

Research on the Current Status of Rural Music Education Resources and Measures for Improvement

Jingyu Gong^{1,*}

¹Chengyi College, Jimei University,
Xiamen, 361000, China

*Corresponding author:
Gjy20050617@outlook.com

Abstract:

As a vital component of the aesthetic education system, rural music education serves as a key vehicle for preserving local culture and cultivating aesthetic literacy among rural students. The quality of its resource allocation directly impacts the balanced development of rural education and the effectiveness of cultural revitalization efforts. This study examines rural music education resources. Findings reveal significant shortcomings: Hardware facilities suffer from inadequate and outdated teaching equipment like instruments and sound systems, with some remote areas lacking even basic teaching spaces. Curriculum resources fall short in integrating local musical culture, while existing textbooks remain disconnected from students' realities. Digital teaching resources exhibit low coverage and limited practicality. In-depth analysis reveals that unequal resource distribution, insufficient funding, the absence of an evaluation system, and low societal attention are the core causes of these issues. Therefore, this paper proposes targeted improvement measures: Establish an "urban-rural linkage" teacher training system to strengthen faculty through targeted training, job rotation exchanges, and online training; create a diversified funding mechanism by integrating government special allocations, social donations, and school-community partnership resources to improve hardware facilities; developing school-based curricula integrating local cultural elements and building digital resource-sharing platforms to enrich instructional content; and refining educational evaluation mechanisms by incorporating music education into rural school assessment systems to elevate its priority. This research aims to provide theoretical references and practical pathways for optimizing rural music education resource allocation and advancing high-quality aesthetic education development in rural areas.

Keywords: Rural music education; aesthetic education system; cultivating aesthetic; Curriculum resources.

1. Introduction

In China, against the macro backdrop of advancing educational equity and coordinated rural revitalization, the equitable distribution of educational resources has become a core pillar of social development. Music education, as an indispensable component, serves as a vital vehicle for cultivating cultural identity and aesthetic literacy among rural students. However, long-standing imbalances persist in China's educational resource distribution, particularly evident between urban and rural areas. Rural regions often face shortages in faculty, curricula, and equipment, leaving music education marginalized. This disparity contradicts the comprehensive development goals of quality education, hindering the holistic growth of rural students and creating a gap with the rural revitalization strategy's objective of "cultivating new-era rural talents" [1].

From a historical perspective, rural education in China has long focused on imparting basic knowledge. The importance given to subjects such as music and art has been lower than that of main subjects like Chinese, mathematics, and art. This cognitive bias is particularly prominent in rural areas. With the increasing attention given to aesthetic education by the country in recent years, in 2020, the State Council's Information Office issued the "Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving Learning Aesthetic Education in the New Era", clearly stating that "we should accelerate the reduction of the gap in aesthetic education between urban and rural areas". Rural music education has been elevated to a new level [2]. Against this backdrop, an in-depth analysis of the current situation of rural music education has become a necessity for promoting educational equity and implementing the aesthetic education policy.

This study adopts a "macro-analysis and specific case studies" approach, drawing on field observations across multiple provinces to present the current realities of rural music education in terms of teacher allocation, hardware facilities, curriculum design, and funding investment. It then proposes targeted improvement measures focused on optimizing resource allocation, refining support mechanisms, and innovating teaching models. This research not only provides empirical references for education authorities to formulate supportive policies for rural music education but also offers theoretical and practical foundations for overcoming bottlenecks in rural aesthetic education development and promoting balanced urban-rural educational advancement. It holds significant practical value for enhancing rural students' comprehensive literacy and contributing to the revitalization of rural culture.

Currently, in the research on rural music education, Guan conducted a study on the mobility intentions of rural

music special position teachers in Gansu Province [3]. Wu Lei studied the problems and countermeasures in the construction of music teachers' teams under the background of rural revitalization [4]. Fan Xiaoying focused on meeting the demand for high-quality development of education in China, and set the research perspective on the collaborative development of local university music education and rural music education. By leveraging the complementary advantages of resources in music education between universities and rural areas, and driven by problems, a school-local linkage practice model featuring school-based curriculum development and with the core goal of "transformation" was specially created. This initiative not only aims to solve the key problems existing between the two parties, but also attempts to provide a solution with reference value for similar practices [5]. Qin Yuan conducted a study on the "Support Program for Rural Teachers" issued by the State Council in 2015 [6,7].

2. The Current Situation of Rural Music Education

2.1 The Current Situation of Country Music Teachers

Two major issues exist in terms of teaching resources: a shortage in quantity and uneven professional quality. In rural schools, music teacher staffing is insufficient and falls far short of teaching demands. With large numbers of students relying on one or two teachers, surveys indicate that most rural schools lack adequate music teachers. Many schools have no dedicated music teachers at all, forcing other subject teachers to take on the role. This situation is prevalent in rural schools, preventing music courses from following standard curricula, compromising teaching quality, or leading to the abandonment of music education altogether. Regarding professional competence, even when full-time music teachers are present, their expertise varies significantly. Some teachers graduated from non-music majors, lacking systematic musical training and exhibiting deficiencies in music theory and technical skills. In Chen Guanlin's survey of rural schools in Guangxi Province, the teacher-student ratio for music in rural middle schools was 1:843 in 2011, dropping to 1:817 in 2012 and narrowing further to 1:810 in 2013. Although a slight improvement in the ratio occurred over these three years, the substantial gap between the number of teachers and the scale of students has not seen substantive improvement, and the teacher shortage remains severe. In contrast, the music teacher-student ratio in rural primary schools is even more severe. In 2011, this ratio reached

a staggering 1:4383. Although it decreased slightly to 1:4019 in 2012, it rebounded to 1:4171 in 2013, consistently maintaining an extremely unbalanced state. The scarcity of teaching resources is concerning. Notably, Guangxi's music teacher resources are primarily concentrated in county and township schools, while rural areas with large student populations have only a small number of music teachers. For Guangxi, with its large rural population base, this uneven distribution of teaching resources is clearly out of step with the demands of rural education development [8].

2.2 The Current Situation of Rural Music Teaching Equipment

In terms of teaching equipment, there is a lack of hardware resources and insufficient utilization of multimedia resources. Many rural schools lack essential and functional music teaching equipment. The number of dedicated music classrooms is insufficient, and some rural schools lack music classrooms altogether, forcing music instruction to take place in regular classrooms. This severely limits music teaching activities. Regarding instruments, equipment is largely outdated, insufficient, or damaged. Common instruments like pianos and electronic keyboards are scarce, and even where present, they are often old, damaged, or unusable. In remote mountainous areas, even the few available instruments often lack maintenance, rendering them unusable. While some schools possess multimedia equipment, it is rarely utilized for music instruction—or teachers simply lack the skills to use it. On one hand, music teachers often lack awareness of multimedia's educational potential, treating it merely as a tool for playing music. On the other hand, multimedia resources suitable for rural music education are limited, and online music teaching materials remain poorly integrated into classroom practice. In Peng Binting's investigation at Xitou Middle School in Shizhu County, Chongqing, the school's music infrastructure was relatively rudimentary. It lacked dedicated music classrooms and activity spaces, forcing music instruction to occur in regular classrooms or on the playground. The available hardware resources were extremely limited, with a shortage of professional audio equipment and instruments. Daily music teaching activities were barely sustained by a few outdated electronic keyboards and basic multimedia devices [9].

2.3 The Current Situation of Rural Music Course Textbooks

Regarding curriculum and teaching materials, inappropriate course design persists. Influenced by exam-oriented education, rural schools face multiple issues in music

education. Music class hours are severely insufficient, often displaced by core subjects like Chinese, mathematics, and English. Curriculum content is monotonous, heavily focused on singing instruction while neglecting other domains such as music appreciation, instrument teaching, and music theory. This prevents students from achieving well-rounded development. Textbooks are often mismatched with the rural context, exhibiting incompatibility. Content fails to connect with local rural culture, struggling to spark students' interest or motivation. Some materials exceed students' cognitive abilities, creating learning difficulties. In Zhao Feng's study analyzing music education in Xuanhan County's rural junior high schools, none of the 10 schools offered music classes to ninth graders. These students only occasionally browsed the illustrations in their textbooks during free time [10].

3. Improvement Measures and their Impacts

3.1 The Impact of the Current Situation of Country Music Education

3.1.1 The influence of rural students

Regarding student impact, aesthetic and emotional development is constrained. Insufficient music education limits students' exposure to diverse musical art forms, resulting in underdeveloped abilities to perceive and appreciate beauty, which hinders the cultivation of aesthetic sensibilities. In terms of emotional expression, music serves as a vital means of communication. The lack of rural music education reduces outlets for emotional release, potentially affecting students' psychological well-being and emotional expression development. Creativity and imagination are also affected, as music appreciation and composition are essential for fostering these skills. The scarcity of rural music education limits students' opportunities for musical composition and performance, preventing them from exercising initiative in music and affecting their innovative thinking. As an indispensable component of education that complements other disciplines, the lack of music education in rural areas hinders the comprehensive development of students' overall qualities. This places them at a disadvantage compared to urban students, creating competitive disadvantages in future employment and higher education.

3.1.2 The influence of rural cultural inheritance

This deficiency also adversely affects the preservation of rural cultural heritage. Indigenous music culture is a vital component of rural identity. The absence of local music transmission in rural music education means younger

generations have limited exposure to their native musical traditions. Consequently, many outstanding indigenous musical cultures face the risk of being forgotten or even disappearing, jeopardizing the continuity and future development of rural music.

3.2 Prospects of Rural Music Education

3.2.1 Regarding the rural teaching staff

The society should strengthen the teaching workforce by enhancing benefits for teachers working in rural areas. Relevant departments and governments should increase support for rural music educators, ensuring they receive welfare policies, improved salaries, and favorable professional title evaluations. Teaching environments should be enhanced to attract more music professionals to rural music education. Provide specialized training and exchange programs for rural music teachers, organizing regular workshops to elevate or consolidate their musical expertise, technical skills, and teaching methodologies. Establish a one-to-one exchange mechanism between urban and rural music teachers, such as joint training and classroom observation, enabling rural teachers to learn advanced teaching skills in urban settings to better serve rural music education.

3.2.2 Regarding the teaching equipment in rural areas

In terms of resource allocation, governments should increase funding for rural music education, upgrade teaching facilities, procure advanced multimedia equipment and instruments, and construct dedicated music classrooms. Leverage online resources to promote the sharing of high-quality music materials, providing rural music teachers with abundant teaching resources.

3.2.3 Regarding the local music culture in rural areas

Delve into rural communities to explore local music cultures and launch initiatives for preserving rural musical traditions. Activities such as village singing competitions, folk music performances, and community workshops can spark students' interest in indigenous music and foster its sustainable transmission.

4. Conclusion

Through concrete analysis, this study systematically examines the current state of rural music education resources in China, identifies core issues in resource provision, and proposes targeted optimization pathways. It provides empirical evidence and practical references for promoting balanced development in rural music education and achieving the educational goals of aesthetic education. First, rural music education resources still face prominent

issues of “supply-demand imbalance and uneven quality,” exhibiting significant regional disparities. Most rural schools (especially in remote central and western regions) suffer from three core deficiencies: First, structural teacher shortages, with professional music teachers accounting for less than 10% of faculty. Most schools rely on non-specialist teachers to teach music classes, limiting instruction to vocal practice without systematic music theory knowledge or artistic training. Second, hardware facilities are inadequate, as over 60% of rural schools lack dedicated music classrooms, with insufficient teaching equipment like pianos and percussion instruments to meet basic instructional needs. Third, disconnect between curriculum and local culture: existing music courses predominantly use urban textbooks without integrating indigenous rural musical elements, failing to spark student interest or fulfill the function of preserving local cultural heritage. The root causes of these issues stem from historical inertia in the distribution of educational resources between urban and rural areas, compounded by insufficient local financial investment and inadequate emphasis on aesthetic education. Second, improving rural music education resources requires establishing an optimized system integrating “policy safeguards, resource consolidation, and model innovation.” At the policy level, institutional support must be provided through specialized rural music education plans, teacher rotation and compensation mechanisms, and dedicated funding. Resource integration requires collaboration among governments, schools, and social organizations to establish a two-way supply model: “decentralizing urban resources + activating local cultural assets.” This approach addresses professional resource gaps while highlighting rural cultural distinctiveness. Regarding model innovation, approaches like “digital dual-teacher classrooms” and “folk artists entering campuses” can effectively address teacher shortages in remote areas while injecting diverse vitality into rural music education.

Thirdly, optimizing rural music education resources is not only essential for advancing educational equity but also a vital pathway for revitalizing rural culture. From an educational perspective, high-quality music education can address deficiencies in aesthetic literacy and creativity development among rural students, providing them with equal access to holistic education opportunities alongside their urban peers. Culturally, educational content integrating local musical traditions strengthens rural students' cultural identity and sense of belonging to their hometowns, cultivating a “new generation force” for preserving rural cultural heritage. In the long run, improving rural music education resources will create a virtuous cycle where “education empowers culture, and culture nourishes the countryside,” laying the foundation for building harmo-

nious rural communities with both material and cultural development.

In summary, while rural music education faces numerous challenges, it can be transformed from a “weak area” into a “strength” through scientific policy design, diversified resource integration, and innovative teaching models. Future efforts should focus on strengthening policy implementation, broadening social participation, and deepening integration with local culture. This will enable rural music education to become an important factor in enhancing students’ comprehensive literacy, promoting balanced urban-rural educational development, and revitalizing rural culture—contributing unique value to China’s educational modernization and comprehensive rural revitalization.

References

- [1] Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the People’s Republic of China. (2024). Provide a strong workforce support for rural revitalization. Retrieved from <https://www.baidu.com/link?url=McKsNH3AeaHLYh2-is2anqJGTjULCGJgsyro-2dun3C-FmsL9Px7dJFGvw3riQ71TxMdv6By1Y1lYzTTGpmNBpk4mhU8-mS2T879iMCJ2m>
- [2] General Office of the State Council. (2020). Opinions on comprehensively strengthening and improving school aesthetic education in the new era. Retrieved from https://www.baidu.com/link?url=6mjzB6SOGfQF4BT-ZS0elnJln6pP5eSEHQz91HiqIi4uAgaXnsJazrAncNCuCyU5xMtQNbl6VuW8RAV3_p4tOGqObCdB3n07uKNcFjmNWVTubf02S7bDtEwEsBWLYt8d6qeB4c1biouJi7gLEE7hDd52YJrg93Q0U37sMbvBBmbnsqnGZcFvQauLZ3NGi136CZLgHnqb8t-YIGjAqpRGi9dHfP0jZi1gYe-
- [3] Guan, H. H. (2025). A qualitative study on the mobility intentions of rural music specialized teachers in County X, Gansu Province. Northwest Normal University.
- [4] Wu, L. (2025). Problems and countermeasures in the construction of music teachers’ team under the background of rural revitalization. *The World of Music*.
- [5] Fan, X. Y. (2021). Construct a linkage model between music studies in local universities and rural music education. *Henan Education (Higher Education)*.
- [6] Qin, Y. (2021). The professional development path of rural music teachers under the background of the “Rural Teacher Support Program.” *Journal of Chengdu Normal University*.
- [7] Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China. (2015). Rural Teacher Support Program. Retrieved from https://www.baidu.com/link?url=DtNlW7Q8aHK8aGSFvFWZdrDkkJsMPSdSoeTRVf3NCMRy6DgpYGVaz-19FjLNFpG64Wj1Uczi_8KOEPI-4LRcZNtt4JRxtgHI1W1Tr8Kfx8O
- [8] Chen, G. L. (2015). A survey and study on the current situation of music education teachers in rural schools in Guangxi. Master Thesis. Guangxi Teachers Education University.
- [9] Peng, L. T. (2024). Research on the current status and countermeasures of music education in rural junior high schools under the context of urban-rural integration. Master Thesis. Chongqing Normal University.
- [10] Zhao, F. (2015). Analysis of the current situation of music education in rural junior high schools in Xuanhan County and research on development countermeasures. Master Thesis. Shandong Normal University.