

# Analysis of the Current Situation of Music Education in Primary and Secondary Schools in the Perspective of Aesthetic Education

Xuting Jin\*

*China University of Geosciences (Wuhan), Wuhan 430074, China*

---

## Abstract

Aesthetic education in school is an important carrier to lead students to establish correct national outlook, cultural outlook and values, and to insist on the “five education” of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics and labor, which has the functions of establishing morality, cultural inheritance, and enriching the heart and mind. In the current social environment, the importance of aesthetic education is becoming more and more prominent. Through the research method of systematic literature review, this study focuses on the current situation and development of music education in primary and secondary schools under the perspective of aesthetic education by selecting relevant high-quality literature, aiming to provide a solid theoretical foundation and practical guidance for the subsequent development of music education in China, to promote the in-depth fusion of aesthetic education and music education, and to truly realize the goal of “educating people with beauty”. The aim is to provide a solid theoretical basis and practical guidance for the subsequent development of music education in China, promote the deep integration of aesthetic education and music education, and truly realize the goal of “educating people with beauty”.

## Keywords

aesthetic education, music education, primary and secondary schools, the integration of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labor education, urban-rural differences

---

## 1. Introduction

This literature review systematically analyzes the current situation of music education in primary and secondary schools under the perspective of aesthetic education, and analyzes its internal contradictions and development path. In recent years, with the promulgation and implementation of the Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving the Work of Aesthetic Education in Schools in the New Era, the status of aesthetic education in basic education has been significantly upgraded, and music education, as an important content of aesthetic education, has gradually become the center of attention of the academic community in terms of its value orientation and path of practice (Guo & Nie, 2022). This paper takes the analysis of the background of today's era as the entry point, combines the multiple perspectives of the aesthetic education system, and systematically combs through the developmental status of music education in primary and secondary schools, aiming to reveal its intrinsic developmental potential and future transformation direction. As the current music education policy advocates the goal of “educating people through beauty”, there are still contradictions (Guo & Zhang, 2024), and the cognitive gap of the education

subject on the connotation of aesthetic education will also have a certain effect on the efficacy of educating people (Liu & Cao, 2024). Therefore, it is very necessary to systematically sort out the current situation of the development of music education in primary and secondary schools.

In terms of aesthetic education theory construction, previous studies have focused on three main paths: first, explanations of the historical evolution and theory construction of aesthetic education (Xie, 2024), revealing that changes in music education and aesthetic education are mutually beneficial and symbiotic; second, explorations of the functions and connotations of music aesthetic education (Chen, 2016; Jin, 2021), emphasizing the unique role of perceptual experience in shaping students' personalities; and third, analyses of the implementation dilemma of aesthetic education policy based on practice (Cui, 2024; Wu, 2015) while focusing on the impact of the differences between urban and rural areas on education equity. The above research results provide strong guarantees for the writing of this research review and serve as an important reference for this study.

Although many studies have investigated the aesthetic education function of music education from different dimensions, for example, in terms of curriculum standards (Bai, 2022; Xu et al., 2024), teaching strategies (Xu, 2021; Yang, 2020) and cultural inheritance (R. Chen, 2023), the existing results are still fragmented, and investigations on the relationships among policy orientation, educational practices, and academic research as a whole are lacking. Moreover, most published studies have emphasized single-dimensional analysis, leaving certain research gaps. In particular, against the background of the current hotspot of “the integration of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labor education”, a systematic theoretical explanation for the function of music education has not yet been formed (Feng & Zhou, 2024; Zhang & Liu, 2022). There is still a gap between the status of current research and the positioning of aesthetic education in the new era, and there is an urgent need to achieve theoretical breakthroughs through an interdisciplinary perspective.

Therefore, a multi-faceted and systematic integration of music education in primary and secondary schools under the perspective of aesthetic education is very necessary. By combing through 58 Peking University core literatures (excluding repeated citations) over the past decade, this paper clearly shows the historical evolution of aesthetic education policies, the multiple interpretations of music education functions, and the dilemmas in curriculum implementation, verifying the complex status quo of aesthetic education in empowerment and practice (Bai, 2022; Guo & Zhang, 2024). The study not only ensures the accuracy of the literature review, but also reveals two key gaps in music education today: first, the difference between urban and rural music education (Wu, 2015; Z. Zhang, 2024); Second, the dilemma of “the integration of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labor education” concept in the implementation process (Liu, 2024; Lu, 2022). By integrating and analyzing the series of literature, it not only helps the evolution of the theory of aesthetic education from “value-led” to “practice-led”, but also helps to clarify the “policy”, “curriculum” and ‘classroom’, providing interdisciplinary solutions to the lack of resources for rural aesthetic education and optimizing the evaluation mechanism of aesthetic education, with theoretical innovation value and practical significance (Liu & Yin, 2023; Wang, 2021; J. Zhang, 2024).

## 2. Methods

This research review utilizes the research method of comprehensive literature review, combining systematic literature analysis with narrative literature research, and closely focuses on the core themes of “aesthetic education”, “music education”, “primary and secondary music education” and “development of music education under the perspective of aesthetic education”, “the development of aesthetic education”, “the development of music education under the perspective of aesthetic education” and “the development of primary and secondary school music education under the perspective of aesthetic education” and other core themes to carry out in-depth inquiry. In the process of literature collection, we mainly relied on the two major databases of “China Knowledge Network (CNKI)” and “Wipro” to conduct the search. The time span of the application papers is from 2015 to the present, to ensure that the acquired literature can reflect the latest research dynamics and development trends in this field. Meanwhile, in order to ensure the quality of the literature, the journal articles in this literature review are all from the core journals of Peking University,

which provide solid academic support for this study. It should be noted that the scope of this literature review only covers the journal literature, and does not include the book literature for the time being.

This study combines “the current situation of aesthetic education”, “the historical evolution of aesthetic education”, “the function of music education”, “the concept of music education”, “music teaching mode”, “current situation of music education in primary and secondary schools”, “curriculum optimization path”, “curriculum implementation dilemma” and a series of keywords are combined and screened, and effective positioning is carried out from a large number of literatures, and a total of 58 effective literatures are finally included (excluding repeated citation of literatures). It provides a strong orientation and effective support for an in-depth understanding of national as well as local aesthetic and music education policies. At the same time, this literature review comprehensively includes the three aspects of policy, theory and practice, which provides a strong guarantee for the subsequent research in terms of the quality and quantity of literature.

In choosing the perspectives of the study, the study takes the three dimensions of “the development of aesthetic education”, “the development of music education in the context of aesthetic education”, and “the development of primary and secondary music education in the context of aesthetic education” as the entry points. The three dimensions serve as the entry point, focusing highly on the organic combination of music education and aesthetic education rather than only on one of the individual areas. The scope of the study is broad, comprehensive, systematic and forward-looking. At the same time, by analyzing the effective literature in depth, it can provide a solid theoretical foundation and practical guidance for the subsequent development of music education in China, promote the deep integration of aesthetic education and music education, and thus improve the comprehensive quality of primary and secondary school students.

### **3. Analysis of the Current Situation of Music Education in Primary and Secondary Schools in the Perspective of Aesthetic Education**

#### **3.1 Development of Aesthetic Education**

##### **3.1.1 Historical Evolution and Policy Support**

The historical evolution of the aesthetic education policy has always been in line with the national education strategy. From Cai Yuanpei's idea of “the light of aesthetic education paves the way for entrepreneurship” (Xu, 2019), to the introduction of the Circular of the Ministry of Education on the Comprehensive Implementation of the Action of Immersing Aesthetic Education in Schools in 2023, the historical status of aesthetic education has always been gradually improved, and the policy text presents a clear stage-by-stage characteristics.

Aesthetic education was proposed in 1951 at the First National Conference on Secondary Education, and it was first included in national education policy as an important dimension of comprehensive development. Early policies on aesthetic education focused on framework building and mostly remained at the theoretical level, such as the formulation of the Report on the Guidelines for the Comprehensive Development of Education in 1955, which specifically spelled out the general function of aesthetic education, i.e., that political and ideological education could be well carried out in aesthetic education. After the reform and opening up, aesthetic education ushered in a new stage of development; in 1978, Deng Xiaoping, at the National Education Work Conference, positioned the quality standard for cultivating talents as “moral, intellectual, and physical education are all developed, so that they can become socialist-minded and educated laborers”; in 1979, the vice-minister of education, Zhang Chengxian, put forward the principle of “moral, intellectual, and physical education”. In 1979, Vice Minister of Education Zhang Chengxian proposed that “moral, intellectual, and physical education all include aesthetic education,” and in 1980, Zhu Guangqian and others sent a letter to the Ministry of Education requesting that aesthetic education be restored to an independent status. 1986, the “Report on the Seventh Five-Year Plan” and the “Law of the People's Republic of China on Compulsory Education” and other documents explicitly stated that schools should strengthen “moral, intellectual, and physical education” as well as “physical education. The policy of “all-round development of morality, intellect, physique and aesthetics” was clearly stated.

After entering the 21st century, aesthetic education has gained development in policy adjustment and consolidation. In 2000, Jiang Zemin's "Talk on Education" pointed out that enabling young students to develop morally, intellectually, physically, and aesthetically in an all-round manner was a major issue related to the direction of education in China, and laid down the status of aesthetic education in our country. In 2012, the report of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) for the first time took aesthetic education as an important dimension in realizing the fundamental task of education, which is to "establish morality and educate people", and provided guidelines for the development of aesthetic education. In 2015, as the first year of the reform of aesthetic education in schools, the "Improvement Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving the Work of Aesthetic Education in Schools" was introduced to establish the legal status of aesthetic education for the first time, and to clarify the relationship between "morality, intellectuality, physical fitness, and aesthetics" which are mutually complementary and promote each other, and the introduction of this opinion has an important leading role in deepening the reform of aesthetic education in our country (Li, 2019), and thus, aesthetic education has been raised to the level of the times. After 2020, there has been another major breakthrough in the innovation of aesthetic education policy. The Art Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022 Edition) explicitly states that the art curriculum at the compulsory education level focuses on aesthetic education and cultivates students' ability to feel, appreciate and create beauty (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2022). In addition, China Education Modernization 2035 and the Implementation Plan for Accelerating the Modernization of Education (2018-2022) emphasize "comprehensively strengthening and improving aesthetic education in schools" as an important way to implement the fundamental task of building moral character and enhancing comprehensive quality, pointing out that aesthetic education plays an irreplaceable role in enhancing students' aesthetic and humanistic qualities and promoting their comprehensive development, which provides policy support and direction guidance for the development of aesthetic education in the new era.

### 3.1.2 Theory Construction

Due to the different cultural environments in different regions and the different concepts of aesthetic education in different schools, it is urgent to carry out the organic integration of music education and aesthetic education. With the gradual progress and depth of the new curriculum reform, music education in primary and secondary schools should take into account both "local culture" and "global culture", enhance cultural self-awareness, and promote the development of aesthetic education (Chen, 2022; Zhu, 2023). On the other hand, we should constantly break traditional malpractices, update educational concepts, and keep pace with time to ensure the continuous development of music aesthetic education. For example, body-participating music education (Ye, 2020) and beauty-creating music education (Chen, 2016) promote the transformation of students from "receiving beauty" to "producers of beauty". In addition, interdisciplinary integration has gradually become a hot topic in the present era, which can enhance students' aesthetic ability in music and permeate their outlook on life and values in a subtle way. Chen Rui points out that there is still a misalignment of the goals of aesthetic education in traditional Chinese music education, and calls for the creation of a teaching style based on cultural context restoration (R. Chen, 2023). In contrast, Li Haiyang suggested that standardized assessment neglects the main aesthetic value of aesthetic education, and an evaluation standard system with the development of aesthetic ability as the core should be created (Li, 2016).

From this, we can see that at this stage, the study of aesthetic education has shown three changes: first, it has changed from "professional music education" to "aesthetic education for all", taking music education as a product to beautify people's aesthetic taste. The second is to shift from "Western-centered" to "Chinese culture as the main body", and to create China's own discourse on music education under the coexistence of various cultures. The third is to gradually shift from "aesthetic education" to "creative aesthetic practice", as simple aesthetic appreciation can no longer meet the demand for aesthetic education in the new era, and creative music practice needs to be strengthened to enhance citizens' aesthetic literacy.

### **3.2 The Development of Music Education from the Perspective of Aesthetic Education**

#### **3.2.1 Educational Function—Multiple Interpretations of the Functions of Aesthetic Education**

##### **(1) Ontological Function**

Research has found that the ontological function of music education is the awakening of sensual experience and the construction of aesthetic cognition, the core of which is to enrich students' aesthetic experience in order to achieve the current aesthetic education goal of “educating people with beauty and beautifying them”. Specifically, music education is based on students' aesthetic experience and focuses on cultivating students' ability to perceive, understand and create beauty (Liu & Cao, 2024; H. Wang, 2024). This concept is highly compatible with the core literacy goals of the new standards, which also emphasize the overall development of students through the three dimensions of aesthetic perception, artistic expression and cultural understanding (Xie, 2024; Yu et al., 2023).

##### **(2) Derivative Functions**

Music education has a significant effect on students' physical and mental development and ideological formation. It is mainly manifested that music education can promote students' physical and mental health development, improve their aesthetic and emotional expression ability, help them better perceive and understand beauty, and form their own unique aesthetic standards (Bai, 2022; Li & Wen, 2020; Xu, 2021). At the same time, red music resources such as local opera and folk music are integrated into classroom teaching to enhance students' sense of cultural identity, make them deeply understand the historical background of the revolutionary period and the difficult conditions at that time, and then inspire them to aspire to a better life in the new era (Shen, 2023; Zhang & Abudukeyoumu, 2024).

The ideological and political function of music education has also gradually become a new development direction of the current mind. Some red music works, such as the Yellow River Cantata, have strong hidden ideological and political penetration, and their emotional infectivity even exceeds the traditional didactic mode (Xia, 2024). Scholar Yan Hong also verified through teaching experiments that the integration of music and ideology and politics can promote the synergistic development of the disciplines, build an interdisciplinary curriculum of the model of ideological and political education, and provide a strong support for improving the teaching level of music and ideological and political education disciplines, and enhancing the sense of social responsibility of primary and secondary school students (H. Yan, 2021).

#### **3.2.2 Educational Concept - Multiple Development of Aesthetic Connotation**

In ancient times, the concept of “music to harmonize with feelings” was put forward in the thought of pre-Qin rites and music, which emphasized the aesthetic concept of “unity of heaven and mankind”, which provides a profound cultural reference for modern music curriculum design, and also coincides with the core goal of “educating people with beauty” in contemporary music education (Y. Q. Wang, 2024; Xie, 2024).

In today's era, in order to realize the core goal of “educating people through beauty” in music education, many scholars are gradually developing new teaching methods to enhance the effectiveness of aesthetic education. With the continuous development of educational theories, contextualized teaching method has gradually received widespread attention. Scholars such as Xie Jiaxing, Li Haiyang and Zhang Qi have pointed out that contextualized teaching plays an important role in cultivating students' aesthetic ability. Living scenes, such as festival music and environmental music, can significantly improve students' musical creativity (Li, 2016). Meanwhile, the educational model of interdisciplinary integration has brought a brand new breakthrough in music education and teaching. Researchers such as Guo Shengjian and Zhang Junling believe that combining music with other disciplines can deepen students' sense of cultural identity and understanding. In addition, the introduction of intelligent technology has opened up new possibilities for music education teaching, which can improve the overall teaching efficiency and student participation, and in the future, through the development of AI technology, it can even realize personalized and targeted teaching (Du & Li, 2024; Guo, 2020). Therefore, the use of contextualized teaching, interdisciplinary integration, and the empowerment of intelligent technology can enable educators to more effectively help students better perceive, understand, and create beauty in the education and teaching process.

### 3.2.3 Teaching Mode-Five Education Integration and Multi-dimensional Innovation

As the core concept of music education in the new era, the theoretical system of “the integration of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labor education” is characterized by multiple dimensions. Zhang Qi and other scholars suggest that music education needs to break through the disciplinary barriers, play the important role of “educating morality and wisdom through beauty”, and promote the synergistic development of aesthetic education with moral and intellectual education (Zhang & Liu, 2022), on this concept, teachers can start from the teaching measures, through the penetration of art aesthetics, moral education and intellectual education complementary aspects of the organic integration of the five education, and promote the synergistic development of moral education and aesthetic education (Feng & Zhou, 2024). However, with the introduction of the “double-decrease” policy, school music education faces many challenges and opportunities. According to the research, educators can expand the implementation carriers, enrich the teaching content, and innovate the teaching methods, so as to build a nurturing mechanism from classroom teaching, extracurricular activities, campus culture, and art performances, so as to realize the goals of the teaching reform, which are to strengthen the musical performance, deepen the aesthetic experience, and stimulate the creative practice (Guo & Nie, 2022).

Literature analysis shows that music can be fully integrated with other education in terms of interdisciplinary teaching. For example, the “music + literature, history and philosophy” framework emphasizes the discipline of music as the leading subject, is based on core literacy, and integrates the curriculum, teaching place, content and organizational management, so as to promote the comprehensive development of students in compulsory education for the entire school cycle (Tang, 2024). At the same time, not only limited to the liberal arts, the integration of math teaching and music rhythm training can also significantly improve students' ability to transfer and apply knowledge (Wu, 2024).

As for the evaluation mechanism, there are still some deficiencies in the current evaluation mechanism of music education. For example, primary and secondary schools and teachers should establish a correct outlook on music education, music teachers should focus on improving their own professional level and comprehensive ability, adhere to the concept of taking the students as the main body, and improve the evaluation mechanism to ensure the comprehensive development of the students (X. F. Chen, 2023). Not only that, schools can also incorporate the effectiveness of students' music learning into the teacher function assessment of classroom teachers or other classroom teachers, so as to raise the importance of music teaching in the whole discipline.

Although aesthetic education is developing well nowadays, there are still some difficulties in the process of integrating it with the other four education systems. For example, there are problems that need to be solved, such as the lack of awareness of aesthetic education, the lack of practice, and the dilemma of aesthetic education being “integrated but not compatible” with the other four education systems (Liu, 2024). For example, the teaching system of music theory is often superficial and lacks attention to the current state of teaching, which can lead to difficulties in integrating it with other disciplines, and interdisciplinary practice in music education is often only a formality (Yang & Tian, 2024). This requires educators to make a breakthrough through appropriate measures in order to realize the real breakthrough of music education in the integration of the five education systems.

## 3.3 Development of Primary and Secondary Music Education from the Perspective of Aesthetic Education

### 3.3.1 Aesthetic Education Connotations

#### (1) Aesthetic connotations of music education

According to the survey, the connotation of aesthetic education in primary and secondary music education has undergone a profound change, from the traditional “art skills training” to “aesthetic literacy training”. The connotation of aesthetic education in the new era not only includes aesthetic experience, but also involves cultural inheritance and personality improvement, through the teaching of specific music themes can effectively integrate the multiple goals of music education, so as to achieve the purpose of education and teaching. For example, the use of folk song teaching to promote students' national sentiment can enhance

students' artistic skills and cultural identity simultaneously. At the same time, the promotion of policy also plays a key role in the transformation of music education. The “2020 Opinions on the Work of Aesthetic Education in Schools in the New Era” clearly requires that primary and secondary school music classes should “cultivate students with beauty” and focus on the cultivation of students' aesthetic and humanistic qualities, which highlights the important position of music education in the overall development of students (The State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2020).

## (2) The Connotation of Ethnic Music Education in the Era

Literature analysis shows that folk music education plays an important role in strengthening the Chinese cultural identity of primary and secondary school students. The modern music curriculum should advocate the curriculum system of “ethnic music as the foundation” to enhance students' sense of identity with local culture (Chen, 2022). At the same time, allowing students to compare various ethnic cultures in the curriculum will enable them to better understand the diversity of ethnic cultures, enhance their sense of identity, pride and inheritance of Chinese culture, and form a correct worldview and values (Chen, 2021).

Although current music education has made remarkable progress at the policy and theoretical levels, many challenges remain at the practical level. For example, the current education system is still insufficient in recognizing the function of aesthetic education, and many schools still focus on the teaching of theoretical knowledge, neglecting the practical teaching link, resulting in a disconnect between theoretical teaching and practical teaching. The author believes that by deepening the theme-based teaching, strengthening ethnic music education and improving the evaluation mechanism and other paths, we can effectively promote the transformation of music education from skill cultivation to quality cultivation, and promote the overall development of students.

### 3.3.2 Current Situation of Urban-Rural Differences

The urban-rural differences in music education in primary and secondary schools are mainly reflected in the unequal distribution of resources and poor cultural adaptability. Firstly, rural primary and secondary schools have a significant shortage of hardware facilities, failing to provide sufficient musical instruments and music classrooms for local primary and secondary students. At the same time, the shortage of full-time music teachers is usually more than half, which has a significant impact on the quality of music education and teaching (Zhang, 2017). In addition, due to the relatively high turnover rate of teachers in rural primary and secondary schools, it is common for rural schools to adopt the mode of “main subject teacher substitution”, i.e., to use full-time main subject teachers to teach the aesthetic education courses, which is not only unable to meet the requirements of the existing policies, but also not conducive to the cultivation of musical literacy and aesthetic ability of the students (Chen et al., 2024). Secondly, rural schools have a strong local flavor, but the direct transfer of the teaching materials is prone to the problem of mismatch between the content of the teaching materials and the local culture, and it is difficult to match with the students' daily life experience (Yang, 2010). This can lead to local students not being able to understand the content of the existing materials and not being able to meet their interests and practical needs, thus affecting the effectiveness of music education in the local community.

In addition, there are some difficulties in the implementation of the policy in rural areas, whereas urban schools can basically guarantee the implementation of one music lesson per week, very few rural schools do so (Shi & Xu, 2021). This may be due to the low priority given to aesthetic education in rural schools, which has led to a gradual increase in the gap between urban and rural areas in aesthetic education.

### 3.3.3 Curriculum Implementation Dilemma and Optimization Path

According to the survey, the implementation of music curriculum in primary and secondary schools faces three major dilemmas, i.e., shortage of teachers, single curriculum resources, and outdated evaluation mechanisms. First, in terms of teachers, as in the case of rural music teachers in Shandong Province, most teachers have not received special training in aesthetic education, which leads to a stagnation in the quality of aesthetic education in schools, and is not conducive to the development of teachers' professionalism and the cultivation of students' musical literacy (Sang, 2017). At the same time, due to the limited professional capacity of teachers, they are unable to select appropriate teaching methods for the characteristics of students,

and the content and form of the classroom are relatively homogeneous, so many students are not interested in the content of the teaching. Secondly, in terms of curriculum resources, due to the singularity of curriculum resources, the phenomenon of “cultural hollowing out” is prone to occur, i.e., the local cultural characteristics of music education have been marginalized, and it is difficult for students to learn about and pass on their hometown's music culture through music courses (Wang, 2021). Scholar Yan Ran suggests that the destruction of ethnic music heritage is one of the major problems of current music education, and fewer and fewer local students are able to continue the study of native folk songs, which is not conducive to the heritage and development of ethnic music (Yan, 2022). Third, by exploring the existing evaluation mechanism, it can be found that the current evaluation mechanism is still mainly based on the assessment of singing skills, and does not focus on the development of students' aesthetic quality (Cao, 2023).

Therefore, in order to solve the dilemma, we can promote the integration of resources, curriculum reform and evaluation innovation in three aspects. In terms of resource integration, we can cooperate with rural schools through colleges and universities to build “native music workstations”, so that college teachers and students can go deep into the countryside and share their teacher strength, while realizing the integration of instrument donation and teacher training (Qin, 2021). In the course of curriculum reform, a “dual-track” curriculum design can be adopted, integrating national teaching materials with local resources in proportion, so that the content of the curriculum is more in line with the actual needs of students, close to the actual needs of students, and enhance the attractiveness of music education (Yang, 2020). At the same time, in the face of the evaluation system, an intelligent aesthetic education evaluation system can be developed to analyze students' emotional expression and collaborative ability in music activities through AI technology, to achieve a comprehensive and objective evaluation, and to realize the scientization of the evaluation system of music education (Z. Zhang, 2024).

#### 4. Discussion

This literature review has systematically analyzed the theoretical construction and practical transformation of music education in primary and secondary schools under the perspective of aesthetic education, with its core findings focusing on the promotion and evolution of the functions and policies of aesthetic education. It is found that music education has shifted from “teaching skills” to “cultivating literacy”, and its functions include aesthetic experience (Liu & Cao, 2024; H. Wang, 2024; Xie, 2024), cultural identity (Bai, 2022; Chen, 2022; J. Zhang, 2024) and ideological and political infiltration (Liu & Pan, 2023; Xia, 2024; H. Yan, 2021) and other objectives. Further development through innovative approaches such as “the integration of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labor education” (Feng & Zhou, 2024; Lu, 2022; R. Yan, 2021) and “digital intelligence empowerment” (Du & Li, 2024; Guo, 2020; Z. Zhang, 2024). On the policy front, the introduction of a number of policies, such as the Art Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022 Edition), have collectively pushed aesthetic education from marginalization to centrality, and the target of the country's aesthetic education has been gradually oriented towards all citizens.

However, this literature review is still limited. First, the research on the integration of the five types of education has focused mostly on the theoretical framework (Lu, 2022; R. Yan, 2021; Zhang & Liu, 2022), there is a lack of actual case studies, and the only cases are mostly limited to developed areas (Guo & Deng, 2019; Shi & Xu, 2021; Zhang, 2017) and have failed to conduct in-depth surveys on rural schools (Liu, 2024; Tan, 2016). Second, although existing evaluation systems have introduced the assistance of intelligent technology (Cao, 2023), the AI algorithm is not mature enough, which may lead to inaccurate evaluation results. In addition, the evaluation system faces problems such as uneven distribution of resources and strong technical thresholds, which are not conducive to the coordinated development of urban and rural areas.

Meanwhile, this review is of great significance to the development of aesthetic education in primary and secondary schools. At the theoretical level, this review clarifies the aesthetic connotation of aesthetic education and provides ideas for the design of music education programs (Yu et al., 2023). In practice, through urban–rural collaboration (Tan, 2016) and evaluation innovation (Cao, 2023; Guo, 2020; Z. Zhang, 2024), two aspects help with the fair distribution of urban and rural resources. However, the existing research on the nature of the music culture subject in primary and secondary schools is still weak and focuses only on



the surface of the music, and interdisciplinary exchanges need to be strengthened (Bai, 2022; R. Chen, 2023; Li & Wen, 2020).

There are also four shortcomings in this review. First, in terms of the scope of literature, only the Chinese literature (including core journals and policy texts) in mainland China is studied, and the results of studies in Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and international regions are not included; second, in terms of time span, articles after 2015 are studied, and earlier articles are not involved; third, in terms of methodology, the analysis of individual cases is not involved, and the understanding of the differences between urban and rural music education is not complete and in-depth enough; and fourth, this research synthesis relies mainly on quantitative analysis and does not fully incorporate qualitative research methods, such as the interview method and observation method. All of these limitations may affect the accuracy and generalizability of the findings, and more in-depth exploration should be conducted in these aspects in future research.

In future research, it should focus on the technological frontier and the cultural frontier for in-depth study. Focusing on the technological frontier, in-depth exploration of the path of AI to promote the development of aesthetic education, for example: through computing, identify the aesthetic preferences of individual students, and dynamically adjust the teaching methods and content; focusing on the cultural frontier, excavate the value of vernacular music in the music curriculum and promote the teaching of ethnic music, to promote the localization and diversification of music education. At the same time, cross-cultural comparative research can also be used to explore the commonalities and individuality of music education in different cultural contexts, so as to provide richer teaching resources and teaching methods for the teaching of music education in rural areas. In addition, it is also necessary to pay attention to the historical inheritance of music education, and commit to combining traditional cultural concepts with modern music education concepts, so as to realize the development of music education in inheritance.

In conclusion, this review systematically reveals the connotation of aesthetics in music education in primary and secondary schools, the evolution of policies and innovations in the logic of practice, and provides in-depth references for the policy makers and practitioners of aesthetics education. In the future, scholars need to focus on the two frontiers of technology and culture to promote the multifaceted development of aesthetic education and truly realize the goal of “educating people through beauty”.

## 5. Conclusions

This study systematically reveals the logic of transformation and practical innovation of music education in primary and secondary schools under the perspective of aesthetic education. First of all, according to the research, the function of music education has shifted from a single “skill transmission” to diversified “literacy cultivation”, which includes the goals of aesthetic experience, cultural identity and ideological penetration, and further promotes the development of music education through the modes of “integration” and “numerical and intellectual empowerment”. The development of music education has been further promoted through the modes of “the integration of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labor education” and “digital intelligence empowerment”. However, there is a certain gap between urban and rural music education in terms of resource distribution and cultural adaptation. At the same time, rural schools lack hardware facilities and teachers, and there is a disconnect between the content of music textbooks and the actual needs of students, which restricts the quality and fairness of music education. In addition, although the proposal of the national aesthetic education policy has elevated the status of aesthetic education in the country, there is still the problem of inconsistency between the aesthetic education policy and education and teaching in practice, which neglects the development of students' aesthetic quality.

Meanwhile, there are some commonalities and individualities in the study. In commonality, music education has always centered on the core goal of “educating people”, and both theoretical research and practical exploration have emphasized the comprehensive quality of students through music education. However, in terms of individuality, due to the differences in research perspectives, theoretical research focuses on the exploration of the functions of aesthetic education and the evolution of aesthetic education policies, while practical research pays more attention to whether the distribution of resources is balanced or not, and how to optimize the evaluation mechanism.

This study aims to provide in-depth reference for policy makers and educators to promote the development of aesthetic education for primary and secondary school students. In the future, the integration between technology and culture should be actively promoted, and the application of AI technology in music education should be explored in depth; at the same time, attention should be paid to excavating the value of vernacular music, promoting the localized and diversified development of music, and providing rich teaching resources and teaching methods for rural areas. In addition, it is also necessary to integrate traditional music culture into modern music education, so as to realize the development of music education in inheritance, and truly realize the goal of "educating people with beauty".

## References

- Bai, X. H. (2022). The connotation, function and realization of aesthetic education in music curriculum of primary and secondary schools in the new era. *Curriculum, Teaching Material and Method*, 42(4), 141-146. <https://doi.org/10.19877/j.cnki.kcjcf.2022.04.003>
- Cao, J. X. (2023). The development context of "evaluation recommendations" in the music curriculum standard for compulsory education and analysis of implementation path in new version. *China Examinations*, (1), 88-94.
- Chen, R. (2023). The practical dilemma and transformation of aesthetic education in traditional Chinese music education. *Journal of Nanjing University of the Arts (Music and Performance Edition)*, (6), 67-72.
- Chen, W. W. (2021). The contemporary connotation of world ethnic music education in primary and secondary schools. *Journal of Chinese Education*, (1), 90-91.
- Chen, X. F. (2023). Exploration of music education reform in primary and secondary schools under the new curriculum reform. *Journal of Chinese Education*, (S01), 28-30.
- Chen, Y. H. (2016). A critique of the criticism on aesthetic music education: Creative aesthetic music education. *Music Creation*, (6), 173-175.
- Chen, Z. H. (2022). Retrospect and analysis of the grand discussion on "music education with Chinese culture as the mother tongue". *Journal of Shandong Normal University (Social Science Edition)*, 67(3), 94-109. <https://doi.org/10.16456/j.cnki.1001-5973.2022.03.010>
- Chen, Z. P., Lu, Y. H., & Yan, R. N. (2024). Cultural representation, practical difficulties and educational approach of aesthetic education in rural areas. *Journal of Guangxi University for Nationalities (Philosophy and Social Science Edition)*, 46(5), 74-82.
- Cui, Y. (2024). Textual analysis and review of music education policies for primary and secondary schools in China. *Teaching and Management*, (36), 23-27.
- Du, T., & Li, Z. (2024). Research on the construction and development of aesthetic education model under the integration of digital intelligence in transportation universities in the new era. *Packaging Engineering*, 45(10), 430-440, 449.
- Feng, Y., & Zhou, J. (2024). Research on the integration strategy of five educations guided by school music teaching. *People's Music*, (1), 28-32.
- Guo, B., & Zhang, Q. (2024). The value orientation and realization path of "educating with aesthetics" in music curriculum standards. *Curriculum, Teaching Material and Method*, 44(3), 134-139. <https://doi.org/10.19877/j.cnki.kcjcf.2024.03.014>
- Guo, H. (2020). Creative transformation of excellent traditional Chinese culture education: An interview with Professor Liu Pei of China Conservatory of Music. *Journal of Educational Science of Hunan Normal University*, 19(5), 1-7, 25. <https://doi.org/10.19503/j.cnki.1671-6124.2020.05.001>
- Guo, S. J., & Deng, Q. (2019). Let art education return to its original purpose of "educating people with beauty". *Curriculum. Materials. Teaching methods*, 39(10), 90-97. <https://doi.org/10.19877/j.cnki.kcjcf.2019.10.014>

- Guo, S. J., & Nie, W. J. (2022). The "double reduction" and "double increase" of school music education. *People's Music*, (5), 36-39.
- Jin, S. Y. (2021). Study of aesthetic philosophy in music education. *Southern Cultural Forum*, (4), 59-62. <https://doi.org/10.14065/j.cnki.nfw.2021.04.012>
- Li, H. Y. (2016). Cultivating aesthetic ability and innovating music education methods. *Music Creation*, (5), 189-191.
- Li, R. Q. (2019). Study on the evolution of aesthetic education in China's education policies over the 70 years since the founding of the PRC. *Hubei Social Sciences*, (5), 155-161. <https://doi.org/10.13660/j.cnki.42-1112/c.015092>
- Li, Z. T., & Wen, J. (2020). Integration of five educations and the construction of a new education system in the new era. *China Educational Technology*, (3), 7-16.
- Liu, C., & Yin, A. Q. (2023). Comparative study and local inspiration of professional competence of primary and secondary school music teachers. *People's Music*, (7), 63-68.
- Liu, H., & Pan, Y. K. (2023). Implementation strategies for ideological and political education in primary and secondary school music curriculum. *Journal of Chinese Education*, (4), 107.
- Liu, S. Y. (2024). The value implication, practical difficulties and implementation path of aesthetic education curriculum in primary and secondary schools from the perspective of five educations integration. *Chinese S&T Journal Database (Full-text Edition) - Educational Science*, (9), 38-41.
- Liu, Y. X., & Cao, T. N. (2024). The dual construction and relationship transformation of aesthetic education and music aesthetics. *Journal of Nanjing University of the Arts (Music and Performance Edition)*, (4), 85-90, 220-221.
- Lu, W. Z. (2022). Theoretical construction and teaching application of evaluation index system under the background of five educations integration. *Modern Basic Education Research*, 46(2), 137-145.
- Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2022). *Art curriculum standards for compulsory education (2022 edition)*. Beijing Normal University Press.
- Qin, X. X. (2021). Innovation of music education in rural education in the new era. *Journal of Nuclear Agriculture*, 35(3), I0011.
- Sang, X. (2017). Research on enhancing core competencies of rural primary and secondary school music teachers in Shandong Province. *China Adult Education*, (24), 149-151.
- Shen, X. X. (2023). Exploration of music education function from the perspective of aesthetic education: Review of *Theoretical and Practical Research on Music Education*. *China Oils and Fats*, 48(7), 167.
- Shi, H., & Xu, C. S. (2021). Research on the development of aesthetic education in primary and secondary schools in Beijing. *Journal of Educational Science of Hunan Normal University*, 20(3), 30-38.
- Tan, Y. B. (2016). Study on the current situation and countermeasures of music education in ethnic minority areas in Qinghai. *Qinghai Ethnic Studies*, 27(4), 111-113. <https://doi.org/10.15899/j.cnki.1005-5681.2016.04.024>
- Tang, W. T. (2024). Toward holistic education: Ontological construction and practice of interdisciplinary music activities. *Journal of Nanjing University of the Arts (Music and Performance Edition)*, (4), 91-96.
- The State Council of the People's Republic of China. (2020). CPC Central Committee and State Council issued opinions on comprehensively strengthening and improving physical and aesthetic education in schools in the new era. *Gazette of the State Council of the People's Republic of China*, (30), 20-26.
- Wang, H. (2024). Value and implementation of aesthetic education in college music education from the perspective of aesthetic education: Review of *Music Education and Aesthetic Research in Aesthetic Education*. *Higher Education Exploration*, (2), 129.

- Wang, N. (2021). Strategies for integrating aesthetic education into rural primary school music teaching under the background of rural revitalization. *China Fruits*, (10), 121.
- Wang, Y. Q. (2024). Aesthetic support of Chinese-style modernization in education: Wisdom from ancient Chinese education. *Journal of Sichuan Normal University (Social Sciences Edition)*, 51(4), 122-128, 205.
- Wu, C. W. (2015). Music education in rural primary and secondary schools from the perspective of aesthetic education. *Social Sciences Front*, (12), 277-280.
- Wu, L. J. (2024). Approaches and paths of interdisciplinary learning in primary school music based on textbooks. *Teaching and Management*, (26), 65-68.
- Xia, X. L. (2024). The ideological and political education function of school music education and its realization path. *School Party Building and Ideological Education*, (12), 41-43. <https://doi.org/10.19865/j.cnki.xxdj.2024.12>
- Xie, J. (2024). Why aesthetic education? Three transformations in contemporary Chinese music education from a sociological perspective. *Journal of the Central Conservatory of Music*, (4), 17-29. <https://doi.org/10.16504/j.cnki.cn11-1183/j.2024.04.003>
- Xu, H. (2021). Direction, experience and countermeasures of music classroom reform in primary and secondary schools in the new era. *Curriculum. Teaching Material. Method*, 41(5), 122-129. <https://doi.org/10.19877/j.cnki.kcjcf.2021.05.018>
- Xu, K. (2019). Realizing aesthetic education in music teaching: Starting from Cai Yuanpei, Xiao Youmei, and He Luting. *Journal of Northeast Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, (5), 29-35. <https://doi.org/10.16164/j.cnki.22-1062/c.2019.05.005>
- Xu, X., Zhao, Y., & Hu, Y. (2024). A study on music education with aesthetic as the core under the new curriculum standards. *Teaching and Administration*, (9), 89-92.
- Yan, H. (2021). In-depth integration of music teaching and ideological and political education. *Reference for Middle School Politics Teaching*, (14), 85.
- Yan, R. (2021). Integrating five educations from the aesthetic education perspective: Value orientation and practical logic. *China Educational Technology*, (7), 69-74, 121.
- Yan, R. (2022). A study on the integration of music education and traditional ethnic music culture in rural primary and secondary schools: Review of *A study on the current situation and countermeasures of rural music education*. *Chinese Agricultural Meteorology*, 43(8), 678.
- Yang, D. (2020). Dilemmas and directions in the implementation of primary school music curriculum. *Curriculum. Teaching Material. Method*, 40(8), 109-115. <https://doi.org/10.19877/j.cnki.kcjcf.2020.08.017>
- Yang, N., & Tian, J. (2024). Construction and quality improvement of music theory teaching system: Review of *Research and practical exploration on music theory teaching*. *Theory and Practice of Education*, 44(36), F0002.
- Yang, S. (2010). Investigating the dilemma of school music education in poor rural areas of western China. *Adult Education in China*, (20), 81-82.
- Ye, Z. (2020). How to improve the quality of music education: Review of *Orff's music education thought and practice*. *University Science & Technology*, (7), 112.
- Yu, D., Liu, P., & Du, H. (2023). Integration and separation in the new arts curriculum standards for compulsory education: Relationship between core literacy and curriculum goals. *Curriculum. Teaching Material. Method*, 43(5), 145-148.
- Zhang, B. B. (2017). An analysis and study of the current practice of music education in rural primary and secondary schools in Guanzhong region. *Teaching and Administration (Theoretical Edition)*, (5), 28-30.

- Zhang, J. (2024). Innovation and development of aesthetic education in primary and secondary schools in Cangzhou in the internet era. *China Science and Technology Journal Database – Scientific Research*, (7), 90-93.
- Zhang, Q., & Liu, S. (2022). The logical approach to integrating music education and the five educations. *Journal of Hebei Normal University (Educational Science Edition)*, 24(5), 123-126. <https://doi.org/10.13763/j.cnki.jhebnu.esse.2022.05.016>
- Zhang, Z. (2024). The current dilemma of aesthetic education in primary and secondary schools under aesthetic education immersion and its solutions. *Chinese Journal of Education*, (11), 68-73.
- Zhang, Z., & Abudukeyoumu, M. (2024). The internal drive, era value and practical path of empowering school aesthetic education with intelligent media. *Basic Education*, 21(1), 106-112.
- Zhu, X. (2023). A study on the symbiotic development of aesthetic and music education in primary and secondary schools under multiculturalism. *Educational Science Research*, (2), 41-46.

### **Funding**

This research received no external funding.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

### **Acknowledgment**

This paper is an output of the science project.

### **Copyrights**

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).