Chinese national music platformisation: A systematic review

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ABSTRACT

Chinese national music is unique to China, and in the past, the single means of distribution and the audience led to the fact that knowledge of Chinese culture and history was limited to national musicians and a subset of fans. With the rapid development of the internet, the dissemination of Chinese national music is no longer limited to live performances, but is beginning to shift to media platforms. Social media has had a tremendous impact on Chinese music culture; people can search for any information they need about Chinese music. With the advancement of social media, groups of internet celebrities such as wanghong (网红) have formed on the internet. This study systematically reviews platformisation and the social media in Chinese national music. Past literature and current notions on Chinese national music development under platformisation are examined given the essentiality of smart devices in developing music through digital technology. The study posed three research questions: 1.What is the current state of development of Chinese national music? What opportunities does platformisation bring to Chinese national music? 2. What areas are the focus for research on platformisation and social media? What is the impact on the music field? 3.What is the history of the development of the Chinese wanghong phenomenon? What impact has it made on Chinese national music? A general systematic review of scholarly articles was conducted for this study using multiple publications from reputable databases: Scopus, Web of Science and CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure). The articles were categorised based on scholarly works involving platforms, platformisation, Chinese national music, social media, and wanghong to determine past study profiles in this domain and relevant knowledge gaps.

1. Introduction

The definition of 'Chinese national music' not only represents a long history but also shows the diversity of music genres. It is a collection of traditional national instrumental music, folk songs, and folk dances, as well as diversified forms of theatre and opera, which, in the process of continuous innovation, thinking and practice, have formed a form of music and art that is in line with the development of society and culture over time. Notably, the broad scope of Chinese national music includes: Han Chinese, ethnic minority, traditional, modern, national and professional music. Chinese national music inherits the foundations of traditional Chinese music, but at the same time absorbs the techniques and methods of Western professional music [1]. In the contemporary development of Chinese national music, a combination of East and West is more often used, and Chinese national music serves as an excellent vehicle to build bridges between Chinese and foreign cultures. In the age of the internet, the dissemination of Chinese national music can provide a new way for the world to understand Chinese culture. Compared with other genres of Chinese music such as traditional,

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serious, popular and modern, the study of Chinese national music is more indicative of the development of contemporary Chinese music and culture.

As one of the representatives of Chinese music culture, the mode of dissemination of Chinese national music is gradually changing with the development of science and technology. Apart from live performances, music used to rely only on auditory media, but nowadays it has become a platform for the coexistence of audio-visual media. For example, audiences no longer rely solely on CDs and records [2,3], but rather on platforms such as music streaming and video media [4,5] to enjoy national music. Audiences can simultaneously obtain multi-sensory experiences in the form of text, video, pictures and so on. The dissemination of Chinese national music breaks through the "time and space confinement" limitations of traditional dissemination as it can be carried out through mobile terminals such as smartphones and tablet computers, no matter when or where. At the same time, the communication content is no longer limited to auditory communication, but includes the development of audio-visual communication. Relying on social media platforms, Chinese national music can be conveniently disseminated to any corner of the world. Data collection and analysis revealed that research related to Chinese national music focuses on music education, musicology, music dissemination and music performance. This article provides a detailed empirical overview of Chinese national music, platforms and wanghong through a systematic literature study, providing a knowledge base for future research.

2. Research background

Given the various definitions underpinning the term 'platform', this study associates the word with computer technology, communication, and entertainment modes. In Chinese business discourses, platform implies digital services and start-ups constituting video platforms, shared travel, dating, and social networking applications [6]. Platformisation is the process of digital infrastructure construction. This refers to the adoption of organisational methods and technical means in line with the rules of internet communication, reconstructing the institutional system and technical facilities of the mainstream media, diversifying and expanding media products and services through the internet. Platformisation extends to many areas of economic, political, cultural and social life, in line with the full landscape of the internet as the basis of social connectivity. It has significant cultural impacts that fundamentally affect the operation of the cultural industry [7]. Research on platforms has been performed in multiple disciplines, including economics, culture, media studies, and sociology [8–14].

Social media has become prevalent with internet technology advancements. As an interactive technology that facilitates the creation or sharing of information, ideas, professional interests, and other forms of expression through digital communities and networks, social media denotes an avenue for content production and communication following users' relationships on the internet to interact through information-sharing and consumption. Social media platforms serve as a medium for users' self-improvement [15], offers users multiple tools and provides sufficient space for personal content generation and storage [16]. Globally, the United States of America has established some of the largest social media platforms in recent decades such as YouTube, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter). Furthermore, due to strict national governance policies and rapid platformisation [17], China has developed its social media platforms such as Sina Weibo, Douyin and Bilibili [18]. Platform access, content, and advertising depend on compliance with varying and complex regulations owing to distinctive national and regional policies [19].

Social media users who uninhibitedly share posts of their daily life, work, and interests online, seek out areas of interest, and follow media creators have became a large-scale group of internet wanghong or internet celebrities in China. Translated from the Chinese as 'someone who has become popular on the internet', wanghong implies the people are influencers or *wangluo mingren* 网络名人, and explicitly refers to an individual who gains popularity and 'becomes viral' in a short period of time. Research related to wanghong has focused on the wanghong economy, censorship, and self-identity [20–27]. Wanghong take advantage of novel digital platforms to interpret conventional cultures with individual experiences. They structure a novel interpersonal communication model, gradually evolving from a cultural phenomenon to an industry and contributing to a comprehensive understanding of contemporary culture [23].

Through data collection and analysis, I have formulated the following questions, which are analysed in the following section.

RQ1a. What is the current state of development of Chinese national music?

RQ1b. What opportunities does platformisation bring to Chinese national music?

RQ2a. What areas are the focus for research on platformisation and social media?

RQ2b. What is the impact of platformisation and social media platforms on the music scene?

RQ3a. What is the history of the development of the Chinese wanghong phenomenon?

RQ3b. What impact has the wanghong phenomenon had on Chinese national music?

3. Methodology

Methods in Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) were used to generate data for this study. The literature was searched on three databases: Scopus, Web of Science and CNKI. Chinese national music and wanghong, as native Chinese terms [28], were also necessary for the search of Chinese literature databases, and CNKI, as an authoritative Chinese database, was therefore chosen. The specific search terms I used in the main database search included social media platform, platformisation, Chinese national music, wanghong, and the terms 中国民族音乐(Chinese national music) and 网红(wanghong) for the

Table 1

List of literatures.

Author/-s, publication year	Focus	Research Methodology	Finding/Contributions
Abidin & Lee (2023) [8]	K-pop, TikTok	Mixed-method approach (press archival research, document analysis, content analysis, and digital ethnography)	TikTok has successfully expanded into the Korean market using K-pop and 'platformed glocalisation' strategies. Collaboration between the mainstream entertainment industry and emerging social media platforms has led to market-specific digital cultural mobilisation.
Vizcaíno-Verdú et al. (2023) [29]	Music, YouTube, TikTok	Quantitative	YouTube and TikTok provide appropriate environments for music creation, sharing and participation, contributing to the understanding of the music consumption process on these platforms.
Cao (2022) [28]	China celebrity culture	Literature review	China's Wanghong industry has significant cultural and economic implications, and its development is closely linked to the digital platform ecosystem and the rise of social media entertainment in China.
Craig et al. (2021) [21]	Wanghong, social media entertainment	Interdisciplinary approach combining humanities and social sciences, theoretical frameworks, case studies	China's governance of the wanghong industry involves both economic and socio-cultural benefits, as well as socio-economic governance through the Internet and the platform economy. This has created a highly competitive live streaming environment with complex commercial functions as well as strict censorship and content regulation. The paper also highlights the ambivalence of 'wanghong culture'.
Cunningham & Craig (2019) [30]	Social media entertainment	Combined qualitative and quantitative methods	Industry and governance issues in social media entertainment (SME) are addressed with a focus on creators and an emphasis on the platformisation of cultural production.
Fung et al. (2023) [22]	Cultural capitals and creative labour, wanghong, Douyin	Qualitative and quantitative, systematic and large-scale survey, in-depth interviews	Douyin offers different wanghong the possibility of pursuing their desired capital, not only economic capital, but also social, symbolic and cultural capital.

Author/-s, publication year	Focus	Research methodology	Finding/Contributions
Han (2021) [23]	Wanghong economy	Historicising method	The "wanghong economy" has become an important source of corporate revenue for these platforms and has the potential to influence the general trend of internet commercialisation in China.
Han (2022) [24]	Wanghong economy	A combined method of document analysis and online ethnography	Reveals the asymmetry of power between platforms and streaming media, showing how the dominance of platforms overlaps with the patriarchal order and how wanghong's social class status motivates their active participation in constructing platforms.
Kaye et al. (2021) [31]	Douyin, TikTok	Platformization of cultural production theory, app walkthrough method	The concept of parallel platformisation is proposed to explain ByteDance's survival strategy in two opposing platform ecosystems in China and abroad, thus contributing to the theory of platformisation. The co-development of Douyin and TikTok is a new paradigm for global platform expansion, distinct from the regionalisation strategy adopted by major social media platforms in the past.
Khan et al. (2021) [32]	Advertisement, music	Qualitative	The music used in adverts on social media platforms influences young consumers' purchasing decisions and creates a preference for the advertised product.
Lal et al. (2023) [33]	Indian recorded music industry, platformisation	Qualitative, literature review	Platformisation has led to the emergence of a new wave of music that poses an unprecedented challenge to the dominance of film music. Platformisation may put musicians who speak languages other than Hindi and English at a disadvantage.

Author/-s, publication year	Focus	Research methodology	Finding/Contributions
Lin & de Kloet (2019) [11]	Kuaishou, Chinese digital cultural production	Qualitative, walkthrough method, in-depth interviews, content analysis	The platforming of cultural production on China's Kuaishou creates opportunities for marginalised individuals to become "unlikely to be" creative workers, and this grassroots digital entrepreneurship transcends the passive digital labour and professional consumer model, which aligns with China's goal of restructuring its economy.
Magaudda & Solaroli (2020) [34]	Platform, digital cultural industry	Literature review	The need for interdisciplinary frameworks and innovative methodological choices to analyse the linguistic, aesthetic and symbolic forms of platformed cultural objects is emphasised.
Morris (2020) [35]	Music platform, culture	Qualitative	Due to the pressures of platformisation, musicians and producers are increasingly required to play the roles of software developers and visibility engineers in addition to their creative roles.

Table 1 (*continued*)

Author/-s, publication year	Focus	Research methodology	Finding/Contributions
Nwagwu & Akintoye (2023) [36]	Emerging musicians	Qualitative, case study, snowball	Social media and new technologies have provided more opportunities for emerging musicians, but have also increased competition.
Park et al. (2023) [12]	Korean platform, K-pop industry	Case study	Korean platforms see K-pop production as a vehicle for generating new revenues and penetrating global markets. Platforms have become a major driver of K-pop's global expansion, but they have also reinforced asymmetrical power relationships between platform giants and K-pop labels and creators.
Poell (2020) [13]	Media study, platform	Case study	The authors combine insights from disciplines as diverse as political economy, business studies, computer science, law, and cultural studies to deepen their understanding of the intricate entanglements between technology, economic strategy, and cultural practices in the platforming of cultural industries.

Author/-s, publication year	Focus	Research methodology	Finding/Contributions
Sandel & Wang (2022) [26]	China wanghong	Multimodal analysis underpinned through social semiotics	Focusing on Chinese wanghong and their use of multimodal technologies to establish and maintain personal and intimate connections with distant audiences, this paper explores the affordances of digital platforms and wanghong's construction of online personas.
Sun & Wang (2019) [37]	Wanghong, wanghong economy	Celebrity theory	In the process of continuous development, wanghong has evolved from a mere "person" to a social and economic phenomenon.
Wang & Feng (2022) [27]	Chinese wanghong women, TikTok	Qualitative research and social semiotic analyses	The identity of a female wanghong is a set of evaluative attributes realised by different symbolic resources and shaped by the socio-cultural context.
Yang & Zheng (2021) [38]	Chinese national music, Mental and emotional health	Literature review, empirical studies and online surveys	Findings highlighting the effects of music on mood, memory and personality are presented, emphasising the role of music-induced nostalgia and its link to emotional experience. The paper also explores emotional responses to traditional national music, emphasising the importance of cultural context and understanding of different emotional experiences.
Zhang & Negus (2021) [14]	Live music	Combination of historical analysis and theoretical exploration	Platforms are becoming increasingly influential in the music industry. The value and commoditisation of live music is changing due to the influence of digital companies and social media platforms.

Chinese databases. I identified relevant work through the following steps. In the first stage, searching e-journal databases: Scopus, Web of Science and CNKI. CNKI's sources were selected from the more authoritative Peking University Chinese Core Journals and CSSCI. In the second stage, n = 3112 eligible papers were screened by title. In the third stage, out of the n = 3112 papers, I excluded n = 2233 papers according to the following criteria: 1. The paper is not relevant to these categories n = 1579 (music/anthropology/social science/culture/humanity/economy). 2. The paper is not written or published in English n = 76 (except CNKI). 3. The paper is not published between 2019 and 2023, n = 811. In the fourth stage, 163 duplicates were removed from n = 811 documents. In the fifth stage, n = 556 literatures were screened by an abstract for inconsistency with the topic. In the sixth stage, the authors retrieved the full text of the remaining n = 160 literatures and screened them critically according to the following inclusion criteria: 1. music was the main area examined. 2. comparative analyses of areas of research across countries were conducted. 3. references and explanations of terms such as platformisation and wanghong were clear. 4. the recommendations were substantial. Ultimately, a total of n = 22 written works were included in this screening. Subsequently, these were analysed for content, including objective, research methodology, and findings/contributions (Table 1). Fig. 1 documents the details of this data collection and screening process.

RQ1a: What is the current state of development of Chinese national music?

Chinese national music refers to all kinds of music that was produced and mostly handed down in China in its course of history, as well as all kinds of music introduced and developed by foreigners (including ethnic minorities and foreigners included in China). This includes four major music categories, namely: folk, literati, religious and court. From the point of view of musical ethnography, music can be divided into seven major categories: folk songs, instrumental music, musical pieces, dance songs, singing songs, song and dance songs, and operas [39]. These catagories are based on the in-depth study of Chinese traditional music, absorbing the techniques and methods of Western professional music, and is composed by professional musicians, with the characteristics of heritage, custom and folklore. Chinese national musicians realised the importance of their music at a very early stage and started to study it. Since Chinese national music is a uniquely Chinese musical genre, most research has focused on China, and fieldwork has also concentrated on mainland China.

Since ancient times, Chinese national music has had a cultural element of openness and exchange, and in the course of its development, it disseminated to neighbouring regions and countries through emigration and cultural exchanges. An orchestra comprising ethnic instrumental music is known as a *'Minzu Yuetuan'* (民族乐团) in mainland China and *Guoyue tuan* (国乐团) in Taiwan with Guo implying nationality. *Minzu* implies ethnicity and ethnic music. *Zhongyue tuan* (中乐团) with the term 'Zhong' refers to Chinese music in Hong Kong and Macau. *Huayue tuan* (华乐团) refers to Chinese music in Malaysia and Singapore with Hua following
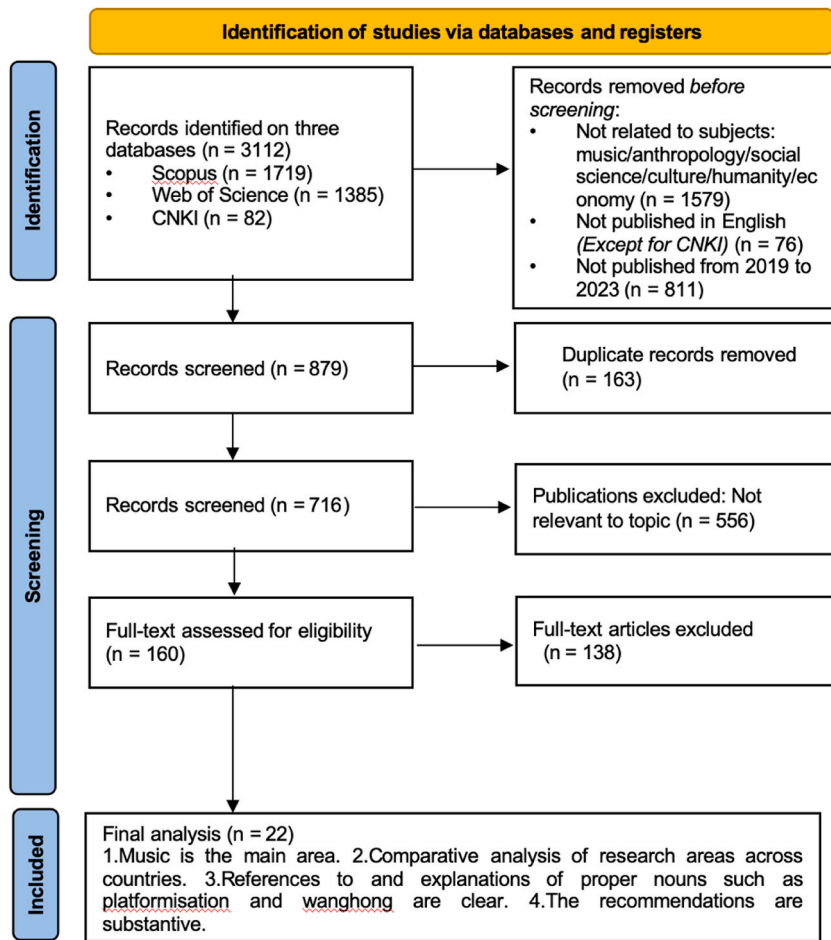
Identification of studies via databases and registers

Fig. 1. Literature review analysis methodology.

the Chinese music in Southeast Asia's cultural diversity [40]. In Chinese national music *Guo yue*国乐 or *Min Yue*民乐, which literally connotes 'music of the nation', musicians have come to nationalise all the music written for Chinese instruments following the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912.

Chinese national instruments have strong distinct national characteristics, but in the development of large-scale orchestras over the past few decades, there has been a tendency to copy Western orchestral models, orchestration techniques, and acoustic combinations, due to the neglect of traditional national musical characteristics. The dynamism of tradition, which indicates perpetual shifts, results from two factors: cultural contacts and altering social conditions [41]. Not all works could be deemed traditional as conventions must be dynamic and sustainable with impeccable quality from music of the past. For traditions, Brace proposes the concepts of preservation and protection [41]. Preservation refers to a process in which a musical tradition is protected from disintegration and oblivion while preventing its development. Protection refers to a process designed to protect a musical practice while still allowing it to continue to evolve. While preservation tends to leave things as they are, protection emphasises the need to maintain musical traditions as 'living' traditions and the inheritance of Chinese national music culture falls into the category of 'protection'.

A musical tradition must relate to modern Chinese audiences and reflect their contemporary lifestyles to be a living phenomenon [41]. In this regard, traditional music underwent modernisation to accommodate modern Chinese lifestyles. Hou, who investigated the professional development of Chinese national instrumental music and its complexities in the 20th century, indicated from a modern perspective that national music is a structural rather than chronological variance between modern and traditional music. National music modernisation implies the specialisation of national music while modernity implies the pursuit of a professional national music quality [42]. Modernisation entails significant, but not dominant, Western influences that seek an independent path to adapt specific elements from the West [41].

RQ1b: What opportunities does platformisation bring to Chinese national music?

Some Chinese scholars argue that Chinese national music is not yet ready to be integrated with platformisation [43]. The Chinese national music industry is clearly trapped by a traditional model that has been developed over thousands of years, and its inherent development model has severely hindered the enhancement of the industry. Nevertheless, with the development of national music and the Chinese media platforms, Chinese national music has begun to adapt to society and the masses. Taking national instrumental music

as an example, on March 2, 2018, the large-scale original Chinese classical music competition programme '*Guoyue Dadian*' (国乐大典), jointly produced by China Guangdong TV and Shanxi TV, premiered and the content of the programme *'Guoyue Dadian'* revolves around the theme of Chinese national instrumental music. The programme content and video clips are shared simultaneously on media platforms such as Douyin, Sina Weibo, Bilibili and others.

In addition to the TV programme *Guoyue Dadian,* various media platforms have also launched national instrumental music related programmes and live broadcasts. For example, famous performers from the Central National Orchestra have live streamed Chinese instrumental music on the "Momo Live" platform and some social media platforms, which has received a great response [44]. The Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China and professional colleges and universities jointly launched the CCTV Instrumental Competition in 2019, which represents the highest level of Chinese national instrumental music, and which is a top-level event of a highly technical and scholarly nature that has mobilised almost all the resources of today's Chinese national instrumental music field [45]. Kugou Music, in collaboration with Guangdong TV's "Guoyue Dadian", has launched "Guoyue Masterclass", which invites artists into the live streaming room to have close contact and interaction with netizens, and performs instrumental performances as well as giving in-depth presentations on relevant Chinese national music knowledge [46]. From these examples, we can see that although the platformisation of Chinese national music relies on virtual media platforms, the professionalism of the performers and the attention of the platforms help Chinese national music keep its authenticity.

With continuous exploration, Chinese national music has begun to break with the inherent mode of communication and try out new models in combination with platforms that not only preserve the tradition but also meet the needs of society and the masses. The internet and social media have offered a wider space and platform for Chinese national music transmission. Platformisation has expanded the dissemination channels of Chinese national music, facilitated its recording and reproduction, and stimulated the continuance and innovation of Chinese national music culture. Yang and Zheng [38] published an article on Chinese national music and its psychological mechanisms in a leading Chinese journal. They used a quantitative approach combining a literature review, empirical research and an online survey to explore the effects of music on emotional and psychological well-being. Notably, through data analysis, they identified that the most important channels for people to listen to Chinese national music are the major music streaming platforms, followed by passive listening in public places while purchasing compact discs and attending concerts are less frequently used. This suggests that platforms such as the internet or short videos can raise the profile of Chinese national music and that people tend to choose more convenient ways of listening in the internet era to save time, costs, and resources.

The emergence of the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the advantages of platformisation. During the pandemic, in order to effectively prevent the spread of the virus, the world carried out intense and orderly preventive and control measures. All performances in the offline performing arts market were cancelled, and all performances under review were cancelled, and the entire offline market was shut down for up to half a year. The music industry turned to using social media as an alternative to in-person concerts: BLACKPINK postponed 'YG Palm Stage - 2020 BLACKPINK: The Show', originally scheduled for December 27, 2020, and instead held it on January 31, 2021 and streamed live on their YouTube channel [47]. The Kennedy Center also aggressively expanding its online performance and screening business with the launch of Digital Stage+, a digital playback platform offering original programming to donors, members and paid subscribers [48]. Several Chinese orchestras responded quickly with a series of interactive online music live streaming and online concerts. In February 2020, the Shanghai National Orchestra held an online interactive live streaming of Chinese national music through Sina Weibo, One Live APP and other platforms; and the Suzhou National Orchestra also held an online concert with the theme of "My Motherland" at the end of February. The pandemic has made platformisation a trend, not only because of the safe distance it gives people but also because it fits into the broader context of sustainable development.

RQ2a: What areas are the focus for research on platformisation and social media?

Helmond, who posited a historical stance on the change from social networking sites to online media platforms, defines the term platformisation as the advent of platforms given the dominant social network infrastructure and economic model and the implications of social media platforms expansion into other virtual spaces. In other words, platformisation impliments social media platform extension to other network parts and their efforts to platformise external network data [49]. As platformisation research has evolved, studies related to social media platforms and platformisation have focused on the fields of economics, media studies and culture [7–14, 18,33,35,50].

The platform and social media ability to integrate with multiple disciplines has substantially impacted society and culture. The term "platform society" emphasises that platforms are an integral part of society, in which conflicts of interest currently exist at all levels. A platform society supports a social life within which socio-economic flows are highly regulated by a global ecosystem of algorithm- and data-driven digital avenues. Van Dijck et al. [51] presented the ideas underpinning platform ecosystems and communities. The platform ecosystem is a series of digital platforms governed by a particular set of mechanisms underlying daily practices that alter social organisation and order (p:3). Kaye et al. [31] proposed the concept of parallel platformisation to explain ByteDance's survival strategy in two opposing platform ecosystems in China (Douyin) and abroad (TikTok). It was found that Douyin's governance is influenced by Chinese platform regulatory forces, while TikTok's platform governance is influenced by numerous international regulatory forces. However, de Kloet et al. [17] has a different view, arguing that platform society does not exist, and is understood as a "controversial concept".

Past literature highlighted various views and issues involving platformisation and culture. The economic and infrastructural extensions of online platforms permeate the network, influencing the production, distribution, and circulation of cultural content [7]. As a process that essentially impacts or undermines cultural producers and their created content, platformisation underscores the re-organisation of cultural production and circulation, which renders cultural products as contingent [52]. The platforms subsequently depend on actors elsewhere as platformisation has resulted in cultural producers' high reliance on digital avenues [7,53]. Cultural content producers rely on platform goals, functions, and business models while their products subsequently depend on them. The

implications of platforms on cultural communication [35] includes the inextricable cultural producer-platform link, which is known as 'platform dependency'.

With the introduction of social media, the platformisation of cultural production has developed. Cunningham and Craig [30] used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods centred on creators to illustrate industry and governance issues in social media entertainment (SME), with an emphasis on the platformisation of cultural production. Lin and de Kloet [11] used qualitative research methods, including ethnographic observation and interviews, to examine the platformisation of the creative class in China and the role of Kuaishou (a short-form video platform in China) in digital cultural production. They found that the platformisation of cultural production on China's Kuaishou aligns with China's goal of restructuring its economy by creating opportunities for marginalised individuals to become 'unlikely to be' creative workers. Platformisation has led to the expansion of online platforms in terms of economy, government and infrastructure to penetrate the network and application ecosystems, which in turn has had a substantial impact on the operations of the cultural industry.

The choice of social media platforms and messages affects consumer behaviour. Khan et al. [32] used a qualitative approach to gain insights into the information processing of music in social media advertisements and its impact on young consumers' decision-making. The results show that music used in adverts on social media platforms affects young consumers' purchasing decisions. Kim et al. [54] studied the impact of gift-type and message-type on B2C (business-to-consumer) gift-giving on different social media platforms (Snapchat and Instagram). The study found that material gifts were more effective on Snapchat, while experiential gifts were more effective on Instagram. Achen et al. [55] explored the impact of three platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and X [Twitter]) and three message themes (sales, informational, and relationship building) on six consumer engagement behaviours (comment, like, search, share, talk about, and purchase). Overall, consumers use different social media platforms for different reasons and in different ways.

RQ2b: What is the impact of platformisation and social media platforms on the music scene?

Before the advent of the internet, traditional media (live performances, tapes, records, radio, etc.) were the main form of music dissemination. Turk [56] used qualitative research methods and historical analyses to explore the changes in traditional instrumental music during the two World Wars, with a focus on the development of audio media such as gramophone records and radio. It is concluded that the development of audio media such as gramophone records and radio during the two World Wars had a significant impact on the performance and popularisation of traditional instrumental music in Slovenia. The development of recording equipment (records, tapes) made it possible to record and play music on gramophone records, and radio fulfilled the need to participate in live performances of music remotely from home. However, he suggests that the mass production of music records and music tapes is likely to cause music to lose its uniqueness as all records and tapes are identical. Jin and Oh [57] analyse the impact of free streaming on CDs and live concert consumption, and they find that there is a relatively large impact on CDs or concert consumption if consumers make greater use of free streaming. While live performances were the only way to hear music in the 19th century, with the growth of social media and platformisation, the music heard now is more diverse than ever before, and both live, broadcast and recorded music can be heard in a virtually unlimited range of contexts [2]. Notably, social media has a dual role [58] in that it not only serves as a platform where information and opinions about music can be shared but also the music itself.

The technological nature of music has transformed song into a platformisation phenomenon [14,29], while music, one of the first cultural domains in which platforms started, has played a role in restructuring assets and practices in a more integrative way [7,8,59, 60]. Abidin and Lee [8] use a mixed-methods approach, including archival news research, document analysis, content analysis, and digital ethnography to explore how the short-video platform TikTok has made inroads into the Korean market with K-pop. They demonstrate the theory of 'platformed glocalisation', arguing that the platformisation of K-pop has led to the homogenisation of K-pop performances in Korea. Like Abidin et al., Park et al. [12] use K-pop as a study object, with the difference that they chose Korean domestic platforms: Kakao and NAVER. They argue that platforms have become the main drivers of K-pop's global expansion, and that Korean platforms see K-pop production as a tool to generate new revenues and penetrate the global market. Platforms have had a ubiquitous impact on local cultures and practices by organising existing ecosystems of cultural production and exchange networks according to the characteristics of the platform.

The platformisation of the cultural industry is particularly important for musicians. Lal et al. [33] used qualitative methods such as literature review and analysis of existing scholarship to explore the impact of platformisation on the Indian music industry. They identify that platformisation may strengthen the dominance of powerful local record labels, thereby negatively impacting musicians. However, platformisation has also accelerated the demand for copyright reform, which may benefit some musicians. Nwagwu and Akintoye [36] used a multi-case qualitative method study to examine how emerging musicians utilise social media to achieve exposure for their music and entertainment activities by using a "snowball" approach to a sample of 20 emerging musicians in Ibadan and Lagos, Nigeria. Emerging musicians use social media platforms to express themselves, connect with other musicians and expand their audience. The results demonstrate that social media and new technologies provide more opportunities for emerging musicians, but also increase competition. Thus, platformisation has brought both benefits and potential challenges to some music industries.

RQ3a: What is the history of the development of the Chinese wanghong phenomenon?

The internet is a catalyst for the popularity of wanghong [61]. Specifically, Sina Weibo has become a premier platform to foster the wanghong economy [19] given the popularity of smartphones with the number of mobile internet users in China reflecting 10.67 billion in 2022 [62]. Some of the Chinese social media platforms that currently surpass YouTube, Facebook, and X (Twitter) have instigated a fresh bout of global wanghong wars, not unlike TikTok [63]. China's wanghong industry has significant cultural and economic implications, and its development is closely linked to the digital platform ecosystem and the rise of social media entertainment in China [28]. As a new type of celebrity and a media phenomenon, wanghong has evolved from a mere 'person' to a social and economic phenomenon in the course of continuous development. Therefore, the study of wanghong helps to understand contemporary culture comprehensively.

In China, the earliest *wangluo mingren* examples can be traced back to Furong Sister (Lotus Sister) in the late 1990s when online Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) were the primary platform for public online discussion. The utilisation of blogs became obsolete in the late 2000s with micro-blogging avenues such as Sina Weibo, Tencent Weibo, Baidu Tieba, and Douban becoming major interactive platforms. This shift was complemented by the popularity of mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets and the 3G network connectivity rollout across most local regions for users to sustainably engage with social media. As a term that emerged in 2012 over its extended form of *wangluo hongren*, wanghong could be commonly seen in 2014 following the increase of online Chinese celebrities. Notwithstanding, the use of the term drastically rose towards the end of 2015, hence establishing wanghong as a social phenomenon [64].

For the *wanghong* economic ecosystem, the key to wanghong lies in its ability to transform fans into consumers [23]. The wanghong economy is essentially an economic form and business model, a kind of purposeful and targeted precision marketing, which mainly refers to the wanghong itself or the manipulator behind it. Wanghong uses its public influence and popularity to adopt certain real-isation channels to obtain economic benefits, and its scope can be extended to the whole industrial chain with wanghong as the core [37]. As a phenomenon of popular culture in the internet era, the symbol of wanghong has become a key factor in the evolution of wanghong from a cultural phenomenon to an economic behaviour, and wanghong's personal charisma and taste has become an object of consumption.

The online celebrity economy is embedded in a larger ecosystem that includes e-commerce and media platforms. For example, Han [24], who analysed women's participation in different dimensions of the 'wanghong economy' using documentary analysis combined with digital ethnography, found that China's wanghong economy has developed a distinctive platform-based model of commoditi-sation, including virtual gifts, tipping, advertisements and, increasingly, e-commerce. Fung et al. [22] identified that media platforms provide an environment for wanghong to gain access to various forms of capital, including economic, social, symbolic and cultural capital. The wanghong economy connects e-commerce and promotes traditional culture, but there is less literature on Chinese national music, wanghong and the wanghong economy. The opportunities and impacts of the wanghong economy on Chinese national music cannot be explored through the literature review, thus this provides a research gap for future studies.

RQ3b: What impact has the wanghong phenomenon had on Chinese national music?

There are two sides to everything, and the wanghong phenomenon is no exception. Wanghong has a degree of influence and has a leading role in the Chinese music culture. In the field of music culture, Lv [65], summarised and analysed the current wanghong music distribution attributes and intricacies with proposed optimisation methods. Arguably, music is no longer the exclusive domain of professional musicians as even ordinary individuals at the grassroots level can create musical works to be digitally shared and pro-moted and summarise the wanghong music dissemination characteristics and complexities. In the field of Chinese national music, the influence of wanghong attracts people to pay attention to national music, drawing the attention of users through performance. On live broadcasts and PK battles (in China, it is referred as player knock out), they talk about the history of national music, the current situation and discuss the future, thus teaching the audience about aspects of national music they have not been exposed to. This in-creases interest through performance, singing and playing, and even motivates the audience to learn national music in their personal life.

The wanghong epithet has witnessed a drastic shift in the local internalisation of online celebrities during the mid-2010s, which transitioned from merely being 'red' (popular) online to a flourishing profession that is both positively and negatively acknowledged. The primary moral criticism of internet celebrities in China concerns (quasi-)pornographic content. For example, wanghong lian (wanghong face) is a derogatory term that typically describes a female Asian face that undergoes cosmetic surgery, stylised make-up, and camera filters to attain a specific beauty standard [66]. Douyin/TikTok videos show female wanghong wearing clothes that expose sexy parts of their bodies and making seductive poses to attract men's attention, a behaviour that sexualises the image of women [27]. At the same time is the wanghong phenomenon having a positive impact on national music? It is hard to say. Some netizens are now wearing revealing clothes and performing suggestively in order to attract the audience's attention. Some people who know little about national music may think that it is vulgar after watching the performance, which is a huge blow to national music. Some people, however, believe that vulgar performances do not have a negative impact on national music, and they believe that every act has its value, and as long as it is not illegal, it is justified. This issue still needs to be analysed with actual cases, and it will belong to the scope of future research.

4. Conclusion

Platformisation undeniably necessitates network development. Current research is incorporating platformisation with economy, culture, media, sociology, and politics as primary study directions and proposes several frameworks and suggestions for a robust theoretical foundation and novel domains in the future. The advent of platformisation has significantly impacted the cultural industry operations, which extends culture from one social media platform to other parts of the internet and social media platforms. Such expansion indicates social media as a transit point where creators post their creations on digital platforms to be redirected to other avenues through social media platformisation, which substantially affects cultural exchanges and personal communication. National music has also been recently platformised from live performances and recording techniques pre-internet to the normalcy of the internet where music is uploaded to social media platforms through mobile phones and computer devices regardless of time and space. This transition substantially conserves and develops the music culture, particularly Chinese national music, whose progress has been constrained. Wanghong has also facilitated the establishment of Chinese national music. As featured artists gain online followers, they in turn are attracted to the cultural production of Chinese national music owing to their performance, thus stimulating interest in learning, comprehending, and distributing Chinese national music.

Undeniably, adverse performance reviews by individuals who allegedly seek to conserve national music and culture would leave an unfavourable impression (from elegance to vulgarity) on the audience. This research outlined platformisation and Chinese national music as key study points and assessed them in association with social media and wanghong. Based on the empirical outcomes, most local and global platformisation emphasises cultural, economic, legal, and political dimensions with studies on music platformisation remaining scarce. Furthermore, scholars on Chinese national music primarily emphasise the Chinese setting as the music is indigenous to Chinese culture with little research on a global scale. Research involving the national music in China is mainly associated with topics on education and teaching, music performance, musicology, and heritage and development with very few works integrating the internet with national music. With regards to wanghong, researchers have collectively focused their research on economic, cultural and social elements with a paucity of studies on music wanghong. In addressing the aforementioned knowledge gaps, platformisation music, the internet-national music combination, and the wanghong of national music would benefit from further examination through a systematic study of platformisation, social media, and Chinese national music. This research would help to determine the implications of a series of changes and phenomena resulting from platformisation of Chinese national music.

Data availability statement

Data associated with this study is available online through the Scopus, Web of Science and China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) Database.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Connie Keh-Nie Lim: Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Methodology, Investigation, Conceptualization. **Mingchen Zhang:** Writing – original draft, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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