

# *Assessment of Music Education in Selected Middle Schools: Basis for Music Improvement Program*

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**Abstract:** With the continuous development of society and the improvement of people's living standards, high quality of life has become the theme of life, and music is an important part of high quality of life. In 2021, the General Office of the State Council of China issued the “Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Classwork and Off-Campus Training on Students in Compulsory Education” (the “Double Reduction” policy). The “double reduction” policy explicitly requires that time not used for extra classes on weekends be allocated to music, art and physical education, encourages students to study art (music and art), increases the time for art studies in primary and secondary schools, and allows art exams to enter the “new college entrance examination” model. Music education is the foundation of modern education, and it is indispensable for secondary school students. This paper conducts a study of secondary school music education in terms of music self-perception, school curriculum satisfaction, music activities, music training support, and learning participation. Specific problems and constraints that hinder the development of music education are identified, and feasible suggestions are made to solve these problems and promote the development of music education.

## **1. Introduction**

As a high school student, the knowledge and learning of music creates one's literacy skills. Music education is the basic education in modern education, and music education is a very weak link in basic education. At present, there are a series of problems in Chinese secondary school music education, such as the contradiction between school curriculum orientation and students' aesthetic needs, the polarization of schools' attitudes toward secondary school students' music learning, and the incongruity between social needs and school teaching goals. Wang Xiaojing's “Analysis of the Reform of Middle School Music Education” (2020)[1] pointed out that middle school music education should focus on students' interests and encourage students' personality development. Guo Xiaobo's “Innovative Path of Middle School Music Education in Multicultural Vision” (2018)[2] puts forward that the innovation of middle school music education in multicultural vision should start from the following three points: First, establish diversified educational ideas and change the music education model. Second, make full use of the content of music education and make rational use of educational resources. Third, clarify the teaching objectives and enhance students' learning initiative. Conducting research on Chinese secondary school music education to identify problems

and understand the limitations of its development can facilitate the future development of music education. This study takes four middle schools in Henan Province of China as the investigation object, studies the present situation of music education in middle schools, finds out the restrictive conditions that hinder the development of music education in China at present, and puts forward feasible suggestions to solve the problems, so as to provide a reference for the future reform of music education in China.

## **2. Overview of the Research Methodology and Research Process**

This paper mainly investigates and researches relevant national policies and relevant experts and scholars, as well as school leaders and some students, teachers, parents, and teaching equipment of four representative middle schools. Mainly to understand the impact of China's national policies on music education in middle schools, some thoughts of relevant experts and scholars on the development of music education in middle schools, the influence of the attitudes of leaders, teachers, parents and students on music education in four Middle schools on music education in middle schools, and schools The impact of hardware facilities on middle school music education. Quantitative research design was used in the study.

In this study, selected students and teachers from four representative secondary schools were used as respondents for validation and reliability testing using a questionnaire method. A self-made questionnaire was used, and the questions were designed using a Likert scale. The questions were set in five areas: music self-perception, school curriculum satisfaction, music activities, music training support, and learning engagement. The collected data were analyzed, the results were discussed intensively and critically, problems were identified, summarized, and finally targeted solutions were proposed for the existing problems as a guide for music education improvement.

## **3. Research Findings and Conclusions**

### **3.1 Research Findings**

This study evaluated music education in four secondary schools in China. As for the profile of student interviewees, 282 high school students from four high schools agreed to respond when conducting the survey again. Most of the student interviewees are women, and they all belong to the average age of high school students in terms of age. Most of the students have been studying in high school for at least one year. The results show that senior high school students have a certain ability to distinguish things, and can objectively evaluate their self-perception of music and their feelings about school music courses. As for the profile of teacher interviewees, in this study, most of the teacher interviewees are women. All the teachers are under 45 years old, and most of them are between 26 and 35 years old. As for the years of teaching, more than two-thirds of teachers have been teaching for more than five years. Generally speaking, it can be said that these teachers already have a lot of experience in teaching, and they know a lot about music education in schools.

In terms of music self-perception, the descriptions of self-perception items in music education by the two groups are “unique” and can adjust their emotions. The evaluation of both groups is very supportive. In terms of the satisfaction of school curriculum, both groups are satisfied with the school curriculum and think that the school music curriculum is reasonable. In terms of music training support, both groups indicated that they would like to participate in more music activities if given the opportunity, but the school did not provide enough opportunities and tools to use them. In terms of music activities, both groups don't agree that the school curriculum provides all kinds of extracurricular activities for everyone, nor do they agree that the music activities in school music classes are very interesting. In terms of learning input, the results show that every classroom in the

school has multimedia equipment. Both groups think that teachers in the school are enthusiastic about their work, but they don't agree that the school has enough musical instruments to meet students' learning needs, and that the courses and activities provided by the school can meet the needs of the school.

### **3.2 Research Conclusions**

The self-perception of music was the same for both groups of respondents. This indicates that both groups of respondents believe that music is very important to their lives, that they listen to and enjoy music regularly, and that music helps them relieve fatigue and regulate their emotions.

Respondents in both groups rated their satisfaction with the school curriculum and the degree of improvement in music education equally. Respondents in both groups were satisfied with the music program taught by the school music teachers. Although respondents in both groups were satisfied with the school curriculum, neither group felt that the school music program fully met their musical needs or covered the musical abilities they needed to develop.

Respondents in both groups were consistent in their evaluation of music training support. Respondents in both groups agreed that music activities foster students' interest in music. However, schools do not provide enough opportunities for musical activities.

Music activities can increase students' interest in music and enrich their musical knowledge. Both groups of respondents agreed with this view.

Each classroom in the school has multimedia equipment so that students can experience music visually. However, teachers do not use a variety of methods in teaching and do not maintain great enthusiasm, which may affect students' experience of music lessons. The school's music classes do not fully meet the students' needs for music, and the school does not have enough instruments to fully meet the school's interest.

## **4. Research Recommendations**

### **4.1 Establish a Feasible Incentive Mechanism**

School leaders should pay attention to music education, understand the problems of music education, and establish a feasible reward mechanism for music education in schools. Encourage school music teachers to innovate on music classroom teaching, increase the reward for excellent teaching results, improve the enthusiasm of school music teachers, and create a positive and active music teaching environment. Jiang Sudi's *Reflections on Some Problems and Countermeasures of Middle School Music Education* (2017) [3] specifically proposed that middle school music education should integrate new media and improve the teaching plan.

### **4.2 Carry out Teaching and Research Activities**

Music subject leaders should assume an exemplary leadership role, leading music teachers in teaching and research activities and exploring different approaches to music teaching together. Improve the teaching content of the music classroom to broaden the knowledge of the music classroom and enhance students' understanding of different types of music. Deepen the discussion on the ways of activities in the music classroom to ensure that the music activities in the classroom are lively, interesting, and can be welcomed and enjoyed by the students to increase their interest in learning music. Lin Rongjiao's "Research on Problems and Countermeasures of Aesthetic Interest in Middle School Music Education" (2019)[4] found out the problems of aesthetic interest in middle school music education, and emphasized that the cultivation of middle school students' aesthetic

interest in music should continue to be strengthened.

### **4.3 Improve School Music Equipment**

The school should organize the existing equipment for teaching music and maintain the existing equipment. Count all the equipment, budget for the equipment needed by students, purchase the musical instruments needed by students, and meet the needs of students learning different kinds of instruments. In addition, integrate school classrooms and set up special music learning classrooms, such as instrumental music rooms and dance rooms. Create a good learning environment for students' music learning.

### **4.4 Specialization of Music Teachers in Schools**

Schools should provide students with professional teachers for instruction, and different music programs should have music teachers with different specializations. If the school's music teachers are not specialized enough to support the teaching, the school should encourage existing teachers to take training courses and pay for the training. Alternatively, schools can hire professional teachers from the community to assist in teaching. This will meet the needs of students in many aspects of music learning.

### **4.5 Optimize the School Curriculum**

Schools should improve the school curriculum by setting up fixed extra-curricular activities courses in addition to the inherent music curriculum, setting up a diversified music curriculum, and subdividing the music curriculum into different types of music classes, such as: dance classes, singing classes, instrumental classes, etc. Students are free to choose the musical knowledge they want to develop according to their interests.

### **4.6 Regular Music Events**

Schools should hold regular music events, at least once a month, with a wide variety of types of events. Different themes can be developed each time, such as: singing competitions, learning activities, modern dance competitions, folk dance assemblies, brass band nights, etc. Students can also use the activity class time to perform in connection with other different types of extracurricular music activity classes. At the end of each activity, a summary, critique and awards are given. On the one hand, this will showcase students' musical knowledge and on the other hand, it will stimulate students' interest in musical activities.

### **4.7 Strengthen Community Cooperation**

The school should establish contact with the community, provide some opportunities for students to showcase their activities when they are carried out in the community, encourage them to sign up for the activities, and give them certain material and spiritual rewards. At the same time, build a platform for students and make joint school and community recommendations for outstanding and willing students.

## **5. Conclusion**

With the development of the times and the promotion of quality education, modern society attaches more and more importance to the arts, and music has become an important part of the

school education curriculum. In previous music education, teachers easily neglected the cultivation of students' interest, emotion, thinking, and self-expression. This study found several ways to improve secondary school music education, but the reform of secondary school music education still has a long way to go, and more scholars are expected to study it in the future.

## References

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