols and rituals that not only engage the senses but also give the dance a deep cultural significance. Every aspect of the dance has layers of meaning that speak to the collective memory and ambitions of the territories it embraces, from the delicacy of the lion's movements to the painstaking creation of its clothes. The first symbolism in the lion dance, according to McGuire (2015, p. 16), is the idea of duality—an interaction between opposing forces that is consistent with classical Chinese philosophy. This dichotomy is embodied by the lion itself, which stands for both strength and protection as well as goodness and power. The complex, painstakingly detailed lion costumes reflect this harmony by showing the interaction of bold hues, textures, and forms (McGuire, 2015, p. 17). The two dancers wearing the outfit interact in harmony, symbolizing the complementary qualities of yin and yang and providing a picture of balance and harmony.

The Lion Dance has rituals that transform performances into religious activities that blur the lines between the profane and the sacred. Extensive preparations are made before to the dance, frequently involving gifts, incense, and prayers that ask for blessings for the neighborhood. Drums and cymbals accompany the lion's initial "awakening," which represents the summons to action and the invocation of uplifting forces. A head of lettuce or other greenery is consumed by the lion during the rite known as "plucking of the greens," which is meant to ward off evil spirits and herald wealth (Chen et al., 2019, p. 762). Beyond these parts of ceremony, the lion dance transforms into a form of storytelling, playing out stories that represent cultural values, folklore, and historical occurrences. The lion's actions, including its leaps, rolls, and gestures, reflect old tales of valor and the triumph of good over evil, according to Chen et al. (2019, p. 763). As a living archive of a community's common history, these performances give audiences the chance to see and take part in narratives that speak to their shared identity.

### 3.3.3 Case studies/examples of how Lion Dance has contributed to cultural identity

Through a collection of compelling case studies showcasing the Lion Dance's transformative function, the significant influence it has on cultural identity is clearly illustrated. According to Xu et al. (2017, p. 11), the Spring Festival is when the Lion Dance, a colorful representation of the community's identity, takes center stage in Foshan, China. The intricate costumes and carefully planned dance not only entertain, but also convey the historical tales of cooperation and resiliency that define the city. The coordinated movements of the performers reflect the pulse of Foshan's citizens,



reaffirming their common heritage and fostering ties between generations. According to Xu et al. (2017, p. 13), this blending of history and modern expression generates a sense of belonging that is felt by both participants and observers. Ye (2019, p. 7) asserts that the Lion Dance transcends its status as a merely entertaining spectacle and develops into a dance of celebration, remembrance, and cultural continuity that personifies the soul of the city. The Lion Dance serves as a narrative thread that knits the community together by telling tales of triumph over hardship and building a sense of shared identity and pride. The dance's effect extends beyond the parade grounds and permeates the minds of the people of Foshan, who perceive a reflection of their own journey in its vibrant motions (Ye, 2019, p. 7). This intergenerational experience strengthens the bonds between the past, present, and future of the city.

Similar to this, in San Francisco's Chinatown, the Lion Dance develops into a beloved custom that goes beyond geographical boundaries, showcasing the unyielding spirit of the community of Chinese immigrants. The dance takes center stage as a crucial component of the city's annual Chinese New Year Parade, illustrating the resilience and determination that characterize their journey (Avaunt, 2018, p. 16). The Lion Dance stands out as a cultural icon and a striking reminder of heritage preservation and adaptation in contrast to the vibrantly multicultural America. A moving story about a community navigating unfamiliar terrain while honoring its heritage is revealed amid the explosion of color and the dance's rhythmic cadence. The Lion Dance, which takes place in the center of San Francisco, is more than just a show; it serves as a live example of the neighborhood's resiliency (Avaunt, 2018, p. 19). The dance, performed by lion dancers as they parade through busy streets, tells a tale of continuity and illustrates how customs can change while still preserving their essential elements. A community that gracefully navigates cultural intersections, bringing its members together and reaching out in understanding to outsiders, is the subject of this story, according to Chen (2019, p. 34). Community members stand as cultural ambassadors and guardians of their legacy through the enthralling performances of the Lion Dance, resonating with the past while embracing the limitless potential of the future.

Another way the Lion Dance becomes a vehicle for cultural identification is through the Chingay Parade in Penang, Malaysia. The Lion Dance embraces Malaysia's vibrant multiculturalism in this instance, transcending its Chinese roots. The dance represents the national attitude of unity in diversity as people of all ethnic backgrounds march in the parade. The inclusive participation in the Lion Dance reflects the national philosophy of embracing cultural diversity. The dance acts as a unifying element in this procession, tying together the tales of the Malays, Chinese, Indians, and other participants into a single, cohesive story (Hassan, 2014, p. 142). The Lion Dance transcends its original context by incorporating many races into its performances, symbolizing Malaysia's cherished values of pluralism and coexistence (Hassan, 2014, p. 143). In this way, the Lion Dance transcends the realm of ordinary entertainment to act as a dynamic platform for cross-cultural communication and understanding. The dance displays the colorful mingling of cultures as the mesmerizing movements of the lions entwine with the varied identities of participants.

### 3.3.4 Comparisons between Lion Dance practices in different regions and their impact on cultural identity

The Lion Dance takes on various shapes and flavors in the "Regions South of Five Rivers," reflecting the varied diversity of China itself. The sophisticated choreography and lavish costumes that define the dance in the Guangdong province are a reflection of the area's lively artistry and precise attention to detail. Li (2017, p. 292) asserts that the lion's movements are frequently graceful, with an emphasis on agility and coordination, and that they stand for harmony and oneness. In the nearby province of Guangxi, lion dancers adopt a more theatrical approach by including humorous aspects and engaging in lively interactions with the audience. These regional variances provide a window into the histories, values, and social dynamics of each province, speaking to its own cultural sensitivities (Henrion-Dourcy, 2017, p. 17). In contrast, the Lion Dance confronts new environments and cultural settings abroad, leading to changes that combine ancestors' customs with the reality of living. This fusion serves as an example of how the dance can adapt to new cultural paradigms while maintaining its essential qualities.

## 3.4 Preservation and Inheritance Efforts of Intangible Cultural Heritage: Lion Dance

### 3.4.1 The concept of intangible cultural heritage and its importance

The idea of intangible cultural heritage emerges as a stinging reminder of the worth buried in cultural expressions that go beyond tangible items in a society characterized by fast transformation. Intangible cultural heritage, according to Kim et al. (2021, p. 38), includes the ongoing customs, traditions, body of knowledge, and performing arts that help communities and cultures define their identities. Intangible legacy, as opposed to physical monuments, is passed down through the years as a tapestry of stories, customs, and practices that are carried within the hearts and imaginations of people (Kim et al., 2021, p. 45). This section explores the concept's profound significance and explains why the Lion Dance, an intangible cultural treasure, is so important to preservation and transmission efforts. The rhythm of traditional melodies, the choreography of dances, the rituals of celebrations, and the skills of craftspeople are all examples of intangible cultural assets that are not limited to museums or monuments (Rodzi et al., 2013, p. 419). Its importance comes from its capacity to represent the ethos, values, and collective memory of a community, frequently acting as a conduit for the transmission of information and wisdom between generations. This philosophy is best illustrated by the Lion Dance, whose choreography, music, and stories reflect the ideals, aspirations, and identities of the diverse locations it has traversed over the years.

Beyond sentimentality, the value of preserving intangible cultural heritage is that it promotes a sense of self, continuity, and common humanity. It provides chances for intercultural communication and understanding while firmly grounding communities in their pasts (Chen, 2022, p. 556). Societies appreciate the range of human expression and make sure that the fabric of cultural diversity is alive and relevant in a world that is constantly changing by recognizing and preserving intangible heritage. Chen (2022, p. 556) claims that the Lion Dance's nomination as

intangible cultural treasure is a recognition of its crucial contribution to fostering cultural identity and intergenerational exchange. It emphasizes how determined communities, organizations, and governments are to maintain the customs that characterize their common past (Chen, 2022, p. 559). The Lion Dance not only endures but also thrives thanks to recording, transmission, and revitalization initiatives, ensuring that its complex motions and evocative symbolism continue to enliven the cultural landscape and motivate future generations.

#### 3.4.2 Roles of local authorities and institutions in preserving Lion Dance

The duty of preserving the Lion Dance's vibrancy and resonance falls to local authorities and institutions, who act as custodians, advocates, and facilitators in the complex ecology of intangible cultural asset preservation. Io (2019, p. 31) claims that in order to preserve the Lion Dance's continual presence within the cultural fabric, various stakeholders must work cooperatively because it is a dynamic art form that weaves cultural identity and continuity. Local governments are in the vanguard of preservation, and they play a crucial role in mobilizing resources, support networks, and channels for cultural transmission in addition to acting as regulators (Zhou, Sun, and Huang, 2019, p. 96). Local authorities can create specialized projects, festivals, and showcases that honor the artistry of the lion dance by working with cultural organizations and community leaders. These platforms not only increase the dance's visibility but also provide younger generations a reason to value and be proud of it. Local authorities create the conditions for the Lion Dance to continue to be a thriving and essential component of the community's cultural landscape through official recognition, financial assistance, and strategic planning.

Institutions have a crucial role in the Lion Dance's preservation as well. Institutions for culture and education serve as repositories of knowledge by providing locations for archiving, studying, and sharing information. Understanding the dance's historical context and modern adaptations is made possible through ethnographic study, archival recordings, and academic publications (Zhou, Sun, and Huang, 2019, p. 96). These organizations can also create mentorship programs, workshops, and training efforts that equip people with the knowledge and abilities required to perform and carry on the Lion Dance. Institutions cross generational gaps by incorporating the Lion Dance into curriculum and educational activities, ensuring that the dance is preserved as a living tradition carried on by devoted practitioners. Partnerships between local authorities, institutions, and cultural organizations are essential for the preservation efforts of the Lion Dance, according to Io (2019, p. 25). The formation of historical centers, the development of online archives, and the planning of knowledge-sharing seminars are examples of collaborative projects. These programs make it possible to take a comprehensive approach to preservation, one that involves many parties and taps into community expertise.



Figure 1 Lion Dance Competition

#### 3.4.3 Documentation, training, and transmission methods for Lion Dance

The process of capturing the Lion Dance's dynamic nature, its evolution, and the voices of those who perform it goes beyond simple archiving endeavors. According to McGuire (2014), an extensive collection that chronicles the history of the dance is made up of ethnographic studies, oral history interviews, and audiovisual recordings. The rituals, tales, and cultural backgrounds that give the dance its meaning are all thoroughly documented, in addition to the choreography and music (McGuire, 2014, p. 23). Communities may guarantee that the subtleties, historical tales, and artistic components of the Lion Dance are preserved for future generations by building a strong repository.

On the other side, Training appears as a crucial channel for the transmission of the Lion Dance, providing a smooth transfer of information from seasoned practitioners to novices. Yap (2017, p. 13) asserts that apprenticeships and mentorship programs serve as forums for the sharing of knowledge and expertise between generations. Training ensures the perpetuation of the dance's authenticity and mastery by immersing newcomers in its nuances. Additionally, training environments promote a sense of unity and common purpose, fostering a setting where cultural values and a sense of community identity can coexist with the development of physical abilities.

The Lion Dance is transmitted through more than just physical movement; it also conveys cultural nuances, feelings, and symbols. According to Zhou, Sun, and Huang (2019, p. 97), traditional performances, workshops, and community gatherings are places where the Lion Dance comes to life and engages both performers and spectators. Immersive experiences are frequently used in transmission techniques so that participants can both see and participate in the dance performance. Participation makes people active stewards of the dance's history, transmitting it authentically and deeply to subsequent generations.





Figure 2 Lion Dance Training

#### 3.4.4 Success stories and challenges in safeguarding Lion Dance as intangible cultural heritage

One noteworthy success story in the Lion Dance's preservation takes place in the fields of mentoring and education. Established Lion Dance troupes have started training programs that involve young performers in a comprehensive learning experience, according to Luan and Beng (2018, p. 36). In addition to teaching the dance's basics, these programs foster a profound understanding of its cultural significance. For instance, in Malaysia's Penang, the Penang Wushu Lion Dance Association has been instrumental in educating young people and imparting the principles and abilities necessary to advance the dance (Li, 2017, p. 301). The Lion Dance is successfully given new life in these programs by fusing practical training with the sharing of historical context and traditional tales, ensuring its survival among newer generations.

The invasion of modernity and shifting lifestyles are the two biggest obstacles to preserving the Lion Dance, though. The old art forms run the risk of being eclipsed by modern interests as urbanization and technology progress reshape daily life (Beng, 2018). Younger generations might be more lured to digital entertainment than to the physically taxing Lion Dance rituals. Additionally, the dance's cultural integrity may be compromised by the commercialization of the dance for tourism purposes (Zhang and Ma, 2020, p. 554). This difficulty emphasizes the necessity for balanced strategies that respect tradition while still speaking to modern sensibilities. Financial sustainability also becomes an issue among these difficulties. Many Lion Dance troupes have limited funding, and it can be expensive to buy original costumes, instruments, and locations. The necessity to gain financing and resources for training, performances, and documentation initiatives continues to be a struggle, claim Zhang and Ma (2020, p. 554). Furthermore, if its rites and symbolism are not completely grasped or if reduced renditions are given for commercial gain, the transmission of the dance's cultural significance may be jeopardized.

### 3.5 Contemporary Relevance and Challenges Faced by Lion Dance

#### 3.5.1 Modern adaptations and innovations in Lion Dance

Recognizing the need to appeal to a wide range of people, lion dance troupes work with choreographic aspects that include current ideas without weakening the dance's fundamental meaning. Urban-inspired movements, dynamic musical arrangements, and even the use of contemporary technology like LED lighting add layers of interest and excitement. By placing the Lion Dance in fresh circumstances that appeal to younger audiences and urban residents, collaborations with modern artists and performers further increase its appeal (Li, 2017, p. 312). The merging of hip-hop dance styles with lion dance is a prime illustration of this contemporary interpretation. Hip-hop components have been tried out by troupes all around the world, giving the dance a new urban feel. Wei and Dan (2017, p. 43) claim that performances feature dancers smoothly fusing contemporary dance styles with classic lion moves, creating mesmerizing shows that appeal to both traditionalists and modern fans. These contemporary modifications demonstrate how the Lion Dance can change without losing its cultural value. The dance retains its relevance in a world that is always evolving by accepting current inspirations, acting as a link between the past and the present.

#### 3.5.2 Engagement of younger generations in Lion Dance

Lion Dance troupes and cultural groups have created workshops and training programs specifically for youngsters in recognition of the need to connect with the sensibilities of younger generations. These programs offer not only hands-on instruction in lion movements but also historical background and cultural insights. According to a research by Chen (2022, p. 561), the workshops include instructional strategies that appeal to young people, such as interactive exercises, multimedia presentations, and chances for creative expression. The blending of traditional and contemporary teaching methods not only makes learning fun but also instills a profound appreciation of the cultural value of the dance. These workshops close the generational gap by educating younger generations, enabling them to carry on the Lion Dance's legacy actively and assuring its continuation. For instance, Lion Dance troupes work with schools in Singapore to provide Lion Dance as an extracurricular activity (Chen, 2022, p. 562). By incorporating current elements into the dance and making it approachable and interesting, these programs draw students. Students study the dance's historical and cultural contexts in addition to its physical techniques, developing a comprehensive understanding of its worth. The Lion Dance is transformed from a remote legacy into a living history that connects with younger generations' identities through the engagement of younger generations through youth-focused seminars and training.



Figure 3 Children Lion Dance

### 3.5.3 The impact of globalization and urbanization on traditional practices

Due to the network of information and increased cultural interaction brought about by globalization, more people are exposed to traditional rituals like the Lion Dance. The dance is able to cross geographical barriers thanks to its symbolic and aesthetic attractiveness, which attracts viewers from throughout the world. Festivals, contests, and cultural exchanges, according to Wilcox (2020, p. 39), give lion dance troupes a chance to present their work on a global stage and advance appreciation of other cultures. The Lion Dance's widespread appeal promotes cross-cultural communication by enabling the exchange of artistic methods, performance idioms, and historical accounts (Wilcox, 2020, p. 40). As Lion Dance troupes adopt aspects from other dance styles or are inspired by global aesthetics, cultural fusion results. According to Ellis (2018, p. 14), this cross-cultural interaction broadens the dance's lexicon and adds to its appeal while creating a feeling of our common humanity. At international Lion Dance competitions held in various nations, lion dance troupes from Malaysia and Singapore compete. These competitions draw teams from all across the world, showing a wide range of interpretations and aesthetic preferences. Innovative choreography and performances that represent a harmonic fusion of tradition and contemporary inspirations are produced by the cross-pollination of ideas and methods. The Lion Dance is now a cultural ambassador, reaching audiences outside of its traditional circles and adding to the worldwide mosaic of human expression as a result of globalization.

On the other hand, urbanization poses a challenging paradox for the Lion Dance. The dance must contend with the difficulties of adjusting to urban settings and taking into account shifting audience tastes as communities move to cities. The commotion of city life necessitates condensed performances, choreography that is more dynamic, and increased visual appeal (Ellis, 2018, p. 19). In order to draw in city inhabitants, the dance frequently adapts to urban settings by condensing routines and incorporating contemporary features. The dance is no longer just a ritual in cities; it has developed into a type of entertainment that is frequently displayed at festivals and business gatherings alike. Lion Dance troupes adjust to suit the need for performances that resonate with contemporary sensibilities while keeping the dance's fundamental elements as urbanization changes social dynamics (Mingrong and Jun, 2018, p. 34). Lion Dance troupes frequently perform in Hong Kong at mall openings, corporate events, and community gatherings, tailoring their acts to the city's urban

setting (Wu and Lo, 2018, p. 137). These performances combine ancient movements with dynamic visual effects to provide a spectacle that meets contemporary expectations. They are made to fascinate busy metropolitan audiences. The Lion Dance's response to urbanization highlights its capacity for change and evolution, keeping its relevance in the urban environment while remaining faithful to its cultural origins.



Figure 4 Lion Dance Performance amid modernity

#### 3.5.4 Addressing challenges to maintain the authenticity and essence of Lion Dance

A thorough knowledge of the Lion Dance's historical and cultural origins is necessary to preserve its authenticity. To understand the dance's history, symbolism, and significance, lion dance troupes and cultural institutions place a high priority on extensive research (Wu and Lo, 2018, p. 137). This historical investigation lays the groundwork for thoughtful adjustments, ensuring that the changes reflect the cultural foundations of the dance. Cultural guardians learn about the complexities of the dance's past by sifting through archives, speaking with veteran performers, and analyzing historical documents. Decisions about the music, clothes, and choreography are based on this information. The recording of traditional performances also guarantees the preservation of historical practices and serves as a guide for preserving authenticity in the face of modern changes. The Chen Clan Ancestral Hall Museum in Guangzhou, China, has exhibits that trace the development and history of the lion dance (Denton, 2013, p. 14). In addition to instructing tourists, these museums give Lion Dance troupes a reference for historical authenticity when creating performances or costumes. The Lion Dance's progress is guided by the pursuit of authenticity, which is achieved through cultural guardianship and historical research, acting as a compass to keep it in line with its rich legacy.





Figure 5 Wong Fei Hung Lion Dance Martial Arts Museum visit, Foshan, Guangdong Province, China

Mentorship programs help to transmit the nuances and unwritten wisdom that textbooks are unable to express. Younger dancers are introduced to the cultural richness of the dance through the elders' stories, anecdotes, and observations that contextualize its symbolic meaning. As mentees grow into cultural guardians, mentorship also fosters a sense of responsibility in them, encouraging a dedication to maintaining the dance's authenticity. Lion Dance troupes in Singapore frequently place an emphasis on mentoring as part of their training programs, claims Loh (2023, p. 41). Younger participants are closely supervised by more seasoned dancers, who not only impart physical skills but also their personal experiences and an awareness of the dance's cultural background (Loh, 2023, p. 42). Mentorship encourages a continuity of knowledge and reverence for tradition, ensuring that Lion Dance practitioners uphold its authenticity by being knowledgeable about its historical and cultural ramifications.

### 3.6 Contemporary Relevance: Infusion of Color and Youth Engagement

#### 3.6.1 Evolution of color in Lion Dance costumes

The lion dance, as it has changed over the years, one of the most notable aspect that has significantly changed is the color of the costumes used by the performers. For example, during the past years, the event performers were donned in less colorful costumes, which usually contained neutral colors (Wang, 2022). However, as the people encountered several changes because of the globe dynamics, the lion dance has embraced new and more colorful decorations for the costumes, showing how the visual manifestation of the dance has adapted to the contemporary tastes. As discussed earlier, the Lion Dance performance entails symbolic components that signify particular aspects of the Chinese cultural society. According to a study by Wang (2022, p. 65), this change in the colorful gesture by the lion dance performance represents the spirit of the performance as it advances to enhance its visual allure. This change in color and visual appearance of the Lion Dance has also been steered by the changing interests of the younger generation, who have been significantly been affected by the dynamism of the current world.



Figure 6 Colorful Lion dance Performance in Lunar New Year Celebrations

### 3.6.2 Preferences of young people in contemporary Lion Dance engagement

Ideally, the continuation of the performance of the Lion Dance over generations can depend on the youths, who form part of the majority of the people that take part in its performance across the region. That is why it has become important to understand the preferences of these age group as they engage the Lion Dance performance to ensure it continues to be relevant among them (McGuire, 2022, p. 46). Therefore, the changes in the visual appearance of the dancers of the land dance can be attributed to the adaptation to the needs and preferences of this younger generation. Young audiences are frequently drawn to Lion Dance performances that eloquently combine modern choreography with heritage, bringing a fresh perspective and excitement to the age-old art form. For instance, the young people have been affected by the prevailing cultural trends, advancement in technology and even the rapid exchange of ideas, and this in turn can deeply affect what they like and dislike (McGuire, 2022, p. 45). Therefore, the current lion dance performance has undertaken a change whereby it hopes to incorporate more interesting elements, innovative features and even multimedia elements which brings the sense of excitement to this tradition. Lion Dance can effectively bridge the generational divide by appealing to the younger audience's hearts and brains while upholding its rich cultural legacy by accepting these preferences.

## 3.6 Gaps in Current Research and Future Directions

### 3.6.1 Identified gaps in the existing literature on Lion Dance

Although the Lion Dance is a treasured and significant aspect of cultural legacy, the literature that has already been written on the subject shows various gaps that invite additional investigation and comprehension. The thorough examination of the historical development of the Lion Dance across areas and its interaction with cross-regional influences is a major gap in the body of extant scholarship. While there are studies that concentrate on certain areas or eras, comprehensive analyses that chart the dance's development from its earliest beginnings to its global dissemination are scarce. Additionally, nothing is known about how other geographical areas interacted and added to the richness of the dance. Migrations, cultural exchanges, and contacts between various tribes are all part of the complicated evolution of the lion dance (Liu, 2020, p. 161). The adaptability of the dance and the factors that contribute to its lasting popularity could be better understood with a deeper look into the historical linkages that connect different regional practices. Additionally, comprehension of

cultural connections and idea-cross-pollination processes may help clarify the dance's function as a cultural bridge. While there are works that explore the history of the Lion Dance in certain places, such as Guangdong or Southeast Asia (Roberts, 2013, p. 65), there is a dearth of work that ties these places together and charts the dance's evolution across time. Filling in this knowledge gap might result in a more thorough comprehension of the development of the Lion Dance as a dynamic, international phenomenon.

Another subject that could use more research is the Lion Dance's cultural and symbolic importance. While the dance's fortunate symbolism is frequently highlighted in current literature, more in-depth assessments that explore the intricacies of its meaning in various groups are still needed. This involves comprehending how the symbolism of the dance changes over time and how different cultures interpret it. The Lion Dance has several layers of meaning, from its representation of bravery and teamwork to its duties as a bringer of good fortune. However, depending on regional settings, historical accounts, and cultural belief systems, the meaning and interpretation of these symbols might change (Liu, 2020, 167). The relevance of the dance in a larger cultural context might be revealed by a more thorough investigation of these cultural quirks. The symbolism of the Lion Dance is frequently discussed in existing publications, but more thorough investigations that take into account the dance's historical, religious, and social contexts may provide a more insightful perspective. By closing this gap, the dance's complex cultural representation and the ways in which its meaning varies and finds resonance in many communities, might be revealed.

### 3.6.2 The significance of the current study

What is the origin and historical development of the lion dance in Guangdong? Is the first research question posed in this study corresponds with the need for a thorough investigation of the Lion Dance's historical evolution across regions, which has been noted as a gap in the literature to date. This study aims to close the knowledge gap about how various communities contributed to the growth and transformation of the dance by carefully tracing the dance's origins, evolution, and cross-regional effects. The historical analysis in this work cuts beyond geographical boundaries and offers insights into the contacts, modifications, and exchanges that have influenced the dance. The study fills in gaps in the literature by tying together historical threads and exploring the dance's voyage across numerous lands, providing a thorough narrative of the dynamic history of the Lion Dance. The study offers a complex picture of how the Lion Dance evolved over time and how regional practices influenced one another through in-depth archival research, practitioner interviews, and cross-regional comparisons. This study fills a void in the body of knowledge by providing a thorough history of the lion dance's development that cuts beyond geographical boundaries.

This study aims to identify the varied meanings that dance possesses by examining the dance's function in forming cultural identity as well as its consequences within various cultural contexts. The study explores the subtleties of how the Lion Dance is ingrained inside cultural narratives, historical settings, and belief systems through ethnographic research, cultural studies, and exchanges with practitioners and communities. The study contributes to the conversation on the cultural value of the Lion Dance by revealing how the symbolism of the dance

resonates within various cultures. In order to learn more about how the symbolism of the Lion Dance is interpreted, modified, and passed down through generations and to gain a deeper knowledge of its cultural significance, the study interacts with a variety of cultures. By exposing the complex interactions between the Lion Dance and cultural identity, the study's analysis of the dance's cultural significance helps to fill a vacuum in the literature.

In addition, what steps have local authorities taken to safeguard and pass on the intangible cultural heritage of the lion dance? fits with the void regarding the necessity of investigating preservation tactics and the function of local government. This study sheds light on a topic that has gotten little attention in the body of literature by examining the steps taken by local authorities to preserve the tradition of the Lion Dance. In order to understand how policies, initiatives, and collaborations are influencing the dance's continuity, the study's investigation of preservation efforts involves interacting with local authorities, cultural groups, and practitioners. The study advances knowledge of heritage preservation efforts for the Lion Dance by examining the difficulties, achievements, and partnerships. The study reveals the varied methods local authorities use to preserve the intangible heritage of the Lion Dance through interviews, case studies, and examination of official paperwork.

### 3.7. Concept, Theory and Conceptual framework

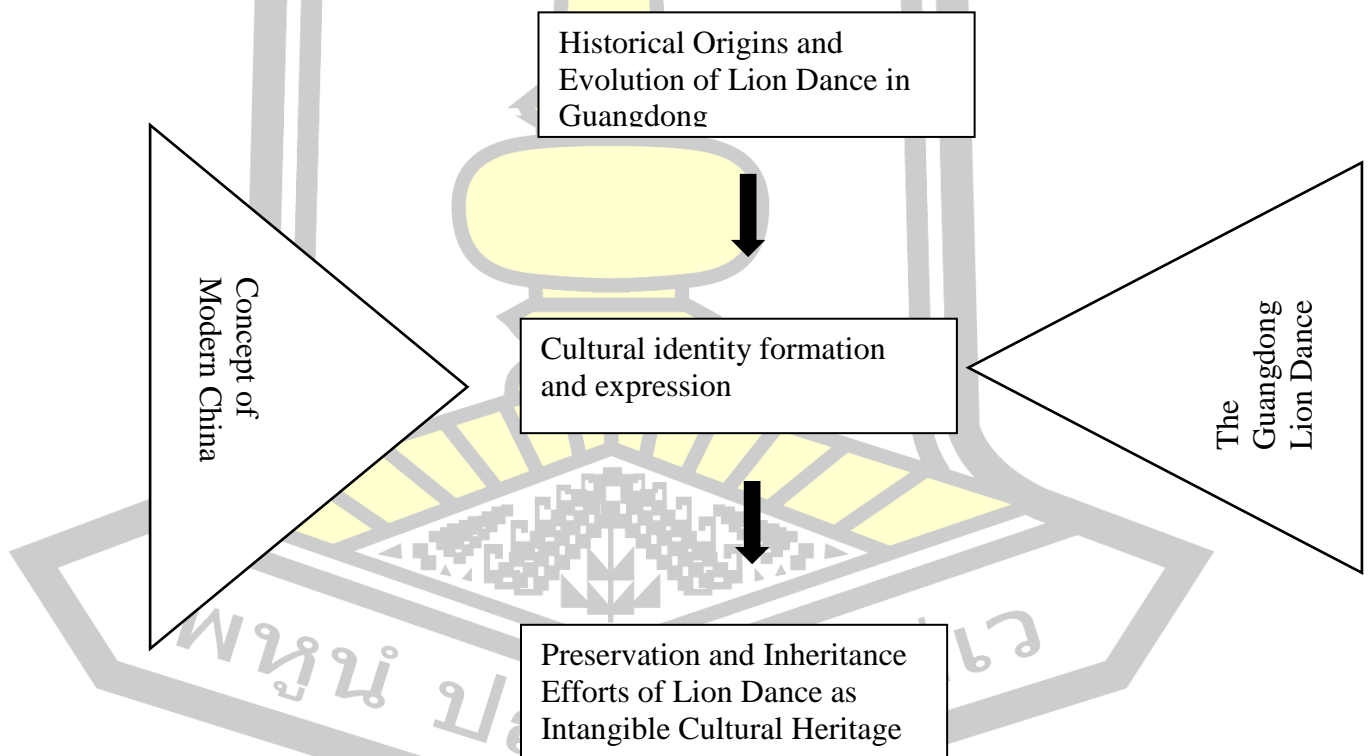


Figure 7 Conceptual Framework

Source: Writer's creation



### 3.8. Research plan

The specified research objectives and questions will be addressed through a systematic and thorough method in the plan of action for this project. To ensure a thorough inquiry of the historical, cultural, and preservation aspects of Lion Dance in Guangdong, the plan includes a number of crucial steps. First, three important participant groups will be individually interviewed as part of the data gathering phase. There are also experts from the Guangdong Institute of Literature and Art, representatives from the provincial ministry of culture, and Lion Dance inheritors who work at local museums. In-depth insights into the development of the Lion Dance historically, its cultural relevance, and preservation efforts will be possible thanks to these interviews, which will act as a key source of qualitative data. In addition, field trips will be made to nearby museums and Lion Dance performances to collect visual information about the costumes, accessories, and tools used in the dance, such as pictures, films, and papers. This visual information will enhance the historical account and offer verifiable proof of the cultural aspects connected to the Lion Dance. The research will enter the analytical phase when the data has been gathered, mostly using theme analysis. We'll meticulously code interview transcripts and other materials we've gathered to spot recurrent themes and patterns. Finding historical turning points, comprehending the function of the lion dance in defining cultural identity, and evaluating the success of preservation efforts will all be aided by this approach.

Secondary materials, including historical books, documentaries, and scholarly literature, will be used throughout the study to support and validate conclusions. These resources will give the research a more comprehensive context and theoretical foundation. The anticipated outcomes will shed insight on the Lion Dance's deep cultural relevance and the difficulties it faces in today's society. In a thorough report, these results will be given, and conclusions will be made regarding the significance of the lion dance in the formation of cultural identity and the precautions required to ensure its preservation. This research plan's ultimate goal is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Lion Dance as an intangible cultural legacy by examining its historical development, cultural significance, and the steps necessary to preserve it for future generations. The project intends to provide important insights into the broader subject of cultural heritage protection through meticulous data collecting and analysis.



### **3.9 Chapter structure**

The literature review for this study is divided into a number of important sections, each of which serves a specific function in exploring the varied facets of lion dance as an intangible cultural asset. The literature review, which starts with an introduction, sets the stage for the next sections. The historical development of the Lion Dance is then explored, tracing its origins in China, its growth in Guangdong, and its spread among Chinese groups abroad. The article then explores the complex connection between the lion dance and cultural identity, examining how it influences regional identity, symbolism, and rituals while giving case examples to highlight its effects. The assessment then turns its attention to the current applicability of Lion Dance, discussing contemporary modifications, youth engagement, and the impact of globalization and urbanization. The literature review concludes by highlighting the significance of the current study in filling in these gaps in the body of knowledge.

### **3.10 Benefit of Research**

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## **CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 Introduction to Analysis**

The analysis part of this thesis explores the data obtained from the study on Guangdong Lion Dance, a folk dance deeply rooted in the cultural heritage of the China Lingnan region. The study title is "Guangdong Lion Dance: Unraveling Lingnans Traditional Folk Dance and Its Cultural Significance within Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage." The research method adopts thematic analysis to help us gain a better understanding of this art form, where it is methods of qualitative data analysis, based on the patterns in meaning that emerge from the data, with the aim of find out common themes in the data. Conferring meaning upon data requires active reflexivity. The subjective experience of the researcher is very important here. The Guangdong Lion Dance is rich in meaning and a reflection of Lingnan's culture. It provides important references for our cultural understanding (Wei & Phanlukthao, 2023, p. 57).

Participants were carefully chosen for knowledgeable insights, and they included a lion dance inheritor associated with the museum, official of Guangdong Art Academy land-offs who is an expert in this area as well as members of the local Ministry of Culture orchestra experienced lion dancers and people from around Guangzhou (Cheung, 2012, p. 34). Our approach is to examine with these people systematically various elements that go into preserving, comprehending and publicizing Guangdong's Lion Dance as a controversial item on the Chinese inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This section focuses on the participants 'stories' through interviews to explore the ways in which this charming traditional folk dance reveals one's identity.

### **4.2 Evolution of Guangdong Lion Dance**

The Chinese Lion Dance has a history covering more than ten generations. It involves mimicking the lion's movements while wearing a lion outfit, it can be seen in China as well as many of their Asian neighbors with similar ceremonies and traditions (Wang, 2022, p. 43). Normally the dance is performed for special occasions, like New Year's Eve and various great cultural and religious festivals. It is frequently performed at important events such as weddings and ceremonies honoring guests. The lion dance is often performed with percussion instruments like drums and gongs. According to Chinese culture, the lion symbolizes auspiciousness (Yang and Hsu, 2016, p. 12). Consequently, celebrations that include lion dances aim to attract good luck and ward against malevolent forces. The lion dance is a traditional and culturally significant folk sport in China. It is also considered a conventional sport. The lion dance is a significant element of the cultural repertoire of ethnic Chinese communities worldwide, particularly on critical occasions like the Chinese Spring Festival and other ceremonial inaugurations.

Lions, as classified by Huang (2022, p. 16), belong to the Felidae family and are formidable, robust beings. They were conveyed to China along the Silk Road, originating from West Asia (Andreeva, 2022, p. 441). In ancient times, the presence of lions was contingent upon information disseminated to the general populace. Nevertheless, only the emperors and influential families could see these remarkable creatures. Moreover, due to the absence of survival competition between ancient Chinese and lions, individuals developed a vivid imagination about lions, enhancing their widespread appeal. Unlike lions, indigenous to China, tigers often encounter clashes with the Chinese population (De Santis, 2005, p. 24). Although enormous and formidable creatures themselves, the Chinese populace was deeply disturbed by the dreadful incidents they endured, which resulted in injuries and even fatalities. Tigers in traditional Chinese culture can be perceived either positively or negatively. However, they are often depicted in a derogatory manner, such as being nicknamed "the strong bullying the weak" or used as a symbol to criticize oppressive governments.

An example is the phrase "Tyranny is fiercer than a tiger" from the poem "The Snake Catcher" by Zongyuan Liu, a poet from the Tang Dynasty. Another expression that reflects this negative portrayal is the four-Chinese-character idiom "Fang Hu Gui Shan," which conveys the idea of using power to oppress others (Zhao, 2023, p. 117). Conversely, the ancient Chinese portrayed a lion in a good or favorable manner. Based on textual study, it has been shown that the genesis of the lion dance is subject to several interpretations in the contemporary academic community. As an example, Xue et al., 219, p. 17) contend the subsequent:

Lion dancing was inspired by the dance of lion tamers from the Western Regions during the Han Dynasty. Since real lions were only seen at the royal palace, folk entertainers would present lion dances to the general public using a papier-mâché lion. Following an arduous and demanding expedition, a few lions may have survived. The Buddha procession, which took place on April 4 of the Chinese lunar calendar to celebrate Manjushri's birthday, was led by individuals wearing masks and lion costumes (Manandhar, 2017, p. 21). This event occurred in the Wei Kingdom, a constituent state of the Three Kingdoms Period. The Northern Wei Dynasty is acknowledged as the originator of the first lion dance template. In his work "Notes on Buddhist Temples in Luoyang," Yang Xuanzhi documented the Buddha procession at Changqiu Temple in Luoyang (Wong et al., 2021, p. 194). He used the phrase "lions lead the way to repel the malevolent force" to depict the event.

The lion dance was strongly linked to the legendary "Nian" creature, which was believed to have protected people from illness (Martini et al., 2020, p. 57). It was also associated with the Monster known as "Nian," which was said to have caused damage to regular people and destroyed crops. Therefore, the lion dance originated and flourished in ancient China due to the introduction of Buddhism since the lion was believed to be the mount of Manjushri. Alternatively, it might be attributed to magical rituals or stories practiced throughout that time. The lion dance has been extensively disseminated across ancient Chinese culture since its inception. Moreover, due to significant cultural disparities between the southern and northern parts of China, two distinct versions of the lion dance have gradually emerged, each with



distinct traits. In China, these variants are referred to as the southern-style lion dance and the northern-style lion dance.

### **4.3 History of the Guangdong Lion Dance**

The dance originated in China more than a millennium ago. The lion is prominent in ancient Chinese culture due to its absence in the region. Merchants bestowed lions onto Chinese monarchs as a quid pro quo for the authorization to engage in trade inside their territories. Prior to the Han Dynasty, the presence of lions in ancient China was few (Psarras, 2003, p. 231). Subsequently, other lions arrived, and due to their mythical nature in China, they fascinated humans, who began imitating their actions and appearance in theatrical performances. The lion-like behaviors catalyzed the development of the lion dance in the Han Dynasty (Gao & Lee, 2021, p. 435). The Lion Dance became more popular throughout the Northern and Southern Dynasties due to the spread of Buddhism, reaching its highest point of popularity during the Tang Dynasty. The dance's increasing popularity resulted in its embrace in Japan. In Japan, the dance was used as a kind of amusement in royal courts, while in China, it was employed at celebrations. Subsequently, the dance spread to Korea and Taiwan, where it evolved into distinct variations while maintaining similar symbolic elements (Gao & Lee, 2021, p. 436).

### **4.3 Types of Guangdong lion dance**

The Guangdong Lion Dance is categorized into two distinct styles: Southern and Northern Lion styles. These styles emerged as the dance progressed and spread to many Chinese dynasties. As the dance spread to other Asian countries, several more styles emerged.

#### **4.3.1 Northern Guangdong Lion Dance**

This technique resembles martial arts and is available in two forms: one where a young person imitates a juvenile lion, and another when two individuals imitate an adult lion. Both artists are adorned in lion attire. Their lower bodies are adorned with trousers that imitate the color of the lion's body (Wong et al., 2021, p. 34). Their footwear has vibrant hues and is designed like a lion's talons. In order to facilitate movement, one dancer positions themselves in front while the other dancer stands behind, both assuming a bent posture like that of a mature lion. The first performer embellishes the head of the lion, while the subsequent performer manipulates the lion's body.

After that, the performers mimic lion-like movements, including jumping, climbing, rolling, and wrestling. The Northern Lion Dance has more flexibility than the Southern Lion Dance, including additional acrobatic elements such as lifts and skillful balance on elevated platforms. Families of Northern Lions might be seen participating in various dances. Under these circumstances, a pair of colossal mature and young lions participate in the dance (Wong et al., 2021, p. 36). In order to mimic an adult lion, two performers don attire that gives the illusion of being significant. During more intricate Northern Lion dances, a commanding warrior figure takes position in front of the lions and guides them through the choreography.

#### 4.3.2 Southern Guangdong Lion Dance

This method originated in the Guangdong region and is performed in pairs. Unlike the Northern dance, the performers don lion costumes and conduct dances peculiar to lions. These actions exemplify behaviors such as scratching, licking hair and shaking the posterior part of the body. The movements contribute to the amusement and intensity of the show. In addition, the lion can engage in many activities, such as playing with a ball. In Chinese old culture, the Southern Lion is associated with a legendary story called Nian (Wang and Wu, 2023, p. 129). It has a livelier demeanor compared to the Northern Guangdong Lion Dance.

#### 4.3.3 Other Guangdong Lion Dance

Divergences in the execution of the Lion Dance emerged as it spread throughout several Asian countries. The lion dances originating from Vietnam, Korea, Tibet, Japan, and Indonesia are included in this category (Gheran, 2022, p. 67). The Japanese Lion Dance is performed at religious and customary events. Due to the existence of more than 9,000 variations dependent on geographical location, the style is very flexible. The Korean Lion Dance consists of two main kinds: exorcism drama and masked drama. These variations are performed on different occasions. The Tibetan Lion Dance is a secular dance during the New Year Festival and a ceremonial dance during religious occasions (Henrion-Dourcy, 2017, p. 19). The Indonesian Lion Dance differs from the original dance. Nevertheless, the symbolism remains similar but is manifested via distinct means compared to China and other Asian countries.

A well-crafted animated image with a horned creature represents the southern-style lion in China. In contrast, the Chinese lion, often depicted in the Northern style, is characterized by a more realistic portrayal. The northern-style lion dance in China has included acrobatics and martial arts techniques in its performance (Farrell, 2007, p. 46). This particular lion dance portrays a more assertive and forceful lion in its movements. The southern-style lion dance stands out from other lion dance forms due to its focus on storytelling and symbolic meanings. According to The Collection of Chinese Ethnic and Folk dance the southern-style lion dance was prevalent in Foshan Town during the Ming and Qing Dynasties (Wong and Lim, 2021, p. 76). Foshan Town was one of the four well-known cities in ancient China. Foshan Town was among the four renowned towns in China at that period. The Caiqing is the most prominent and captivating element of the lion dance in the Southern style (Sheng et al., 2023, p. 12). Lion dancers do choreographed movements to grab clusters of auspicious greens suspended above them. When referred to by their specific names in Cantonese, each kind of green vegetable is associated with a good meaning. The term "fortune" is linked to lettuce, whereas "diligence" is linked to celery, and "intelligence" is linked to Chinese spring onions. At the end of the lion dance performance, it is usual to present "lai see" packets, red envelopes containing money, to the lion dancers. These packets are often distributed to bestow good fortune and all the beautiful attributes associated with the color green.

The lion dance served as a means of preserving and transmitting Traditional Chinese culture over successive generations. As previously mentioned, the lion dance is said to have originated from mystical ceremonies or legends. This dance involves the actors mimicking the movements of a lion by jumping, scratching, and sniffing throughout their performance. In ancient China, the practice of lion dance bestowed

performers with supernatural abilities and engaged them in a realm of mythical imagination (Von Krenner and Jeremiah, 2016, p. 34). This ritualistic belief aimed to ward off malevolent spirits, ensure a bountiful harvest in the coming year, and bring good fortune to the people. The lion dancers use these symbolic deeds to express their thoughts and emotions to everyone nearby. Cassirer argues that human life would be limited to basic biological needs and practical interests, similar to the prisoners in Plato's cave without symbolism. Symbolism allows humans to access the "ideal world" from various perspectives (Gaiane, 2021, p. 93). The lion dance may be traced back to the agricultural culture of ancient China. The dance symbolized the feudal system, with the ruler seeing a mighty lion that would provide prosperity and vitality to his realm. Barthes argues that to link a mythological framework to a broader historical context and demonstrate its alignment with the specific objectives of a society; one must shift from the study of signs and symbols (semiology) to the study of beliefs and values (ideology). The lion dance and its performers encompass all the cultural icons in their fullness. In other words, the image of a lion engaged in a dance might be considered folk art with significant symbolic meaning.

Guangdong province emerged as a hub of economic vitality, attracting citizens throughout the country, particularly during the latter period of the Qing Dynasty's reign. Due to their considerable distance from their own country, they were compelled to vie with one other for more spacious accommodations, resulting in inevitable conflicts. Given that turning to violence became a crucial means of "resolving problems," martial arts ethos was nurtured in this area.

Only folk performances rooted in the martial spirit can persist and garner widespread acclaim. An illustration of this may be seen in the southern-style lion dance. Meanwhile, China was undergoing a substantial transformation at that period. Nevertheless, they persevered in their courageous struggle, tirelessly seeking a means to accomplish remarkable rejuvenation. China was often seen as a dormant powerhouse on the global stage. St. Pierre and Jackson (2014, p. 719)) states that codes and indicators are only sometimes provided broadly. Instead, they are tailored to specific interests and objectives that underlie them, taking into account historical and social factors.

Conversely, this suggests that symbols can be modified if necessary. Therefore, the lion dance, a compilation of cultural symbols, has a distinct significance. The endeavor aimed to construct a favorable portrayal of the Chinese, depicting them as proactive and progressive rather than presenting a pessimistic image of the Chinese as weak. Within this framework, the lion dance had cultural implications beyond its conventional associations of protection, exorcism, and good fortune (Huang, 2022, p. 9). It also symbolized the idea of national salvation. This phenomenon occurs because signals or symbols cannot be detached from the social context in which they exist. The Chinese national identity was forged within a period of national turmoil. Thus, the lion dance came to be seen as a distinct medium that encapsulated the essence of that era. Undoubtedly, Wong Fei-hung is a witness to this significant historical period. It is incorrect.

Fei-hung is a cultural symbol within Chinese culture, representing the essence of the Chinese nation. In Guangdong, the lion dance has a crucial role in the repertoire of every regional martial arts club. From its inception, Wong Fei-hung has been hailed as the foremost lion dancer in Guangdong, playing a pivotal role in advancing lion dance in the southern style (Campbell, 2016). The Chinese populace resisted the gradual degradation of their independence and autonomy that they were undergoing. Wong Fei-hung skillfully integrated Kongfu with the traditional southern-style lion dance (Zhang and Wen, 2020, p. 63). This remarkable achievement was attained within the context of history. Within this particular environment, the lion dance had the dual function of fortifying the physical well-being of the Chinese populace externally while also symbolizing their inside yearning to transform the distressing circumstances they faced. Therefore, it can be concluded that the lion dance is not only a customary source of amusement but also a manifestation of the profound nationalistic sentiment held by the Chinese people. In the Wong Fei-hung series directed by Hark Tsui, it is evident that Wong Fei-hung was a proficient practitioner of Nan Quan, a southern martial arts style characterized by its first techniques. He expressed concern for his country, the Chinese populace, and the nation's prospects. He was transformed into a revered figure of national importance, and his lion dance became the most prominent feature in movies.

The Lion Dance has substantially developed since its origin. The crucial feature is its spread into other cultures and the incorporation of electronic instruments that have altered a bit its form. The dispersion of Chinese across the globe has seen their traditional dance form largely assimilated and subtly changed in the process. In ancient China, it was done within the framework of Chinese martial arts culture (Zhang and Wen, 2020, p. 63). It was used on religious and customary occasions. As the progress of this dance proceeds, it was only natural for its practice to be included in contests designed to identify which is the dance with the best moves or performance. In these contests where victory is gained, the lion's versatility and agility are very important.

#### **4.4 Cultural Identity of Guangdong Lion Dance:**

The lion dance has its intimate relationship with the depth of Buddhism and Taoism. These intellectual and spiritual traditions greatly influenced the lion dance, which played a major role in its development. The lion was regarded as a symbol of strength and safeguarding by Buddhism, which emphasized compassion and enlightenment (Swanepoel, 2013, p. 17). The lion was seen as a protector who would drive off evil-doers and anyone who saw the dance was given good fortune. Likewise, Taoism regards the lion dance as a spiritual practice which calls up celestial forces and communicates with things in nature. It stresses harmony and balance.

The lion dance is richly symbolical. Every movement and gesture has its significance. In this dance, the lion transforms himself into a Nian, one of mankind's oldest enemies. Tradition has it that the Nian was an earth-born creature with ferocious attributes and linked to the Lunar New Year (Ye et al., 2016, p. 1743). The lion's rich colors, complex mane and agile leaps symbolize power, courage and grandeur. The action of the lion dancers, operating in rhythm with the beating drums



and cymbals, enhances this sense of spectacle: one is immersed in a world beyond time and space.

This ancient art form has stood the test of time, constantly evolving and adjusting to many different regional cultures and traditions. Depending on the region, versions of the lion dance have special local cuisines and cultural idiosyncrasies (Ye et al., 2016, p. 1743). Lion dance traditions cover several regional variations. Southern Lion Dance in Guangdong Province is vibrant and energetic, while Northern Lion Dance as performed in Beijing is grander and more detailed. These differences give the history of lion dancing a richness and complexity. The lion in Chinese culture is looked up to as a symbol of strength and possessing many qualities; it has considerable meaning. The Chinese lion is particularly ubiquitous and closely connected with several other symbols. We shall look at what the lion stands for in culture, and understand how it was used here as a symbol.

In Chinese culture, the lion represents fortitude, valor and nobility. It symbolizes authority, power, and the triumph over obstacles. A lion's elegant physique expresses these traits, possessed of a flowing mane, fierce expression and imposing demeanor. It is usually linked with rulers and the governing class, representing excellence and success. The lion's meaning goes beyond its own specifications. It is related closely to the legendary creature known as Nian. According to ancient Chinese custom, Nian was an enormous beast with fearsome teeth capable of slaying huge animals and repeatedly leveling all manner of village structures before taking off for his cave in the mountains (Ye et al., 2016, p. 1744). Nian's fear of loud noises, intense light and the color red was soon discovered. To defend themselves, they fashioned effigies of lions, and danced while setting off firecrackers and wearing bright red ornaments. These actions were regarded as intimidating Nian and bringing prosperity and security to the community.

Its symbolic meaning can be seen in its role of terrifying away malignant entities. Lion dances are done on auspicious occasions and celebratory events to bestow blessings and disperse evil spirits. With the lion's staggered movements and drums beating so forcefully as to drive people crazy, interspersed with the clash of cymbals makes it quite a spectacle. The lion's energetic dance represents the victory of good over evil, reinforcing belief in the power of righteous forces and providing protection against corrupting ones. Moreover, the symbolism of the lion is deeply intertwined with Chinese mythology and religious doctrines. The bodhisattva Manjushri, the enlightened deity of wisdom, compassion and enlightenment in Buddhism is related to the lion (Corona and Yeshe, 2021, p. 8). As guardian of the sacred, it protects and provides guidance for spiritual development. In Taoism, the lion represents the mutual influence of opposite cosmic forces--or yin and yang--so that harmony can exist. This is presented along with the taste of harmony, vitality, and richness; a sense of the awesome might of nature.



#### 4.5 Lion Dance Performance

The lion dance performance is a rich and colorful exposition of Chinese culture, an exhibition that has won audiences around the globe. A captivating display that presents the luxurious clothing, detailed choreography, and energetic performances of China, effectively capturing the essence of its ancient civilization and way of life. Come with us as we explore the enigmatic world of lion dancing, and discover just what it is that gives this all-or-nothing performance such a dazzling power. The most important segment of the lion dance performance is in the portrayal of a legendary lion, whose character comes out through the abilities of dancers. The traditional lion dance relies on two dancers playing the head and body (Li, 2017, p. 292). Each is active and in harmony with the other, for a unified performance. Added to the percussion of the drums, and resounding clash of cymbals, introduce other habitual musical instruments for a more realistic theater effect.

The costumes these performers wear as lions are impressive. These works are made with a lot of attention to detail, like saturated colors, multicolored patterns and fine adornments. A wide variety of patterns and styles are used in the clothes, which sometimes reflect local traditions and sources of inspiration. The eyes, mane and facial expressions of the lion's head are endowed with glistening jewels, which give flesh and form to the mythical animal. Occasionally the lion's physique is decorated with ornamentation such as silk ribbons and golden tassels, representing wealth and good fortune (Li, 2017, p. 294). The lion costumes aren't just there for aesthetic value. It is believed that these objects have spiritual and symbolic power. They give out positive energy and ward off bad influences. The colors of the garments are also significant in meaning. Red represents auspiciousness and enjoyment, while the hues gold, green and blue typify various facets of Chinese culture and belief.

Lion dancers are an essential part of bringing the display to life. These extensively training artists have to undergo rigorous training in order to acquire the skill of lion dance. They demonstrate enormous physical dexterity, strength and synchronicity as they move in gruesome harmony with the lion suit. A beautiful marriage of grace and force is on display here. To produce an authentic and lively performance, dancers must have a deep knowledge of the cultural connotations and traditional movements involved in the lion dance (Suib et al., 2020, p. 117). Toward the end, the lion dance choreography is a complex yet well-rehearsed series of actions. It uses acrobatic moves, martial arts techniques and symbolic gestures. In this dance, the dancers imitate the movements of a lion with its agility, power and pleasure. They perform hair-raising acrobatic feats and seemingly defy gravity. They awe viewers with their impressive leaps, flips, and crystal-clear footwork. The lion dance performance is a cultural spectacle of unity, prosperity, righteousness overpowering wickedness. It has become a commonplace usage at times of celebration, such as Chinese New Year, weddings and important festivals since it is thought to bring blessings, good fortune and prosperity to the community (Suib et al., 2020, p. 123). An atmosphere of exhilaration and joy is created by the dynamic, spirited character of the performance which has a strong impact on spectators.

#### 4.6 Symbolic gestures and movements

The exciting lion dance is symbolic and very meaningful, with movements and gestures that imbue this performing art with a depth of form. The lion dancers' movements and gestures all have symbolic significance, giving the performance a cultural dimension which goes beyond being just a spectacle. Now we can explore the symbolic movements and gestures of the lion dance, with their various meanings and concepts behind them. One of the most dramatic and powerful motions in the lion dance is undoubtedly its roar. The lion widens its lips, and emits a roar. This represents the awakening of the lion's essence and the announcement of its arrival in this world (Yap, 2017, p. 6). As a gesture, it symbolizes authority, courage and the capability to drive away evil spirits. The lion's thunderous roar reverberates throughout the auditorium, and vigor and anticipation permeate the atmosphere.

The pouncing action is an important part of the lion dance. The lion gets down low and gathers its energy before exploding, bounding forward like a rocket. This is an example of the way in which lions like to court danger, overcome difficulties and win victories. It represents determination, overcoming obstacles and achieving one's goals. This leaping movement has powerful kinetic energy, and the observer is quite excited. Besides its pouncing action, the lion's biting motion is also noteworthy. The lion extends its mandibles and clamps down, all too often tending to be targeting auspicious objects like lettuce or red envelopes (Avaunt, 2018, p. 67). This is the lion's power to consume negativity and draw in wealth and good fortune. Legend has it that the lion's bite sends evil spirits packing and offers wealth and good fortune. The biting motion is carried out with an air of precision and vigor, making a deep impression on spectators.

The various movements of the lion represent a number of culturally significant concepts during the dance. In a regular lion dance, the elegant and graceful movements of the lion are supposed to symbolize plenty. The lion's nimbleness and steadiness also show that it is capable of surmounting obstacles to its fortune. The majesty of the lion represents auspiciousness, and heralds beneficial energy and advantages (Avaunt, 2018, p. 65). Another important concept conveyed in the lion's movements is 'unity.' The simultaneous action of the lion's head and body symbolizes perfect concordance, cooperation and the strength of working together. Each dancer must perform in perfect synchronicity. They have to mirror one another's movements and gestures. The homogeneity of the performance increases its aesthetic appeal, and suggests a Butcompalsoll message of community, friendship, and the energy coming from working together. Moreover, the lion dance represents a celebration of culture and ancestors. Hence, the movements and gestures of the lion are based on traditional historical and mythical concepts from Chinese mythology. Through dance, the stories are brought to life, giving audiences a chance to connect with their culture and allowing them to indulge in the richness of Chinese traditions.

## 4.7 Cultural Significance of Festivals

Sprightly and symbolic, the lion dance has rich cultural value when festivals or celebrations are involved. Around Chinese New Year and other celebratory events, people assemble to watch performances; this is an engaging art form.

### 4.7.1 The Lion Dance has great cultural value

The lion dance is an enduring symbol of courage, strength and felicitation in Chinese culture and mythology. In the dance, boisterous drums, cymbals and firecrackers are used to drive away evil spirits and bring blessings to society. The lion is worshipped as a mythical creature with protective powers guarding against ill influences. Thus the lion dance is taken to be a sign of wealth, fortune and auspiciousness.

### 4.7.2 During the Chinese New Year, the Lion Dance is performed

More important in the Chinese calendar than any other festival (which is usually called the Chinese New Year) is the Spring Festival. With its lavish displays, the lion dance adds to the performances throughout the festivities. The movements of the lion are perfectly attuned by experienced dancers, who enliven it in an agile demonstration of grace and dexterity. Chinese New Year is a popular time for the lion dance (Li, 2017, p. 291). It is often combined with a lively procession through the streets, during which households and businesses are visited to confer good fortune during the coming year. The dance team puts on an exciting and lively act with an interactive lion that interacts directly with the audience, both accepting red envelopes containing monetary gifts from the spectators, as well as blessing their community. According to tradition, the lion's appearance and vigorous performance are thought to drive away evil spirits and bring in a year of abundant crops and profound enjoyment.

### 4.7.3 Lion Dance and promoting cultural heritage

Besides its symbolic value, the lion dance also serves an important function in promoting a sense of solidarity and protecting cultural traditions among Chinese communities. It is a compelling expression of affiliation and self-esteem, which strengthens common beliefs and traditions. Lion dance troupes are generally made up of people from across the immediate neighborhood, including both young admirers and veterans (Li, 2017, p. 297). The lion dance is a form of art which has been passed down from generation to generation. It exists today, and many of its culturally important traditions have been preserved. In the practice of the lion dance, performers must cooperate and foster a sense of camaraderie as they try to improve their synchronized movements, and even build their acrobatic feats.

Festivals and events such as the lion dance serve to bring people together, so that they may all commemorate their cultural heritage and exchange customs. These lively events show off various kinds of regional lion dance variations, with different styles and techniques presented to demonstrate the special characteristics of each town. The lion dance is a highly valued and dynamic ceremonial practice of significant importance in Chinese culture (Ying and Chiat, 2016, p. 138). The presence of this symbol throughout celebrations and events, especially around Chinese New Year, is a potent symbol of prosperity and plenty. The lion dance serves to unite communities, foster cultural heritage, and cultivate a sense of pride in Chinese traditions via its captivating movements and lively displays.

#### 4.7.4 Music, costumes and instruments

In addition to the Lion Dance performance, musical accompaniment and diverse musical instruments are integral elements. Drums, gongs, and cymbals are tools used during dance performances (Ma and Cartier 88), (Gao, 2019, p. 176). The drum is the principal instrument, while the other two devices are accompaniments. Within the dance context, the drum is crucial in generating the fundamental rhythm, while the movements are precisely coordinated with the drum beats. Throughout the performance, the drum is used to accentuate specific movements or actions that are being executed. The main objectives of including cymbals and gongs in a dance performance are to prevent misfortune and elicit an emotional reaction from the spectators (Gao, 2019, p. 177). The instruments are played in synchronisation with the lion's movements. The lion above dance variations use diverse musical accompaniments and employ distinct techniques while playing their instruments to achieve harmony. The rhythms of each style are distinct and intimately linked to the customs and ceremonies of its practitioners.

In modern times, electronic instruments have given the lion dance a greater level of dynamism and interest. One of the most important contributions technology has made to the evolution of lion dance, is that handheld MP3 players now make it possible to listen to music. This means you no longer have to carry huge musical instruments with you when performing in a lion dance troupe. However, it is the use of costumes that makes the lion dance different. Generally, they are made to order, with different colors used to portray the different parts of a lion's body.

#### 4.8 Representations of History, both by Period and Event

The Three Kingdoms Period was the name given to this era, and the Lion Dance expresses both the many trials that were suffered by these kingdoms as they jockeyed for supremacy, and their efforts to conquer those warring lands. Yellow lion with white hair is a sign of tranquillity, temperance, skill and expertise. A lion with black hair becoming red represents both accomplishment and knowledge. The black lion is strength, courage and honor. Its fur may be black or white. The colors used in the costumes are intended to symbolize many facets of Chinese culture and everyday living that are dear to the hearts of most Chinese (Liu, 2020, p. 157). Earth is yellow, wood green, fire red; water black and metal white. Many outfits feature a green nose on the lion. The color green stands for luck, wealth and the appearance of heavenly activity. Additionally, a mirror is placed on the lion's forehead to frighten any harmful being that might be lurking among residents or hatching plans against them.



## 4.9 Qualitative Insights

The Guangdong Lion Dance is a colorful folk art from Southern China of rich cultural background. Cultural values, artistic virtues and factors that affect people's attitudes toward the acceptance of this ancient dance are revealed by qualitative research. The phenomenon is especially found among younger generations. All these interviews produce some major themes.

### 4.9.1 Preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage

The vast majority of the participants felt that the survival of Guangdong Lion Dance was imperative, considering it as a cultural treasure beyond price. This person's work is based in antiquity and represents a heavenly cultural heritage. Moreover, currently it is also a crucial development that is leading contemporary Chinese society back to their renowned origins. Indeed, the Guangdong Lion Dance continues to be practiced as a lively cultural tradition. Regardless, the proximity traditions are adversely affected by the harsh realities of urbanization and industrialization, making this threat a significantly serious concern (Liu, 2020, p. 158). The urgent appeal to those of us who are responsible for our actions is now being expressed from all sectors of society in this situation. Now is the perfect occasion for us to take action, and we must guarantee that Guangdong Lion Dance will endure as a permanent aspect of China's cultural heritage.

As stated by a 75-year old resident of Guangzhou, the lion dance was a significant aspect of their childhood, allowing them to feel a connection with their ancestors. "Lion dance was a part of my childhood, connecting me to my ancestors," states one of the residents. "I fear today's youths are losing touch with these cultural customs. We must make efforts to uphold our intangible cultural heritage." Anxiety expressed by the older generation, particularly in light of modernization and its potentially adverse effects on traditional behaviors. It is imperative that we safeguard our intangible heritage from becoming extinct. A lion dance inheritor employed at the nearby cultural heritage institution expresses apprehension regarding the preservation of traditional practices. This was greed with two other participants; an official from the ministry of culture as well as an expert from Guangdong Art academy. The lion dance has been a tradition in Guangdong for over a thousand years (Liu, 2020, p. 157). As stated by lion dance inheritor "today, it is facing the possibility of being eliminated. My objective is to enlighten the public about the cultural importance of this art form and identify new apprentices who have the potential to continue its legacy." This demonstrates the appreciation that people have on lion dance as they perceive it to contribute to cultural preservation.

An expert from the Guangdong Foundation of Cultures elaborates on the societal value of lion dancing, stating that it combines elements of gymnastics, music, and visual representation. The dynamic rhythms and intricate lion movements symbolize good fortune and prosperity. Preserving the craftsmanship of these individuals is crucial for safeguarding the social identity of Guangdong. This showcases the prominent artistic elements of the dance. This is also supported by participant an official from the ministry of local culture. The Social Relics Agency in the vicinity has made efforts to preserve the lion dance tradition (Gao, 2019, p. 28). "This will provide resources and recognition to support lion dance groups and events," stated the ministry of culture official. These administrative efforts aim to



safeguard the established social norms. Furthermore, the interviewees also came to a conclusion that participating in the lion dance allows members to forge a deep bond with the rich cultural legacy of Guangdong. "I derive great satisfaction from exerting dominance over this conventional expertise," local resident states. "I am determined to continue showcasing Guangdong culture to people of my generation and beyond." From this quote, the participant's perspective is that the traditional artistry can be passed on to future generations.

#### 4.9.2 Transmitting Traditional Values

The Guangdong Lion Dance remains as a significant portrayal of customary Chinese qualities, with the actual lion representing properties like mental fortitude, strength, and assurance. This dance's numerous fine movements represent abstract concepts like unity, confidence, and harmony; everything about has incredible significance. It ensures that the lion dance has a double reason: for diversion as well as furnishing individuals with an opportunity to find out about the conventional standards of Chinese (Gao, 2019, p. 19). An intriguing transition is being announced from this perspective: Continuing in the strides of contemporary China, to transform conventional Chinese workmanship into an exhibition and imbue components from their own way of life.

Subsequent to having had numerous inside and out conversations with specialists about the matter, it is obvious that moving can significantly affect spreading perspectives to various gatherings. One of the participants (Academy Exert) stated that "the lion dance is partaking in a universe of Confucian excellences". It is a model of endurance, insight and flexibility. Additionally, one can see dance as a vehicle for the dissemination and accumulation of morals and social values there. When it comes to setting goals, Chinese thinking places more emphasis on collective action than on individual responsibility. Shockingly, as a matter of fact two separate individuals - one from the ministry of local culture and one resident confirm this declaration. Guangdong Lion Dance is the medium through which post-war Guangdongers can pass along their accepted practices and values.

One of the local residents stated that, "seeing a lion dance, you get the sensation of incredible insight that traverses ages." This shows that professionals in this domain have encountered numerous cases related to persistence and hard work during their extensive experience in mastering the lion dance. As a fraternity founded on trust, the members of the association collaborate to highlight the profound impact that personal growth has on one's self-awareness. The youths of the participants, who prioritize the importance of the lion dance instructors' focus on respect, dedication, and community, holds the same opinions.

According to the interviews, most of the participants stated that there is a sense of belonging whenever lion dancers perform. Performers and experts in the Guangdong Lion Dance spread the dance's messages to a larger audience. Audience/fans ponder the exhibition's deeper meaning while admiring the expert and with their innovations. The meaning of cooperation is highlighted when one of the participant's commented, "seeing the dancers feature their outstanding expertise makes me feel proud." The interview's aggregate insight includes the dance's ability to really speak with a different crowd, making it a social medium that outperforms generational limits. This dance serves to maintain and scatter antiquated Chinese standards.

#### 4.9.3 Promotion of Social Cohesion

The Guangdong Lion Dance moves beyond its traditional function as merely a visual performance and transforms into an active medium for fostering connections between communities. The workmanship that is immovably settled in Chinese practice is not just a curio of amicable heritage. It likewise fills in as an improvement to advance neighborhood fortitude. This undignified yet inescapable old ritual makes different bonds that lengthen ages and dialects. As indicated by one member, the lion dance brings individuals of all foundations and ages together: "Lion dance furnishes me with accomplices". The gatherings essentially illuminate the astounding effect lion moving has upon warm abilities. Specifically, an accomplished lion craftsman who never tires of shading expressed basically: "Our organization has individuals from a wide range of foundations skippers and kids. Yet, when we train together the distinctions among expert and man vanish totally. A section designated solely for rehearsal space cannot separate the team spirit that was developed on their feet in practice; it fans out across society all in all" notices a social division official of the illustrator building areas close to their close by lion dance gatherings, and remarks that these shows are wellsprings of neighborhood.

The local resident's statement reveals that when their lion dance team participates in competitions, the entire town shows up to support them, demonstrating a strong sense of community pride. This evokes a delightful feeling of belonging to a particular location. The Guangdong Lion Dance serves as a large-scale celebration that strengthens the social cohesion, stability, and unity within the local community (Avaunt, 2022, p. 78). For individuals engaged in the transmission of lion dance talents, it goes beyond the mere transfer of expertise; it fosters a strong connection between different generations. This Guangdong Art Academy expert proudly declares, "I have taught children as young as 5 years of age and people as old as their 70s." This helps different generations to maintain their culture from time to time.

#### 4.9.4 Cultural Pride and Self-Identity

The lion dance capabilities as a way for Chinese networks all over the planet to keep their social character and social fortitude. Those counseled from these outside nations say that society work of art causes a feeling of social pride and gives an association with populaces under tension (Liu, 2020, p. 162). The picture is the encapsulation of their common encounters, giving a feeling of warmth. The Guangdong Lion Dance is regarded as a significant milestone by Chinese where it provides exiles with a safe self-appreciation character and advances social union. However, several individuals engage in the lion dance, a significant emblem that aids in maintaining their cultural heritage. The lion dance, which has solid social roots in China, assumes a central part in advancing social solidarity inside Chinese people group. It offers a cautious connect to the practices saw by their progenitors. The visual and auditory link to one's own nation offers a feeling of familiarity during festivities and events through vibrant performances that may be heard throughout (Wang, 2022, p. 13). Many folks utilize it as a tool to maintain their ties with their home nation, even when they are far away and working hard to earn a decent income.

#### 4.9.5 Artistic Merit

In addition to its social significance, the Guangdong Lion Dance has received recognition for its artistic value. Experts' viewpoints: "About approaches are stunningly refined; movement fastidiously spread out, symbolism wealthy in imagery or loaded up with figurative topics. Furthermore, the dance has complex plans for garments and musicality with roots joins numerous ages". The intricacies of the Lion Dance are nearly as much a high work of art (or identical to one) as any performing expressions, and this turns out to be quickly obvious upon direct perception.

The dance's strategies are maybe its most significant component. To keep up with the music, dancers must perform each step precisely and carefully link them together. The obligation of movement is to pass social stories and customs on through the exact grouping in which they are introduced, every development having its own significance. In addition, the lion dance's symbolism lends credence to a plethora of additional meanings. Subsequently this sort of visual portrayal becomes one sort of mode for account which goes a long ways past basic diversion alone (Liu, 2020, p. 157). The costumes that the lion dancers wear are frequently quite impressive and well-made. These things add to an additional visual effect for the exhibition. Additionally, melodic backup typically includes drums, cymbals and gongs. These instruments add another aural dimension to the dance, adding aesthetic value. However, a social power summarizes the disposition held by numerous who perceive its significance. "The Guangdong lion dance isn't just people craftsmanship, it's high culture too." Master and devotee interviews pressure that seeing the dance's creative worth as other than a social aberration is significant. The inclination addresses a typical affirmation that the lion dance arrives at a high level degree of imaginative accomplishment. It is exemplified in its strategy, movement, imagery and ensembles; these have all been passed down starting with one age then onto the next over numerous years and hundreds of years.

#### 4.9.6 Youth Engagement

Interestingly, when asked about the perceptions of adolescents on the future of the lion dance, individuals of all age groups, ranging from older to younger generations, have divergent viewpoints. Some hold this very custom near their souls while others are not entirely certain. One of the members, rather than the assessments of specific youthful people who see the lion dance as old fashioned and separated from contemporary qualities: "I would prefer to utilize Tiktok than do the outdated banging of cymbals and playing the fool." This perspective highlights the challenge of bridging the gap between different cultural generations and discovering avenues for the present-day younger generation. The students perceive the Lion Dance as antiquated, monotonous, and irrelevant to their technology-driven existence. They lack guidance in effectively allocating their time and effort to acquire this ancient skill of financial planning. However, there is also a smaller group that demonstrates a preference for returning to tradition, as long as it can incorporate elements of technology and be effectively integrated into contemporary mainstream society. "If we are able to transform and update the traditional customs and practices of the people, it would attract the attention and curiosity of the younger generation," another participant said.

Another observation that the lion dance is largely unfamiliar to students, who perceive it as a matter of adult interest, highlights the disparity between the younger generation and ancient customs. This disparity gives rise to a genuine apprehension--will these cultural customs become extinct if no endeavors are undertaken to engage the younger generation in preserving them? One of the participants (an official from the local ministry of culture) emphasized the significance of fostering an understanding and appreciation for the lion dance among young individuals, as well as adapting teaching methods to cater to students of all age groups, particularly those who are very accustomed to technology in the present era. As one of the participant youth mentioned, "Student's endorsement of utilizing social media platforms such as TikTok to showcase lion dancing as an appealing and captivating activity," exemplifies the potential of technology in reigniting curiosity among younger cohorts.

These findings show, alarmingly perhaps, that there is little correlation between the lion dance and young people. To protect this cultural legacy, it is necessary to devise organized projects that inspire youths by involving them directly. So such approaches must be modern and innovative enough to suit their lifestyles. One expert said, "If the lion dance-by re-vitalizing it and expanding its accessibility to interest young people--can bring these two parts of society together, then this traditional art form can be assured a long life." Other experts suggest a strategy complexity to resolve the age gap problem in lion dance. This plan should consider the traditional and contemporary facets of this cultural activity. A major recommendation, for instance, is to "change and adjust lion movements in order to make the performance attractive to younger viewers" according to the respondent. Therefore we need not only Chinese music but also modern elements of theater providing that societal platforms are included; then this authentic essence can be preserved without losing what's relevant within our culture today." This fair position attempts both sides--to respect art while recognizing it's reasonable

One of the artists for Lion was a member. He said energetically: "Instead of beating on the cymbal repeatedly and pretending to be a lion I use TikTok". Some young people think that the lion dance is outmoded, he continues somewhat humorously; "it does not fit in with modern convention". It implies that there is an urgent need to narrow the gap in social norms between different generations. The following observation by the teacher is not without significance. It indicates that most students lack a proper understanding of the lion dance, one which they tend to regard as an ancient and antiquated subject matter peculiar only to people who are closer in age to themselves. The observation demonstrates that there is a significant gap between the younger generation and the customs that have been practiced forever. Because of the existence of this gap, there is cause for concern regarding the potential loss of cultural legacy. This is the case unless proactive actions are done to involve the younger generation in the preservation of these traditions.

There is a cultural authority that acknowledges the relevance of igniting the curiosity of young people in the lion dance and emphasizes the requirement of modifying instructional approaches to coincide with the preferences and lifestyles of young people who are interested in digital technology. By establishing a connection between this historic art form and the contemporary style of life that young people lead, the official underlines the importance of actively cultivating the excitement that young people have for lion dance. A student at a college makes the argument that if



lion dance were to become famous on social media, it would most likely be considered trendy by a greater number of young people, which would result in an increase in the number of young people who are interested in learning it.

#### **4.10 Critical Analysis of role of the Government Initiatives and**

##### **Recommendations**

##### **4.10.1 Historical Context of the Government initiatives**

The creation of rules and regulations was a common way for the government to become involved early on. Such regulatory frameworks sought to normalize and formalize lion dance practices, maintaining cultural integrity as well obeying established norms. If we analyze archival records and historical documents, it is possible to follow the origins of such policies as well as their contribution in structuring fundamental aspects of Guangdong Lion Dance. These early policies were crucial in setting the stage for Guangdong Lion Dance preservation by providing a formulated platform that guides practitioners (Gong, 2020, p. 136). The government sought, by setting up guidelines and standards to protect the legitimacy of the tradition against potential dilution or misconstruing. The effectiveness of these regulatory measures becomes evident when distinct rituals, movements and symbolic elements that form an integral part of the lion dance are preserved. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century archival records indicate state decrees recognizing and protecting traditional cultural practices such as lion dance. For example, descriptions of acceptable instruments stage costumes and venues offer real proof that during its early days the state had promised to protect Guangdong Lion Dance (Gong, 2020, p. 139). The early creation of regulating mechanisms also acts as an anchor to subsequent government interventions. This first layer of engagement established the norm for future endeavours, which provided a reference in assessing policy development and its consequences on Guangdong Lion Dance.

The role that the government played in preserving the lion dance changed dramatically as the people moved into the mid- to late-20th century. Economic developments, urbanization and cultural trends impacted the approach which resulted in a refocusing of policies to respond to new challenges but maintain tradition. During this time, government responses went beyond mere regulatory activities to include financial aid programs as well as civic partnerships and community-based interventions. The analysis of these programs' development shows that the government changed its position in relation to society, noting the need for integrated approaches (Tang and Shou, 2016, p. 859). Support in maintaining lion dance schools and buying traditional costumes and instruments is also an indication of a larger goal to maintain the cultural heritage. The transition to broad, multi-directional programs in the mid - later twentieth centuries can be seen as a bridge between early regulatory efforts and modern government strategies.

##### **4.10.2 Quantitative Assessment: Changes in Number of Lion Dancers**

From the early to mid-twentieth century, when regulation was dominant and little interaction with government occurred, a slow but steady increase in the number of lion dancers took place. The historical evidence shows some slow upward trend, which reflects both generational change and the tradition's staying power. It is possible that the preservation and standardization policies of government within this period helped to sustain a steady and living population in practice. From the 1920s to



50, schools and also steadily fresh recruits of lion dancers. But the growth rate stayed quite stable, which indicates that the government's efforts during this initial period were more concentrated on ensuring authenticity of the practice rather than aggressively encouraging participation (Tang and Shou, 2016, p. 857). The very first regulatory measures can be traced back to the preservation of tradition, which becomes a buttress for further development. With the development of government programmes in mid- to late twentieth century into financial aid and community involvement, there was a much more significant rise in numbers lion dancers.

Beginning in the mid-20th century, government measures started reflecting a broader and universal character. Financial support for lion dance schools, cultural festivals and public performances became widespread. This period has quantitative data that shows a dramatic increase in the number of lion dancers, representing the successes obtained by these broader strategies. The infusion of finances into lions dance schools and the availability of spaces for public performances served a critical function in fostering community participation. The numbers of lion dancers grew greatly, indicating a wider interest and involvement in the Guangdong Lion Dance (Beng, 2007, p. 67). This expansion is linked to the government's increasingly hands-on approach and directed investments. Statistics gathered since the 1960s show an indicating uptrend in lion dancers, especially where government sponsored strategies were implemented (Beng, 2007, p. 69). Although the exact numbers might differ, there has been a continuing upward trend showing constant interest and involvement of society in this classical folk art. This is a turning point the middle of twentieth century, where governmental initiatives shifted from regulatory systems to active support that led for substantial growth in lion dance community. This transformation creates the basis for what a contemporary Guangdong Lion Dance participation looks like.

#### 4.10.3 Financial Implications: Income Generated and Economic Viability

Traditionally, the lion dance performers depended on local patronage and contributions from communities along with minimal performances to support themselves. It is because there was little government interference in the initial stages of development that economic feasibility, depended mainly on grassroots initiatives. Although these classical sources sustained the art, it is possible that they imposed restrictions on the economic development and popularity of lion dance. The economic model of Guangdong Lion Dance changed dramatically as a result of Government initiatives like funding training programs, festivals and equipment. This development made it possible for the practitioners to generate revenue not only from traditional acts but also through institutional partnerships and public performances (Beng, 2007, p. 66). The infusion of financial resources also furthered the development of lion dance as a more financially viable cultural form. Government funding supports economic viability that helps sustain the livelihoods of lion dance as lions' welfare is well looked after.

#### 4.10.4 Audience Engagement: Attendance Trends and Cultural Impact

Audience participation probably increased significantly in the mid-20th century as government backing for lion dance increased. Combining these resources with proper promotion and partnerships amongst institutions was to boost the internalization of lion dance into a cultural position that would attract more diversified audience. Even the government initiatives, such as funding for cultural events and lion

dance festivals with public showcases were made to preserve not only this tradition but also broaden its significance (Li, 2017, p. 293). These strategies were aimed at broadening the reach, generating awareness and promoting activity outside of community contexts. This is evident from the fact that audience increased as a result of enhanced visibility which government sponsored events and collaborations were responsible for. The relationship between government initiatives and more involved audiences shows a correlation between policy action and the cultural impact of Guangdong Lion Dance.

#### 4.10.5 Challenges and Critique of Government Measures

A notable drawback that can be attributed to governmental actions and its importance in the perpetuation of the Lion Dance is cultural infringement. In attempts to publicize and popularize Guangdong Lion Dance on a wider scale, issues arise regarding commodification or misuse of this culture for non-cultural benefits. Government-driven events, particularly those with private interests in them lead unintentionally to the loss of true cultural value of lion dance. Critiques, on the other hand, assert that such interventions privilege entertainment over cultural protection and could even result in a misrepresentation of culture. Another persistent challenge, despite government efforts, is the perceived inadequacy of financial assistance. Though governmental assistance of Guangdong Lion Dance is taken to confirm the economic feasibility, it does not meet evolving demands and challenges that practitioners and stakeholders face (Li, 2017, p. 296). Even though the lion dance schools, cultural events and public performances have been funded by injection of funds there are fears that a little money injected may fail to meet challenges that face rise in cost of training man power maintenance tools as well sustenance. This lack could prevent practitioners from sustaining themselves economically based on their art. The lack of financial resources is effectively connected to the overall objective, which involves preserving both economic viability and sustainability in Guangdong Lion Dance. This challenge highlights the importance of continual assessment and modification of government measures to address the changing needs for practitioners.

#### 4.10.6 Recommendations for Government Action

The growth of financial aid program is undoubtedly a critical recommendation to combat the challenges facing Financial issues that Guangdong Lion Dance suffers. While acknowledging the existing financial deficiencies, the government is required to implement proactive actions aimed at boosting funding allocations on such aspects as training programs, cultural events and public performances. Lion dance practitioners are faced with various financial challenges ranging from the costs of training, equipment to sustaining performances hence government should strategically increase funding for such practices. This entails an overall assessment of present budgetary allocations and moving resources to the core areas that directly influence Guangdong Lion Dance's economical sustainability (Li, 2017, p. 296). Through increasing financial backing, the government can significantly aid support not only a profession's sustainability but also growth. The connection between financial barriers and strengthened support programs is evident—by precisely addressing the detected limitations on finances, government can provide a robust platform for Guangdong Lion Dance practitioners to sustainably preserve their culture.

One important suggestion for promoting the Guangdong Lion Dance's preservation is the creation of community-based cultural preservation programs. This involves involving local practitioners and cultural enthusiasts in the decision-making processes to make sure that preservation is not only effective but also culturally sensitive as well. To build a robust Guangdong Lion Dance cultural framework, it is critical that the government engage various community stakeholders such as practitioners scholars and representatives of culture in formulating policies preservation strategies. Through the creation of collaborative platforms, decision-making becomes a cooperative effort that inspires feelings of ownership from those with an investment in the tradition itself. This method of preservation guarantees that projects reflect Guangdong Lion Dance practices authentic diversity, recognizing the regional differences and stylistic variations (Gong, 2020, p. 142). Through active participation of community stakeholders, the government not only delves into their inestimable knowledge and skills but also empowers a sense of common responsibility for protecting and enriching Guangdong Lion Dance.

#### 4.11 Summary

The process of qualitative data analysis also yields a complete study for the Guangdong Lion Dance. It turns up many remarkable qualities, personal observations and interpretations along the way. In this way, the internal theoretical perspective of dance is revealed. These views include the symbolic meaning, social recognition, artistic manipulation and cultural impact of this dance. By opening up this admired type of imaginative creation, the endeavored emotional encounters are uniquely more than just dry perception and authentic depiction. However taking a gander at the Guangdong Lion Dance, we can see its worth. Every development or motion has various layers to it. The points of view and encounters of the members can add profundity to how we might interpret dance as an aggregate memory. For this reason the dance is a moving, unique storage facility of significant worth and custom sent by one age to another. Emotional information, then again, adds rich brightening to creative lion dance. The people who have themselves been involved proposition stories and memories, making a continuum from start to finish that show each move toward this cautious interaction. These emotional points of view offset these objective assessments to give an extensive comprehension of how and why the presentation style that rose up out of Guangdong has stood tall over the long run.

As per meetings and stories, the emotional evaluation finds that one significant positive part of lion dance is its job in advancing local area attachment and character. Emotional perception uncovers the importance behind friendly practices. It also demonstrates that in order to implement successful strategies, one must strike a harmonious balance between coping with up-change and intergenerational differences. The consequences of their conversations are vital to the preparation of a procedure to keep up with the custom that is Guangdong Lion Dance. When developing a comprehensive plan for the preservation and promotion of this cultural property, it is possible to take into consideration the perspectives of all stakeholders, including those of experienced practitioners as well as those of the younger population.

## CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Interpretations

The study of the Guangdong Lion Dance delves into the cultural identity of this traditional folk dance within the broader framework of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage, demonstrating a comprehensive grasp. The interviews conducted with lion dance specialists, cultural authorities, seasoned performers, and members of the local community provided valuable qualitative insights, revealing several notable discoveries. The dancers stress the dance's historical roots, immense cultural value and its role as a bridge between modern Chinese culture and its past. The research points out that modernity and industrialization are posing a grave threat; these laws have to be urgently protected if this art form is going to survive.

According to a 75-year-old resident in Guangzhou, the research is also useful in understanding how older generations imagine traditions from their youth disappearing. The resident said, "I fear today's youngsters are losing touch with these cultural customs. We must make efforts to uphold our intangible cultural heritage." The inheritors of lion dance and cultural authority have proven an enormous devotion to preserving the historical legacy, educating people's minds and passing on their credentials to future generations. The Guangdong Academy of Arts reaffirms the need to protect traditional art in protecting culture. The inheritor said, "The lion dance has been performed in Guangdong for over a thousand years, but today it risks fading away. My job is to educate the public about its cultural significance and train young apprentices to keep the tradition alive."

In addition, the study of this topic shows that Guangdong Lion Dance is an excellent channel for passing on concepts whose roots go deep into Chinese civilization. The dance embodies many highly recognizable Confucian ideas, teaches courage and self-control, comradeship and joint effort. "The lion dance blends acrobatics, music, and symbolism. The lively drum beats and intricate lion maneuvers convey good fortune and prosperity. Safeguarding this folk art is vital for preserving Guangdong's cultural identity." That is why it is important to point out the importance of the lion dance--to shape human growth and give a sense of heritage. These have been transformative experiences for veteran artists and novice apprentices alike, deeply affecting the course of their lives.

In addition, the work looks at how the lion dance works to maintain social solidarity and produce deep connections between people from different factions in a community. In training sessions, participants make the case that one of its functions is to destroy obstacles caused by social divisions; stimulating community pride and togetherness.

One important discovery was that the lion dance had a considerable impact on cultural pride and self-identity among Chinese throughout the world. "The exhibitions become a wellspring of local area pride and solidarity."

Dancing provides an emotional bond with one's own people and allows expatriates the chance to bridle their wants. It is a channel through which cultural continuity is preserved, and one's sense of self identity developed.

As well as its cultural importance, the Guangdong Lion Dance is also renowned for having an artistic superiority which sets it apart from other dances. With its meticulous techniques, well-structured choreography, deep symbolism and

splendid costumes combined with great musicality; it is accordingly accorded high praise by professionals and cultural elites alike.

Also, this research is also focused on the major challenge of keeping youths' attention. A big obstacle is the young generation's view of the lion dance as an old-fashioned art form divorced from modern thought. One respondent said, "connecting the traditional and modern elements of this cultural practice." But it should be pointed out that many generations have differing opinions about the standard dance. The generation gap can be narrowed by integrating technological elements and improving conventional methods, making them more attractive to younger people.

The results of the thematic analysis study show that it provides an all-sided understanding of Guangdong Lion Dance's cultural identity. The response said, "The lion dance blends acrobatics, music, and symbolism. The lively drum beats and intricate lion maneuvers convey good fortune and prosperity. Safeguarding this folk art is vital for preserving Guangdong's cultural identity." It points up the vital nature of preservation, as well as its role in passing on traditional values, promoting social unity, building cultural self-esteem and appreciating artistic excellence. In fact, the study's findings suggest making some special efforts to attract younger people and see that this ancient art form can be passed down indefinitely.

All the participants recognized that maintaining intangible cultural assets for China's real history is just as important. In particular, they all saw how important the Guangdong Lion Dance is to Chinese culture's intangible historical legacy. One respondent said, "I feel proud mastering this traditional skill," he says. "I want to keep performing to share Guangdong culture with my generation and beyond." Faced with the potential destruction of modernization, we must carry out joint efforts to avoid compounding its negative impacts and save this art form replete in transcultural significance. Many kinds of people have answered the call to action, and all recognize that preserving it is necessary for upholding what are unique about this dance as well as its cultural background.

Simultaneously the Guangdong Lion Dance is becoming an increasingly influential medium for passing on traditional values. This dance wonderfully highlights major Chinese attributes, including toughness, solidarity and cooperation. In addition to its role as a performance art, the lion dance is also an instrument for passing down these concepts from generation to generation and helps develop personal growth while building up a unified community. The dance appears as a physical monument, witness to the perennial cultural ideas. Thus these concepts can be transmitted down through succeeding generations in this living incarnation of that high art form which we call dance.

In addition, due to the lion dance's cultural status it has helped achieve other notable effects such as encouraging social solidarity. As a force for integration, the dance solidifies relations between communities and makes up for differences in generations. Its cultural glue role, which brings together people of all ages and ethnicities as a source of pride is re-emphasized by marking individuals with the same identity. As a result, the lion dance becomes an agent of social integration that increases collective strength and endows people with self-awareness.



## 5.2 Comparison with existing literature

### 5.2.1 Preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage

UNESCO (2017) and Wong et al. (2021, p. 234) both agree on this point, which is consistent with earlier studies about the sensitivity of intangible cultural assets to modernization pressures such as globalization. The attention given to retain the lion dance is both responding to calls for action by local residents and also official recognition. (Chen, 2019, p. 43) In contrast, this particular research is notable precisely because it stresses the lion dance's important role in propagating Chinese ideas and promoting social cohesion. Besides the usual preservation work, it offers a refined vantage point that breaks away from such efforts.

### 5.2.2 Transmitting Traditional Values

The results of the present study coincide with those from previous research concerning ways in which Chinese traditional dance can be used as a medium for imparting moral instruction (Yao, 2012; Liu, 2019, p. 161). These results are compatible with research findings on other traditional forms of performing arts-such as martial arts (Wong et al., 2021, p. 245). These findings are reflected in the focus on collaboration and discipline. On the other, however, this research approaches things from a fresh angle in that it examines how the lion dance can help build up people and at same time benefit society as well. This extends the boundaries of traditional education by emphasizing learning through doing and action.

### 5.2.3 Promotion of Social Cohesion

In line with the work of Liu (2020, p. 158) and Wu and Lo (2018, p. 134), our research corroborates that viewpoint, adding to evidence that Chinese lion dancing is a cultural activity common among people from different generations and social strata. It is important because it enhances knowledge by examining how the lion dance not only creates connections among communities. These are important insights into the role that the lion dance plays in keeping Chinese tradition alive for those living outside mainland China.

### 5.2.4 Cultural Pride and Self-Identity

Thus far previous research has shown that for Chinese communities the lion dance provides a way to express cultural pride and the sense of belonging (Yang, and Hsu, 2016, p. 9). The findings of this research show how the lion dance links people to their roots and makes them more comfortable in who they are. Through its research, which examines this special emotional effect produced by seeing the lion dance in unique places and circumstances, not only is human feeling added to an understanding of why it has value as a cultural link for expatriate populations.

### 5.2.5 Artistic Merit

This study is thus in accord with past research that has been done on the aesthetics of lion dance, as discussed by Wong and Lim (2021, p. 12) and Zhang (2017, p. 13). It recognizes the complicated choreography, symbolism and musicality of this dance. This exchange further enhances the concept of lion dance as a broad piece of art that goes beyond entertainment. It points up the need to raise lion dance into a form of high art, so as to prevent this oldest form be relegated in future times like other traditional folk practices.

### 5.2.6 Youth Engagement

These research findings, that different age groups have differing levels of enjoyment from the lion dance, are in line with what we already know about how hard it is for young people to appreciate traditional art (Martini et al., 2020). The article differs from previous work in that it suggests numerous innovative ways of involving the young, including making use of technology and online channels. It also offers practical suggestions for overcoming the gap between young and old.

Besides contributing to existing scholarship, this study on the "Guangdong Lion Dance" provides a rich and exacting look at cultural value as well as aesthetic quality. Not only that, the lion dance offers some special insights into how special its contribution lies in passing on values and promoting social cohesion as well as preserving intangible cultural assets. The requirements of modern society have placed pressure bags-of-bone 72 upon this practice among younger generations or those who come from places along. By illuminating the artistic character of lion Dancing and by creating innovative methods for incorporating new fans, this research helps preserve one of our greatest cultural treasures.

### 5.3 Contribution to knowledge

This research, entitled "Guangdong Lion Dance," greatly enhances our knowledge of this familiar cultural custom. This knowledge adds to our understanding of the lion dance's role in conveying such traditional Chinese ideas as force, harmony and cooperation. It's not only the links it provides but also how these principles are expressed through its movement and symbolism. Therefore, there is a much greater and more sophisticated view of the lion dance as both a medium for teaching morals through example and preserving cultural forms.

Also, the research reflects a profound understanding of why the lion dance is able to inspire creating group cohesion. This demonstrates how human artistic expression can build bridges across generational and socioeconomic differences, encouraging a feeling of being part of the social body. This is particularly important in today's interdependent world, where communities are finding it more difficult to pass on cultural legacy and carry out linkages. The research points to the lion dance's ability as a means for crafting social solidarity and community integration.

Moreover, the study offers an interesting insight into some of the pitfalls that young people encounter when they try their hand at this ancient form. In doing so, it recognizes the scorn that some younger people feel for lion dance which is generally thought of as old-fashioned or unrelated to modern lives. But the report does offer some suggestions that could be beneficial, like using technology and social media to increase dance's appeal or opening it up so younger people can more easily get involved in performing. It might offer much practical insight to practitioners and educators about how the lion dance can continue being relevant today and into tomorrow.

The study of the "Guangdong Lion Dance" is a comprehensive and exhaustive survey, covering all aspects of cultural value or artistic merit which may be linked with it. This research provides additional information on intangible cultural assets. This is achieved through the communication of detailed, delicate information. But apart from reinforcing fears about the vulnerability of such ethnic assets to industrialization and globalization, what sets this study apart is that it also points out

in a special way how much lion dancing has played its own part teaching Chinese values and building social harmony. The study is all about preserving intangible cultural assets. The work illuminates these components, permitting a more complete picture than any previous preservation attempts.

Moreover, the study significantly enhances our understanding of how lion dance is used to disseminate ancient beliefs. The study adds a new dimension, emphasizing the role of lion dance in promoting personal and social development. Experiential and embodied forms of learning, beyond the standard form. This study is consistent with previous studies concerning Chinese traditional dance as a medium for moral lessons, but it provides another viewpoint from which to look at this issue.

These findings confirm previous results about the lion dance in promoting among Chinese a sense of cultural pride and self-identity. In addition it explores the emotional impact of seeing lion dances in novel settings, infusing a human touch into our appreciation of its role as an agent maintaining cultural connections for dislocation people.

The study aligns with earlier studies of the lion dance's complexity, noting complicated choreography, symbolism and musical elements underlying this traditional form. As regards artistic quality, the research is rated as good. Still, it does also have an important role in highlighting the need to see lion dance as a highly creative expression rather than simply one of tradition which helps counteract marginalizing the culture and practice.

Finally, to bridge the generation gap in youth involvement, the report presents new options: using technology and electronic platforms for example. In the debate about passing down traditional art forms, this pragmatic approach provides a progressive perspective.

The Guangdong Lion Dance study zooms in on the cultural, social and artistic elements of intangible heritage. This is achieved by giving valuable information for academics, practitioners and policy-makers involved with preserving or promoting traditional cultural practices.

Lastly, the "Guangdong Lion Dance" research project sheds much light on the cultural significance and artistic quality of this thousand-year old art form, as well as its attendant issues. PSI offers a clearer understanding of its role in passing on values, promoting social unity and protecting cultural identity at the younger generations' level. From this clear understanding sprout new methods of protecting and increasing the value of this precious cultural asset for future generations.

#### **5.4 Limitations**

Guangdong Lion Dance is an important contribution to the understanding of cultural heritage, and greatly improved our knowledge. In exploring new areas of study in the future, there are also some constraints that must be recognized. It used to be that the research relied on interviews with cultural authorities and professionals, so there was a potential for sample bias. Maybe this attitude led to a bit of contempt towards the sacred beliefs of younger generations and those less knowledgeable about his lion-dance legacy. Under this limit, then further research is necessary to have a better understanding about the obstacles and opportunities for including young people within this tradition. Doing comparative research in different environments can perhaps give us a slightly different perspective, and thus increase our understanding

of the differences and problems implicit with this activity. Theme analysis was the study's technique. Nevertheless, through supplemental qualitative methods such as participant observation or ethnography, we can learn more about the life experiences and opinions of those who do lion dance.

### **5.5 Recommendation**

With such constraints, future study may focus on ways to reach teenagers. Perhaps innovative methods can be considered: use technology or find interest from some of the elements in popular culture itself. Other traditional dance forms, facing similar barriers to transmission, may be useful for comparative study so that we can find broader patterns and more effective strategies. Doing this could yield inspiring information about the way in which cultural inheritance and social cohesion might be sustained. Moreover, carrying out economic study of the lion dance and making it a legal intangible cultural property will be helpful in formulating policy proposals for this art. It can ensure its long-term protection. A detailed study of the problems accompanying recordings for versions upon version would also help whoever should take on this rescue work in future. By considering these points and making further investigations, one can more comprehensively understand the Guangdong Lion Dance. This will make possible the study of its social and cultural value, as well as aid in developing sound policies to secure it for future generations.

### **5.6 Evaluating Local Authority Initiatives**

#### **5.6.1 Socio-Cultural Impact Beyond Numbers**

With the help of government programs, the cultural cord of Guangdong Lion Dance Villages is reinforced and safeguarded as the culture evolves. Allocations have been made towards preservation, archiving, and instructional activities to give the persons a sense of belonging, thereby developing solid cultural emphasis. Festivals and activities also help attain communal integration as relations are nurtured and cultural messages are passed across everyone and everything. Moreover, government funds and market sponsorships foster economic prospects for dancers, artists, costume designers, and event organizations. Government programs further encourage inclusion, and in so doing, they develop what appears to be a pluralistic socio-cultural environment that recognizes, considers, and promotes regional variants of the Guangdong Lion Dance heritage. This openness is formed through the appreciation encouraged by this inclusion, strengthening the core of the community's cultural values. As a whole, the influence of government programs has been a quantitative one that is also complexly qualitative, in the sense that the programs enacted for Guangdong Lion Dance communities have contributed to promoting the diversity and vitality of their socio-cultural fabric.

#### **5.6.2 Sustainability beyond Economic Viability**

The support the government is offering to preserve and transmit cultures, such as the Guangdong Lion Dance, is necessary. To keep the traditional arts, financial resources, and policies are needed to maintain the technologies used in the traditional activities, and that way, future generations will benefit. Education campaigns and organizations can help cultures that receive information on the presence of a foreign nation-state learn and become aware of what is happening around them. Introducing

initiatives such as apprenticeships and various mentor ship programs may aid in the government's transfer of knowledge and cultural understanding. The continuity of cultural phenomena such as the Guangdong Lion Dance keeps the element of authenticity and depth even though one should realize the richness of this phenomenon due to the preservation of abilities, refined cognitive characteristics, and history. Engagement in factual narratives of the settlement of ancestors and knowing about the activities of predecessors gives the youth a reason to protect their cultural heritage vigorously. Government investment in identifiable continuity helps cultural practices and communities, with one benefit being fostering a firm cultural identity.

#### 5.6.3 Innovation and Tradition

The spirit of the performance involves the Guangdong Lion Dance, a kind of Chinese art that is driven to reform itself to the demands of audiences in different eras with its classical taste. The dance stuffs are preserved with the original elements, including an inner intention underneath this dance and when it was born. It is expected to specify measurable criteria when asking the government for money, which includes documenting historical characteristics and defining safeguard criteria. Dynamic capability to make new adjustments can be accomplished with government programs, introducing new choreographies, using high-tech innovations, or mixing various art genres. Finding a balance between traditional practices and new ways is significant for the relevance of dance in the age of innovative culture. Government aid helps to maintain more reasonableness because there is still an interpretation of coming out with modern translations that still hold on to the essence of the unknown original.

#### 5.6.4 Globalization and Cultural Identity

Globalization has seriously encroached upon the culture of the traditional Guangdong Lion Dance. The financial funds that the government has given in support of exhibitions, cultural exchange programs, and promotion activities have been pivotal in strengthening its global status. However, the factual concerns on the subject are the dilution or commodification of the dance into a broader expectation. In this respect, the sub-rival ease of movement may occur, modifying symbolic senses that may have deviated from the cultural heritage. To continue the dance's authenticity in its original state and global recognition, the government has a role in approving guidelines, training purposes, and encouraging foreign collaborations. Close coordination with the practitioner practitioners, cultural experts, and experts can also optimize the degree of harmony between the values of the tradition and the choice made of the choice. International diffusion is particularly important for the future of the government because only the government's efforts in promoting the dance overseas will the dance continue to exist.

#### 5.6.5 Inclusivity and Diversity in Lion Dance

The government attempts to popularize the openness and multiculturalism of the Guangdong Lion Dance regarding societal awareness and appreciation of various lion dancing styles with local traits. This recognizes that it has historical, cultural, and artistic characteristics of its unique nature, and so not to be defined by any standard. Government-sponsored initiatives for education and community-based events are being organized so that people of different genders, colors, and socio-economic backgrounds are not denied equal opportunities and can live happily together. Therefore, despite the advances, a few obstacles still arise, and government programs



and initiatives must constantly evaluate and adapt their programs to ensure accurate integration so that hiring one in the essential Ayurveda field is a false misconception. Cultural experts and stakeholders in the community must advocate for inclusivity and help out in the effort. Helping the participants to network communicatively and work as teams can boost inclusivity. A larger cultural environment will have to commit more to recognizing, appreciating, and respecting differing approaches. This approach promotes a lively and diverse culture, featuring these traditions in Guangdong Lion.

#### 5.6.6 Public Perception and Awareness

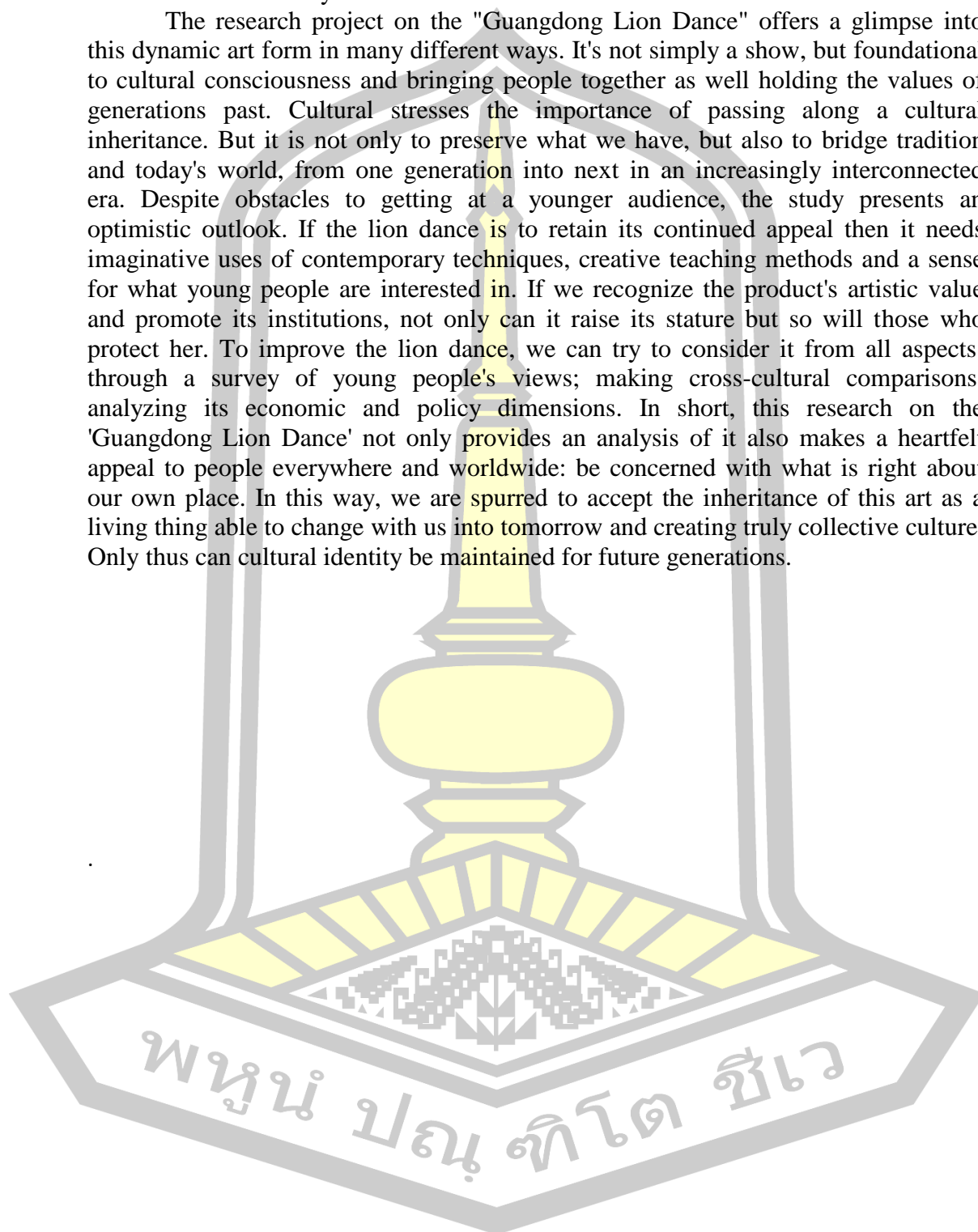
The lion dance that originated in the Guangdong province has since received much attention from the public. This is after various government-funded events and initiatives. These performances demonstrate this ancestral operation, appealing via complicated movements, lovely outfits, and symbolism. The government has also encouraged the dance through various education development activities, including seminars, workshops, and documentation programs. These initiatives have removed the boundaries that have been administered by the form of art and have made the information more available, thus allowing the public to enjoy the cultural and symbolic factors that the art form confers. However, effective communication strategies are essential for establishing a profound politico-historical foundation of the dance culture. The meetings with cultural experts and practitioners usually help turn these events more severe and precise. As much as these public awareness initiatives have been successful in their own right, further efforts must be made by considering the cultural diversity associated with the dance and the historical relevance of the dance as a heritage.

#### 5.6.7 Integrating Youth Engagement

The Guangdong Lion Dance has evolved in that it started retaining the interest of the new generation interested in such preservation. Educational programs inside the schools and community centers have worked wonders in making students aware of the deeper cultural meaning of the dancers and creative techniques. There has also been financial support to Lion Dance groups, which has increased such participation and enhanced skill development. But despite these changes, several challenges continue to be evident, for instance, emerging lifestyle needs and changes in the priorities of individuals' needs. Government-funded projects may be directed to aid the creation of interactive software applications and virtual reality simulations into online resources to form a more alluring option for the techno-savvy young audience. Mentorship programs and intergenerational communication are desired to promote the continuity of engagement. While achievements were made, it is essential as part of the ongoing adaptation to innovate to respond to new challenges and conservation efforts. Hence, the youth's interest in protecting the cultural heritage remains.

### 5.7 Conclusion to analysis

The research project on the "Guangdong Lion Dance" offers a glimpse into this dynamic art form in many different ways. It's not simply a show, but foundational to cultural consciousness and bringing people together as well holding the values of generations past. Cultural stresses the importance of passing along a cultural inheritance. But it is not only to preserve what we have, but also to bridge tradition and today's world, from one generation into next in an increasingly interconnected era. Despite obstacles to getting at a younger audience, the study presents an optimistic outlook. If the lion dance is to retain its continued appeal then it needs imaginative uses of contemporary techniques, creative teaching methods and a sense for what young people are interested in. If we recognize the product's artistic value and promote its institutions, not only can it raise its stature but so will those who protect her. To improve the lion dance, we can try to consider it from all aspects: through a survey of young people's views; making cross-cultural comparisons; analyzing its economic and policy dimensions. In short, this research on the 'Guangdong Lion Dance' not only provides an analysis of it also makes a heartfelt appeal to people everywhere and worldwide: be concerned with what is right about our own place. In this way, we are spurred to accept the inheritance of this art as a living thing able to change with us into tomorrow and creating truly collective culture. Only thus can cultural identity be maintained for future generations.



## **CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS OF STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

### **6.1 Summary of the findings**

The research which was performed within the confines of Guangdong Province and its results compared to other parts where the dance is performed has revealed a rich history that is attached to this tradition. It has revealed a rich historical evolution, cultural significance and revealed some of the contemporary challenges it has faced. Through the research, readers can understand some of the different ways through which the Lion Dance shapes the identity of the people through its cultural significances. The dance, which had its beginnings in customary celebrations, saw revolutionary changes in choreography, setting, and attire, emphasizing a careful balancing act between custom and innovation. For instance, when it comes to the goal of cultural identity, this study has revealed that to a greater extent, the Lion Dance has for a very long time served as a mirror and shaper of regional identity. A varied yet connected story is created by regional differences in choreography, symbolism, and traditions, which highlights the dance's significant influence on forming a sense of community among people living in the Regions South of Five Rivers.

Additionally, the study has revealed that several preservation methods by both the government and the people have been vital in driving the practice of the dance over the years. With the several changes that have taken place over the past years, this study has revealed that through the various adaptation methods, such as the infusion of new colors, the lion dance has greatly adapted to the changing preferences as it ensures the dance continues to resonate well with the current society. The key discoveries come together to provide a story of adaptability, resiliency, and cultural relevance that presents Guangdong Lion Dance as a dynamic cultural manifestation that both mirrors and influences the changing identities of its performers and audience.

Moreover, this study has been effective in revealing how the Lion Dance over the years of its evolution has acted as a powerful force that shapes the cultural identity of the people of Guangdong. The Lion Dance entails a variety of choreographically structured forms as well as symbolic gestures and ritualistic nuances. These aspects have been crucial in revealing the cultural perspectives of the people of Guangdong. Also, the ways that the dance is performed within the province are different from each other across the various parts of the region as well as those performed outside the province. Every location, from the calm beach areas to the busy urban environments, added unique elements to the dance, resulting in a mosaic of customs. As a result, the dance served as a dynamic archive of regional traditions, capturing the spirit of the people it interacted with. This is not just a dance but rather a tradition that has been significance in echoing the social, historical and even spiritual dimensions of the people of Guangdong. A common cultural consciousness was fostered by symbolic gestures that were woven throughout the dance to tell tales of prosperity, safety, and harmony among the community as it developed as a tool for the Guangdong people to visually arrestingly express and celebrate their distinct identity.

The continuity of the cultural lion dance has remained consistent over the years, not just because of the efforts of the performance but by the careful documentation, comprehensive training and even the effective transmission efforts. As identified earlier, the dance which began almost 1500 years ago has been moved from generation to generation. For instance, there are many people outside China today that practice the cultural dance. It is through the effective documentation and training that has ensured people of the younger generations get sufficient information that is related to this dance. Practitioners were able to explain the complex dance steps, symbolic gestures, and historical stories incorporated into the Lion Dance through meticulous documentation. In addition to being an archive instrument, documentation ensured that the dance's essence was faithfully passed down through the generations. On the other hand, younger population have received sufficient guidance from the practitioners on how the dance is performed. For instance, various schools in Guangdong practice the lion dance during the Lunar New Year celebrations, as well as other community events, weddings and even community events. The younger people get the chance to know what is done and how it is done, and in turn they teach their younger ones as they get old. This has facilitated the continuity of the celebration of the dance with the aid of the government.

Lastly, this study has effectively identified that the dance has effectively adapted to the changing dynamics of the modern world, whereby it has significantly been affected by the cultural changes on the global scale amid this age where technology is rapidly growing. Formerly, the dance was performed in less colorful costumes unlike today where the performers have focused on enriching the performance with high visually appealing colors. This development is a dynamic adaption that draws in younger audiences who are more receptive to visually engaging presentations. The dance, which was originally decorated in conventional colors, has evolved to incorporate a rainbow of hues, reflecting shifting inclinations and aesthetic standards. However, this study has revealed that this dance has faced several hardships amid the modernism, where for instance, modern distractions and shifts in cultural preferences have barred many from celebrating it. The difficulty is not in the dance's intrinsic appeal but rather in navigating the always changing array of teenage entertainment options. In order to ensure the dance's ongoing relevance, innovative approaches are required to incorporate the traditional art form into the interests and way of life of younger audiences. Proposals that encourage community engagement, educational initiatives, and creative performances have surfaced as viable means of bridging the generational divide.

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## 6.2 Limitations of the Study

The major constraint that barred this study was mainly the scope limitation, whereby the study solely resolved on using the Cantonese Lion Dance practitioners in Guangdong leading to what is called a geographical limitation. Although this aligned the study to one specific cultural context, this investigation was exposed to limitation of generalizability of the findings to other regions that perform the dance across China and even the rest of the world where the dance has been largely been embraced. Besides, the historical development of Lion Dance has taken place over many decades, if not centuries, and the study faced the difficult task of fitting this long timeframe into a limited amount of time (McGuire, 2015, p. 32). The temporal constraints imposed by the study may limit the breadth of historical investigation. Additionally, as earlier indicated, this study was purely qualitative, an aspect which leads to the creation of the subjectivity challenge. Subjectivity enters the analysis because of the qualitative nature of the research, especially when examining cultural values and artistic acknowledgment. A certain amount of potential bias may be introduced by the researcher's perspective in the interpretations and insights drawn from observations and interviews. Although this challenges affected the achievement of the intended aims of the study, the investigation managed to make applicable recommendations that can be vital in the creation of insights into how the Lion dance changed over time, and thus presents a good opportunity for the study to make recommendations for the continuity of the tradition.

Besides, the Lion Dance is more than just a series of physical moves; it's a representation of Guangdong's cultural identity, with gestures, symbolism, and historical allusions firmly ingrained in the region's distinct legacy, telling a story that goes beyond the dance's stage. However, because of this focus, a new challenge has been created for the study whereby the cultural variations across other regions make it hard to translate the cultural nuances to other regions that have different foundations. For instance, some of the things that make sense or resonates well with the people of Guangdong might fail to resonate well with the same intensity in other regions that have different cultural foundations (Zhang and Wen, 2020, p. 63). It is a challenge that strongly affect the generalizability of the findings since different people across China perform the art differently and uniquely. Similarly, the people across the country face different challenges and thus, the dance is differently affected across. Hence, it is important to note this limitation since it can help the investigation to avoid getting overgeneralized. The Lion Dance's cultural contextualization highlights the necessity for a nuanced understanding, highlighting the dance's inextricable connection to Guangdong's cultural fabric and recognising the challenges involved in transferring these intricate cultural details to areas with disparate cultural backgrounds.

The Guangdong Lion Dance has gained official recognition and protection thanks to the top-down strategy of declaring it an "intangible cultural heritage," but at a cost. Nearby grassroots specialists have been ignored and minimized in this cycle. To conclude what to do frequently adopts a unified strategy, leaving out the voices and maybe in any event, considering individuals from neighborhood networks emphatically associated with lion dance custom. It's possible that this kind of bureaucratic treatment will not take into account the nuances, and it won't encourage



those who have preserved this heritage for generations to get involved. The lion dance's designation as "intangible cultural heritage" comes with a risk: that static conservation will supplant dynamic change. There might be an expected impediment to the regular development of lion dance in accordance with contemporary patterns, be that as it may (Zhang and Wen, 2020, p. 63). That is, we run the risk of completely losing sight of the art form if we emphasize its preservation as static and unchanging. This technique can upset imagination and advancement inside the custom, in which professionals might be deterred from investigating novel articulations or structures that would assist with keeping it alive too gotten show-stoppers.

Lion dance troupes can't continue their work without government funding, which is limited and very uneven. Monetary vulnerabilities hamper numerous groups' interest in essential necessities including ensembles, instruments and preparing offices. Yet, the absence of a stable monetary emotionally supportive network takes steps to subvert the drawn out supportability of lion dance customs. Without satisfactory support, even especially talented and committed entertainers would not have the option to keep up their responsibility. There is a tendency for programs that are financed by government initiatives to gravitate toward megacities and the vacation sector, leaving behind those locations in remote rural areas where lion dance traditions are becoming less prevalent with the passage of time (Li, 2017, p. 294). The concentration of resources in urban areas might highlight the disparity between the various efforts to protect the environment, with the result that rural networks are unable to obtain the assistance or attention that is necessary for their own unique approaches to lion dance in order to survive. It is necessary to have a strategy that integrates rather than merely accepting the state of diversity and difference in order to achieve the appropriate equilibrium required for this valuable resource.

Young people's interest is discouraged due to the tensions associated with modernization and the absence of monetary motivations. The lion dance tradition runs the risk of being compromised when it comes to locating younger members due to the pressures of modernization and the absence of financial driving forces. Younger generations who are compelled to balance the demands of their careers and the realities of the economy may have the misconception that mastering lion dance is incompatible with the requirements of modern living (Li, 2017, p. 297). In the absence of significant benefits or compensations for those involved with lion dance, it may be challenging for a great number of children to devote such a significant amount of time and effort to acquiring a skill such as this one. This ultimately contradicts the concept of custom itself. The challenges that have been encountered necessitate the development of fresh ideas regarding the most effective means of making lion dance more enjoyable and practical for younger generations.

Finally, the historical documents and archival records allowed a deeper insight into the initial regulatory actions conducted by the government to redact and safeguard the cultural purity of Lion Dance rituals. These measures were considered by the study as effective in preserving distinct rituals, movements, and symbolic elements linked to Lion Dance. Additionally, the study looked at the historical background of government intervention highlighting the progressive shift from the regulatory framework toward comprehensive financial and community-based interventions. By pointing out gaps in developing these evolving attempts, the study identified the potential areas in which the local authority failed to protect the

intangible cultural heritage of Guangdong Lion Dance. The analysis is towards the accomplishment of RO3 since the provided nuanced understanding of the evolving government nexus and identified lacunas that might obstruct the implementation of the Lion Dance preservation are enriched by that. The study has also revealed cases in which the transition from measure controls to long-term non-directional programs took place, with major shifts in the quantity of lion dancers and economic feasibility of Lion Dance as cultural tradition. Through the identification of obstacles and criticisms, such as cultural appropriation and the seeming insufficiency of financial support, the research has identified several domains in which government initiatives may encounter constraints. Furthermore, the study made suggestions for government intervention on how to manage financial crises and ensure community-focused cultural heritage conservation strategies.

### 6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

After the performance of this study and upon its conclusion, it is highly recommended that any future research that will be performed on this topic should consider the regional variations in the artistry of the Lion Dance. This means that the researchers should consider some of the different cultural nuances across the different regions before coming into conclusion on particular aspects of the dance. Scholars would have to analyze the regional histories, folk traditions, and cultural influences to determine how these elements interact with the Lion Dance performances. Additionally, the researchers need to deeply analyze how the different historical influences have affected the regional dance styles. Here, it is widely acknowledged that different regions exhibit different cultural perspectives, and as the time moves by, the different perspectives change simultaneously. Therefore, it is necessary to do a sociocultural analysis in order to understand how the changing dynamics of each group have influenced and moulded their own version of the Lion Dance. There is a need for the future researchers to deeply unravel the regional variations, and this can be important in the preservation of the Lion Dance.

To address the shortcomings identified above, there are some of the things that need to be considered. The development of cooperative administration models is an important step that should be taken in order to reduce the segregation of grassroots specialists. The inclusion of social specialists, society artisans, senior people from the community, and young delegates in dynamic cycles indicates that the process will be more representative of individuals. In addition to including a variety of viewpoints, these models encourage a more significant input from the surrounding community (Blake, 2019, p. 21). In that moment, a sense of pride and dynamic support for the advancement of this legacy is created among the people who are using the space. The significance of achieving some form of harmony between tradition and progress, thereby enabling study on adapting lion dances to the times in which we live, remains substantial. This kind of investigation can lead to the discovery of ways to combine the ancient and the new, with the intention of ensuring that the Lion Dance will continue to hold a place in the culture of the present day. Participating in consequently, by providing assistance to traditional experts in their efforts to collaborate with social trend-setters, craftsmanship is able to develop while also maintaining its inherent culture (Avaunt, 2021, p. 74). It will also attract a larger

number of people and be able to accommodate a variety of distinct mental settings that are always shifting.

Another area that needs focus by future researches in this topic is the technological landscape, whereby they need to solely focus on the technological impacts on the evolution of the lion dance. The future researchers need to try to uncover some of the ways that today's digital platforms, social media and even virtual reality is affecting the traditional performance of the Lion dance. For instance, using interactive web platforms, virtual exhibitions, or high-definition videos could be modern means of preserving and presenting the dance's minute intricacies while overcoming regional restrictions. Furthermore, virtual reality is a frontier that has to be explored. Studies may reveal the ways in which virtual reality technology helps to produce immersive experiences for Lion Dance (Liu, 2020, p. 157). Interactive simulations, virtual performances, and educational modules have the potential to become cutting-edge resources for cultural preservation and teaching. They can provide audiences with a more profound understanding of the cultural diversity that have persisted in this dance. Some of the digital aspects that cannot be ignored that have been very essential in the performance of the lion dance entail the digital platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, YouTube and even TikTok. By exploring this area, future stars will illustrate how the dance has navigated and survived through this digital age.

Lastly, the future researchers are required to delve into the different strategies that can be used to captivate the interests of the younger populations who are very critical for the continuity of this tradition. They are required to create an understanding on the existing gap between traditional practices and the youth preferences, and this will be vital in explaining some of the things that needs to be done or some of the changes that should be made to ensure the youth are actively involved in the performance and continuity of the Lion Dance. Some of the things that should be considered here resolve around the contemporary elements such as the evolving technology as earlier identified, or even modern music, innovative choreography that perfectly aligns with the traditional art, and this will address the evolving tastes of the youth. Research ought to broaden its purview to include joint ventures with academic establishments (Liu, 2020, p. 159). It is crucial to comprehend how Lion Dance might fit into recreational activities, school curriculum, or cultural exchange initiatives. These kinds of partnerships could act as a means of bringing the next generation up to date on the creative, historical, and cultural diversity that is embodied in dance. Research should look into ways to enable younger people to actively participate in and contribute to the Lion Dancing heritage, whether through community workshops, mentorship programs, or youth-led initiatives.

#### 6.4 Practical Implications

This study has revealed substantial practical implications that can be used to serve as a wake-up call to all individuals that are aspiring towards ensuring this tradition to continue existing for many more years to come. This study calls upon members of the society, not only in Guangdong but in the larger China and other regions that the Lion Dance is practiced. That is why there is a need by the authorities to ensure and any other cultural institutions to ensure they leverage and effectively utilize the technology in favor of the continuation of the lion dance. It is therefore essential to set up a virtual archive in order to facilitate the thorough recording of Lion Dance techniques (Liu, 2020, p. 161). An international audience may interact with and enjoy the subtle intricacies of the dance thanks to this digital archive, which not only makes accessibility easier but also transcends geographic boundaries. Also, this study has identified that there is a need for the people in power to ensure knowledge about the Lion dance is passed effectively to the younger people through training programs on how it needs to be conducted. The young people in the region are the designated inheritors of the tradition, and if they are not trained well, the values of the dance might fail to pass down effectively and this can affect the continuity of the tradition in the coming years.

Additionally, another niche that needs to be effectively utilized is the education system, where the Lion Dance needs to be seamlessly integrated into the Guangdong educational system. It is impressive to note that most schools are still practicing the dance during the celebration of the Lunar New Year. However, this is not quite significant especially for the continuation of this tradition, whereby the educational institutions which entail all schools, colleges and even universities need to incorporate the dance in its educational programs. In order to accomplish this, age-appropriate educational modules, live performances, and targeted seminars can be created to provide a welcoming and stimulating learning environment (Braun-Wanke, 2017, p. 23). This will be a very important step because it will instill a sense of pride and connection to the local traditions for the younger populations on top of imparting practical knowledge to them. For example, through live performances as well as workshops, the students will get the chance of being directly involved with the dance's vibrant energy, an aspect that can lead to the appreciation of the intangible cultural heritage. In order to raise a new generation that cherishes the tradition and actively contributes to its promotion and preservation, educational integration becomes a proactive step.

Further, without the engagement of the larger community, most of the recommendations might not work. It is advised that the different local authorities as well as cultural organizations need to prepare community festivals, workshops and even mentorship programs that are directed at the local communities as they try to engage them in the performance of the dance. These programs provide engaging forums for residents to actively participate, increasing their sense of pride and ownership of the rich cultural legacy that is ingrained in Lion Dance. As it is known, the local communities contain the larger part of the population and if they are constructively engaged, the cultural values of the Lion Dance will be effectively shared and this will be passed on to the next generations effectively (Braun-Wanke, 2017, p. 23). Community workshops offer forums for collaborative education where



locals may actively participate in the historical and cultural relevance of the dance. Festivals transform into colorful events that promote intergenerational conversation while exhibiting the variety of Lion Dance techniques. By engaging the local communities, the people will be encouraged to become the ambassadors of the tradition which will lead to effective cultural heritage. The resilience and vitality of the intangible cultural legacy, expressed in Lion Dance, are ensured for future generations as long as the community actively engages in these projects.

Another major aspect that needs to be considered is the innovative engagement platforms, which have gained popularity amid this rising technological advancements. This study suggests that the people involved with the cultural dance are required to embrace some of these innovative engagement platforms that can be very essential in communication of the lion dance's values across the populations. For example, the people can effectively utilize aspects like social media and other online platforms during the practice and performance of the dance, leading to increased visibility of the Lion Dance to a larger population. Today, with the way many interactive social media platforms have come up, it is essential to note that some of the cultural performances can effectively utilize this platforms to their advantage. These online venues function as vibrant avenues for showcasing the grace and cultural diversity of Lion Dance (Watford, 2019, p. 33), drawing a wide range of viewers from all over the world. Furthermore, it is recommended that there should be collaborations with digital artists, influencers and even renowned content creators which can infuse the modern perspectives to this dance, and through their involvement, many of the people that did not initially know the dance will get to know it and understand what it entails. Traditional art can flourish in the modern cultural environment and win the interest and appreciation of a broad and international audience by utilizing technology and working with influencers.

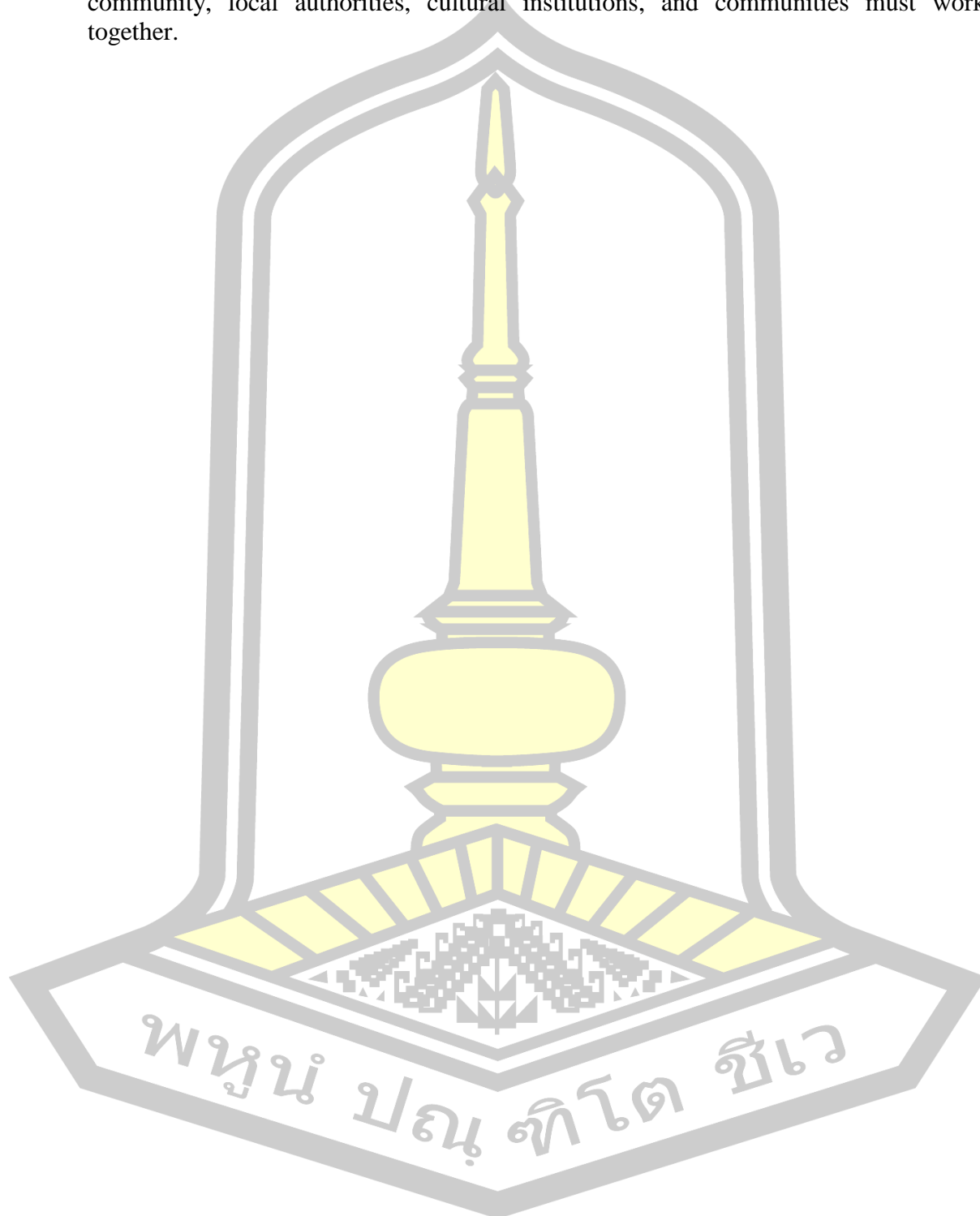
## 6.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has effectively achieved its intended goals as it traversed over the Guangdong Lion Dance landscape, leading to revelation of major insights on its historical evolution, cultural significance as well as some of the current challenges that it is facing. This study has revealed some of the movements that are involved during the performance of the dance, symbolic gestures involved as well as the artistic elements which effectively describe the dance. Lion Dance is a tenacious cultural asset that unites tradition and creativity, from its historical roots to its contemporary variations impacted by urbanization and globalization. The benefits of this research is that it has revealed some of the ways the dance has changed over time, giving a clear insight on the nuances of its evolution. The people's understanding of how this traditional art form negotiates the complexity of the modern world is further enhanced by the investigation of regional variances, color progression, and youth engagement initiatives.

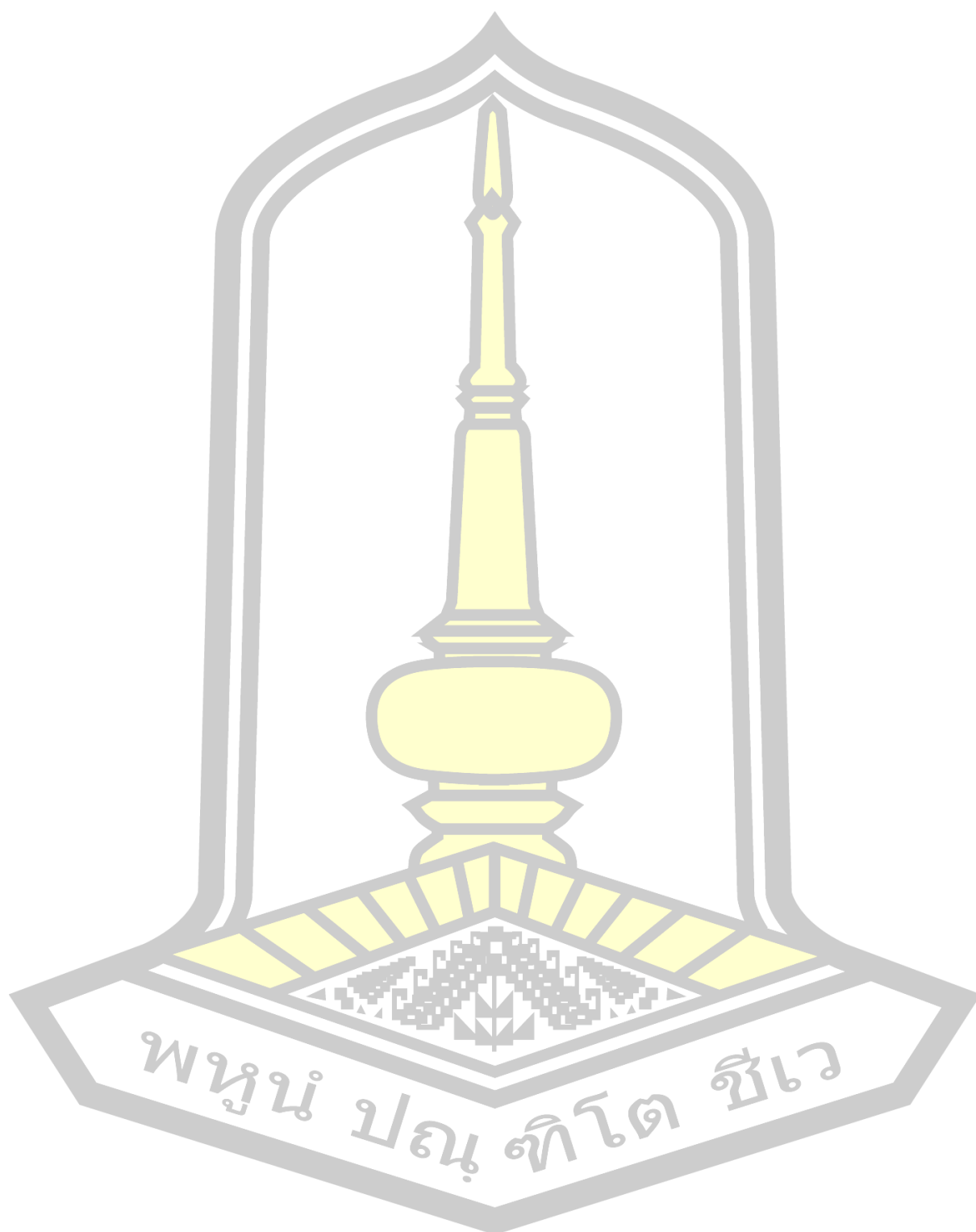
In addition, this study has revealed key insights on the role of the Guangdong's cultural identity in Lion Dance. Here, this dance for a long time served as living creation that describes the region's long history, customs as well as regional diversity, answering the research question on how the dance has been used to create and describe cultural identity of the people of Guangdong. Its appreciation and preservation represent a dedication to the survival of cultural heritage in the face of



modern challenges, as well as a tribute to the past. To successfully adopt creative preservation measures, include Lion Dance into education, and actively engage the community, local authorities, cultural institutions, and communities must work together.



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