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# Optimization Path of Music Education Curriculum in Shaanxi Private Universities under the Background of Aesthetic Education Reform and Development

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**Abstract:** Under the strategic guidance of aesthetic education reform and development in the new era, music education, as a core carrier of aesthetic education, undertakes the important mission of fostering virtue, cultivating people, enhancing students' aesthetic literacy, and inheriting cultural genes. As an important component of higher education, the construction of music education curricula in Shaanxi private universities not only encounters new development opportunities brought by aesthetic education reform, but is also constrained by school-running orientation, resource allocation, and teacher structure. These constraints lead to prominent problems such as homogenized curriculum systems, a disconnection between teaching content and contemporary cultural realities, and weak practical and experiential links. Drawing on the school-running characteristics and regional cultural advantages of Shaanxi private universities, and based on the core requirements of aesthetic education reform, this paper systematically analyzes the current dilemmas in music education curricula in these institutions. On this basis, it proposes targeted optimization paths from six dimensions: curriculum system construction, updating and integration of teaching content, innovation of teaching methods, professional development of teachers, improvement of evaluation mechanisms, and strengthening of resource guarantees. The study aims to provide both theoretical guidance and practical reference for the high-quality development of music education in Shaanxi private universities, promote the deep integration of aesthetic education and professional training, and support the effective implementation and rooting of aesthetic education reform in private higher education institutions.

**Keywords:** aesthetic education; music education; private universities; curriculum design; teacher development

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## 1. Introduction

The Opinions on comprehensively strengthening and improving school aesthetic education in the new era emphasized that aesthetic education should be integrated into the entire process of talent training. It promotes the integration of aesthetic education with moral, intellectual, physical, and labor education, aiming to cultivate individuals with all-round development in these areas. The aesthetic education infiltration campaign implemented by the Ministry of Education further highlights the importance of reforming aesthetic education teaching, improving the curriculum system, enhancing teaching quality, and ensuring aesthetic education permeates students, teachers, and schools [1]. Music education, as a vital component of aesthetic education, plays an irreplaceable role in cultivating students' sentiments, fostering aesthetic taste, preserving cultural heritage, and enhancing cultural confidence through its unique artistic appeal.

Shaanxi, as a major cultural province, possesses a profound historical and cultural heritage along with rich musical and cultural resources. Local musical traditions such as Qin Opera, Northern Shaanxi Folk Songs, and Chang'an Ancient Music provide valuable

teaching materials for college music education. Over the years, private universities in Shaanxi have emerged as a significant force in higher education, with their music education curricula contributing positively to meeting students' artistic needs and cultivating applied music talents [2, 3]. However, compared to public universities, private universities in Shaanxi face challenges in constructing music education curricula due to limitations in funding, faculty resources, institutional orientation, and other factors. These challenges hinder their ability to fully meet the requirements of talent training under the aesthetic education reform.

Currently, the reform of aesthetic education has entered a critical stage [4]. Addressing the characteristics of Shaanxi's regional culture, leveraging the advantages of private universities, optimizing the music education curriculum system, improving teaching quality, and cultivating applied talents with aesthetic accomplishment, innovative ability, and cultural confidence have become pressing issues for music education in Shaanxi private universities. This paper explores pathways for curriculum optimization based on the reform and development of aesthetic education and the current state of music education in Shaanxi private universities. The aim is to provide insights for the reform of music education in these institutions and to promote the high-quality development of aesthetic education in private universities.

## **2. Existing Predicaments of Music Education Curriculum in Shaanxi Private Universities under the Background of Aesthetic Education Reform and Development**

### *2.1. Severe Homogenization of Curriculum System and Insufficient Adaptability*

Currently, the music education curriculum system in most private universities in Shaanxi continues to adhere to the traditional model of public universities, lacking distinctive institutional characteristics and exhibiting significant homogenization [5, 6]. The curriculum design predominantly emphasizes professional skill training in areas such as vocal music, instrumental music, and music theory, which occupy a substantial proportion. Conversely, courses focusing on aesthetic appreciation, cultural heritage, and practical applications related to aesthetic education are underrepresented, failing to align with the core objective of aesthetic education reform to "cultivate individuals through beauty and educate through culture." Furthermore, the curriculum system does not adequately incorporate the unique aspects of Shaanxi's regional culture, with limited integration of local musical traditions such as Qin Opera and Northern Shaanxi Folk Songs. It also neglects the orientation of private universities toward "cultivating applied talents," leading to a disconnect between curriculum design and the employment needs of students as well as the cultural development needs of the region. Additionally, some private universities prioritize specialized music courses over general education, resulting in an insufficient provision of music aesthetic education courses for non-music majors. This shortfall fails to meet the aesthetic needs of the broader student body and diverges from the aesthetic education reform's goals of "comprehensive coverage and diversification." Moreover, the curriculum system exhibits a clear tendency toward isolation, lacking effective integration with moral, intellectual, physical, and labor education. Prominent issues include insufficient incorporation of moral education, a lack of interdisciplinary approaches, and the absence of labor awareness cultivation.

### *2.2. Lagging Teaching Content and Lack of Timeliness and Practicality*

Teaching content is the core of curriculum implementation and a key factor in meeting the requirements of aesthetic education reform. Currently, the teaching content of music education in Shaanxi private universities exhibits significant delays: first, the proportion of classic repertoires is excessively high. Certain courses continue to emphasize traditional Western music and classic Chinese music works, with insufficient integration of contemporary pop music, film and television music, and local characteristic music. This disconnects the content from students' cognitive characteristics and the demands of modern times, making it challenging to stimulate students' interest in

learning. Second, the teaching content prioritizes theoretical knowledge and skill training while neglecting the cultivation of aesthetic appreciation and the enhancement of practical abilities. As a result, students struggle to apply their acquired knowledge to real-life contexts, limiting the realization of the aesthetic education value of music education [7, 8]. Third, the exploration and preservation of Shaanxi's regional music culture lack depth. Content related to local music, such as Qin Opera and Northern Shaanxi Folk Songs, is fragmented, lacking systematic organization and relevance, thereby failing to transform regional cultural strengths into teaching advantages. Survey data indicates that the proportion of classic repertoires in the music teaching content of some private universities exceeds 60%, while content aligned with contemporary trends and students' cognitive levels accounts for less than 30%, hindering the full realization of the educational function of aesthetic education.

### *2.3. Single Teaching Methods and Lack of Interactivity and Innovation*

Influenced by factors such as teachers' proficiency and teaching conditions, the teaching methods of music education in Shaanxi private universities remain relatively uniform, primarily relying on the traditional approach of "teacher demonstration - student imitation," which lacks interactivity and innovation. In classroom settings, teachers maintain a dominant role, while students passively absorb knowledge with limited opportunities for independent exploration and collaborative learning. This approach hinders the stimulation of students' initiative and creativity. Furthermore, the teaching tools employed are predominantly traditional. Most universities continue to rely on basic methods such as multimedia courseware and piano accompaniment, with minimal integration of modern approaches like online teaching, virtual simulation, and situational teaching. The potential of modern information technology to enhance teaching outcomes remains underutilized. Additionally, practical teaching methods are overly simplistic, often limited to classroom performances and small concerts, with insufficient alignment to societal and market needs. This lack of diversity in practical teaching reduces its effectiveness, making it challenging to develop students' practical application and innovative abilities. As a result, 75% of students passively receive knowledge, neglecting their aesthetic subjectivity, which undermines the achievement of the educational goal of fostering aesthetic education.

### *2.4. Weak Construction of Teacher Team and Failure to Meet the Needs of Aesthetic Education Teaching*

The teacher team serves as the core support for curriculum optimization and plays a pivotal role in implementing the requirements of aesthetic education reform. Currently, the music education teacher teams in private universities in Shaanxi face several challenges. First, there is an insufficient number of teachers, leading to an imbalanced teacher-student ratio. In some universities, the teacher-student ratio for music majors reaches 1:45, significantly exceeding the ideal ratio. This imbalance places heavy teaching burdens on educators, making it difficult for them to dedicate sufficient time and energy to curriculum reform and teaching research. Second, the teacher structure is unbalanced, with a high proportion of young teachers and a shortage of experienced educators with advanced professional expertise. Additionally, 70% of professional teachers possess purely artistic backgrounds, lacking interdisciplinary teaching capabilities, which hinders their ability to meet the demands of integrated aesthetic education. Third, teacher training is inadequate. Private universities allocate limited resources to the professional development of music teachers, resulting in fewer opportunities for them to participate in aesthetic education-related training and academic exchanges. Consequently, their professional skills and teaching levels remain stagnant, making it challenging to align with the requirements of aesthetic education reform. Fourth, some teachers hold outdated concepts of aesthetic education. They often equate music teaching with skill training, neglecting the primary goal of fostering students' aesthetic and cultural accomplishments

during the teaching process. Furthermore, some private universities lack a stable part-time teaching workforce, which exacerbates the shortage of teaching resources and further restricts the improvement of curriculum quality.

### *2.5. Single Evaluation Mechanism and Lack of Guidance and Comprehensiveness*

Curriculum evaluation serves as a critical tool for promoting curriculum optimization and ensuring the implementation of aesthetic education reform requirements. Currently, the music education curriculum evaluation mechanism in Shaanxi private universities remains relatively narrow, with notable deficiencies in guidance. First, the evaluation method predominantly relies on summative assessments, focusing primarily on students' final examination scores and skill evaluations. Approximately 80% of students' grades are determined by final performances, with limited consideration given to their learning process, aesthetic development, practical abilities, and innovative capacities. Second, the evaluation process is largely dominated by teacher assessments, with minimal inclusion of self-evaluation, peer evaluation, or third-party evaluations from societal or industry stakeholders. This lack of diverse perspectives undermines the objectivity and comprehensiveness of the evaluation outcomes. Third, the evaluation content is heavily centered on professional skills and theoretical knowledge, neglecting aspects such as students' aesthetic experiences, cultural understanding, and practical applications. This approach is misaligned with the aesthetic education reform's emphasis on enhancing comprehensive accomplishments. Such a limited evaluation mechanism fails to fulfill its diagnostic, motivational, and guiding roles, thereby hindering students' holistic development and impeding the deeper advancement of curriculum reform. Furthermore, teacher evaluations primarily emphasize teaching workload while overlooking the effectiveness of aesthetic education instruction and contributions to curriculum reform. This approach fails to encourage teachers to actively engage in curriculum optimization efforts [9, 10].

### *2.6. Insufficient Resource Guarantee Restricting the Promotion of Curriculum Optimization*

The optimization of the music education curriculum in Shaanxi private universities faces significant challenges due to insufficient resource guarantees, which can be categorized into two primary aspects. First, there is a lack of adequate hardware resources. Some universities do not have access to professional music classrooms, rehearsal halls, musical instruments, and other essential equipment. The teaching facilities are often basic, making it difficult to meet standard teaching and practical requirements. Second, there is a shortage of software resources, including high-quality teaching courseware, online courses, and music materials. Additionally, the exploration, organization, and utilization of regional music and cultural resources remain inadequate, limiting the support available for curriculum optimization. Furthermore, private universities face constraints in capital investment, which hampers progress in areas such as curriculum construction, teacher training, and the development of practical platforms. The lack of collaboration with professional art colleges, cultural institutions, and enterprises further exacerbates the issue, as it restricts the integration of high-quality external resources [11, 12]. This limitation reduces the availability of diverse practical opportunities for students and hinders the practicality and timeliness of the curriculum. The scarcity of high-quality artistic resources has thus become a critical bottleneck in optimizing the music education curriculum in Shaanxi private universities.

## **3. Optimization Path of Music Education Curriculum in Shaanxi Private Universities under the Background of Aesthetic Education Reform and Development**

### *3.1. Optimize the Curriculum System and Highlight Characteristics and Integration*

Based on the core requirements of aesthetic education reform, combined with the school-running orientation and regional cultural characteristics of Shaanxi private universities, a diversified curriculum system of "general education + major + practice +

region" should be constructed to address the issue of homogenization. First, the construction of general aesthetic education courses should be strengthened to expand the coverage of music aesthetic education. General courses such as music aesthetic appreciation, introduction to music culture, and local music appreciation should be offered for non-music majors to meet the aesthetic needs of all students and implement the "full coverage" requirement of aesthetic education reform. Second, the professional curriculum system should be optimized to balance the cultivation of professional skills and aesthetic accomplishment. The proportion of pure skill training courses should be reduced, while courses focusing on aesthetic appreciation, cultural inheritance, and innovative practice, such as music aesthetics, music creation, and music therapy, should be increased to emphasize the core of aesthetic education. Third, regional cultural characteristics should be integrated by adding local music courses such as Qin Opera Music, Northern Shaanxi Folk Songs, and Chang'an Ancient Music. Regional music and cultural resources should be transformed into teaching content to build a music curriculum brand with Shaanxi characteristics and cultivate students' cultural confidence through regional cultural inheritance. Fourth, practical application courses such as music teaching methods, stage performance, music planning, and management should be added to align with the orientation of cultivating applied talents. This will enhance students' practical application abilities and align with market demands. Fifth, the curriculum should promote the in-depth integration of moral, intellectual, physical, and labor education. Moral education elements, interdisciplinary knowledge, physical training, and collective creation projects should be incorporated into the curriculum to construct a system where "beauty is the core and the five educations coexist," achieving the goal of collaborative education. For example, patriotism education can be integrated through the teaching of red music works such as *The Yellow River Cantata*, while the spirit of cooperation and labor awareness can be cultivated through the teaching of *Work Song* [7].

### *3.2. Update Teaching Content and Enhance Timeliness and Practicality*

Focusing on the requirements of aesthetic education reform, and considering students' cognitive characteristics and the needs of the times, the teaching content should be updated to achieve a combination of "classic and modern, theory and practice, regional and international." First, optimize the teaching of classic works by retaining Chinese and foreign classic music pieces while incorporating contemporary elements such as modern pop music, film and television music, and new media music. Examples of popular works can be used to connect with students' lives and stimulate their interest in learning. Second, enhance practical teaching by increasing content related to music creation, stage performance, music planning, and community art services. This approach guides students to apply their knowledge in practice, thereby improving their practical application skills. Third, explore regional music and cultural resources in depth by systematically organizing the historical origins and artistic characteristics of local music, such as Qin Opera and Northern Shaanxi Folk Songs. These can be integrated into the curriculum through specialized courses on regional music, fostering students' sense of cultural identity and heritage. Fourth, incorporate knowledge related to aesthetic education by including topics such as music aesthetics and art appreciation in the curriculum. This helps students experience the beauty of music and enhances their aesthetic sensibilities. Fifth, align with the characteristics of the digital age by integrating content on digital music production and online music communication, thereby cultivating students' innovative abilities and adaptability to modern trends [10]. Additionally, tailor the teaching content to the specific characteristics of students from different majors. For art majors, emphasize the development of advanced skills in "performance + creation," while for non-art majors, focus on fostering aesthetic sensibilities and basic practical skills to achieve the goal of "teaching students in accordance with their aptitude."

### *3.3. Innovate Teaching Methods and Improve Interactivity and Effectiveness*

Break the limitations of the traditional teaching mode, combine modern information technology, innovate teaching methods, and improve the interactivity, innovation, and effectiveness of teaching. First, promote the transformation of the teaching mode of "situational experience - cross-border integration - practical creation," and transform one-way teaching into multi-dimensional interaction. In the situational experience phase, use virtual reality technology to recreate the creative background of classic music works, allowing students to experience the artistic charm in an immersive environment. In the cross-border integration phase, design interdisciplinary projects such as "music + history" and "music + technology." For instance, reconstructing Moon Reflected on Second Spring combined with digital audio technology enables students to understand the connection between music and technology in practical applications. In the practical creation phase, organize activities such as campus musical creation and community art services to enhance students' practical creative abilities. Second, innovate interactive teaching methods by adopting approaches such as group cooperation, independent inquiry, and case analysis. Encourage students to actively participate in classroom discussions, music creation, and performances to stimulate their learning initiative and creativity. Third, strengthen the application of modern information technology by utilizing online teaching platforms, virtual simulation teaching systems, and multimedia courseware. These tools enrich teaching methods, enable blended online and offline teaching, overcome time and space constraints, and expand the teaching space. For example, high-quality art courses can be introduced through MOOC platforms, and innovative activities such as cloud choruses and online concerts can be conducted to extend aesthetic education beyond traditional boundaries. Fourth, diversify the forms of practical teaching. Beyond classroom performances and small concerts, strengthen collaboration with society, enterprises, and cultural institutions. Engage in school-enterprise cooperation practices, community cultural services, music competitions, and other activities to help students enhance their abilities through practice while embodying the educational concept of aesthetic education integration.

### *3.4. Strengthen Teacher Development and Improve Teachers' Aesthetic Education Teaching Ability*

The construction of the teacher team is central to curriculum optimization. In alignment with the requirements of aesthetic education reform, multiple measures should be implemented to strengthen the development of music education teachers in Shaanxi private universities. First, the scale of teachers should be expanded, and the teacher structure optimized. Backbone teachers and academic leaders with extensive teaching experience and high professional expertise should be introduced through open recruitment and talent acquisition. Additionally, industry artists and moral education workers should be employed to address the limitations of a single teacher structure. Part-time teachers should be allocated rationally, incorporating local music experts and front-line music practitioners to enhance the teaching workforce. Second, teacher training should be reinforced by increasing investment in training programs. Regular participation in aesthetic education-related training, academic exchanges, teaching seminars, and similar activities should be organized to improve teachers' professional skills, teaching proficiency, and aesthetic education perspectives. Teachers should be guided to adopt the teaching philosophy of "cultivating people with beauty" and integrate aesthetic education throughout the teaching process. Furthermore, interdisciplinary research should be encouraged to enhance teachers' ability to deliver integrated teaching and meet the demands of the five-education integration approach. Third, a robust teacher incentive mechanism should be established, along with an improved teacher assessment and evaluation system. This system should include factors such as the effectiveness of aesthetic education teaching, contributions to curriculum reform, and achievements in practical teaching. Such measures would stimulate teachers' enthusiasm and initiative in

curriculum optimization and teaching reform. Fourth, a teacher development platform should be built to encourage teaching research, music creation, and artistic practice. This would enhance teachers' overall quality and foster the development of a high-caliber, aesthetic education-oriented music teacher team characterized by "noble morality, exceptional professional skills, balanced structure, and vitality."

### *3.5. Improve the Evaluation Mechanism and Strengthen Guidance and Comprehensiveness*

In alignment with the requirements of aesthetic education reform, it is essential to move beyond a singular evaluation model and establish a comprehensive evaluation system that integrates "process evaluation + summative evaluation + diversified evaluation," thereby enhancing the diagnostic, motivational, and guiding functions of evaluation. First, the evaluation methods should be optimized by reducing the emphasis on summative evaluation and increasing the weight of process evaluation. This approach should incorporate students' classroom performance, learning attitudes, music creation, practical achievements, and other relevant aspects to holistically assess their learning process and overall development. Second, the range of evaluation participants should be expanded to include students' self-evaluations, peer evaluations, parental feedback, and assessments from third-party entities such as societal organizations and enterprises, ensuring objectivity and comprehensiveness in the evaluation outcomes. Third, the evaluation content must be clearly defined to assess not only students' professional skills and theoretical knowledge but also their aesthetic sensibilities, cultural understanding, practical abilities, innovative capacities, and moral development, aligning with the overarching goals of aesthetic education. Fourth, a diversified evaluation mechanism should be established, incorporating aesthetic experience (30%), creative practice (30%), social service (20%), and skill display (20%) into the evaluation framework. This system should utilize a combination of self-evaluation, audience feedback, and professional reviews, shifting away from the traditional skill-centric evaluation focus. Lastly, the teacher evaluation mechanism should be enhanced by including aspects such as the effectiveness of aesthetic education instruction, curriculum reform efforts, and teaching research. This approach aims to stimulate teachers' enthusiasm and creativity, thereby fostering the comprehensive development of curriculum optimization.

### *3.6. Strengthen Resource Guarantee and Provide Support for Curriculum Optimization*

Increase resource investment, integrate internal and external resources, and provide robust support for the optimization of music education curricula in Shaanxi private universities. First, enhance the construction of hardware facilities by increasing investment in music classrooms, rehearsal halls, musical instruments, and other equipment to perfect teaching facilities and meet both routine teaching and practical needs. Second, enrich software resources by organizing teachers to develop high-quality teaching courseware, online courses, and music materials, and establish a comprehensive music teaching resource database [3]. Simultaneously, deeply explore and organize Shaanxi's regional music and cultural resources to create a regional music resource database that supports curriculum teaching. Third, increase financial investment by establishing a dedicated fund for music education curriculum reform, which can be allocated to curriculum development, teacher training, practical platform construction, and other related areas to ensure the smooth implementation of curriculum optimization. Fourth, strengthen collaborations between schools and enterprises as well as between schools and local communities by forming partnerships with professional art colleges, cultural institutions, and enterprises. This approach integrates high-quality off-campus resources, builds practical teaching platforms, and provides students with diverse practical opportunities. Additionally, leverage the "hand-in-hand" assistance mechanism between universities and primary and secondary schools, as well as between urban and rural schools, to expand teaching resources and improve curriculum quality. Fifth, utilize online resources to broaden the teaching space by introducing high-quality art courses

through MOOC platforms and new media platforms. This approach enriches teaching content, enhances teaching outcomes, and addresses the resource limitations faced by private universities.

#### 4. Conclusion

The reform and development of aesthetic education have introduced new opportunities and challenges to the construction of music education curricula in private universities in Shaanxi. Optimizing the music education curriculum represents a crucial step for these institutions to align with the requirements of aesthetic education reform, enhance educational quality, and cultivate applied talents. Currently, the music education curricula in Shaanxi private universities face issues such as homogenization of curriculum systems, outdated teaching content, limited teaching methods, insufficiently developed faculty teams, incomplete evaluation mechanisms, and inadequate resource allocation, all of which hinder the effective implementation of aesthetic education. Addressing these challenges requires a multidimensional approach, including optimizing the curriculum system, updating teaching content, innovating teaching methods, strengthening faculty development, improving evaluation mechanisms, and enhancing resource support. These measures can effectively resolve existing issues, elevate the quality of curriculum delivery, and maximize the aesthetic education function of music education. Private universities in Shaanxi should leverage their unique strengths, adapt to the evolving trends of aesthetic education reform, and continuously explore innovative strategies for curriculum optimization. By transforming regional cultural advantages into educational assets and embedding the goal of cultivating applied talents throughout the curriculum development process, these institutions can nurture individuals with aesthetic sensibilities, innovative capabilities, cultural confidence, and practical skills. Furthermore, private universities should actively engage in collaboration and exchange with public universities and cultural organizations, drawing on advanced practices to refine their curriculum systems. Such efforts will promote deeper reforms in music education curricula, ensuring that aesthetic education serves as a vital link connecting moral, intellectual, physical, and labor education, ultimately achieving the goal of fostering individuals enriched by beauty and culture.

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