

Study on the Current Situation as well as Countermeasures for Music Education at Rural Primary and Middle Schools in Shaanxi, China

Kajian Mengenai Situasi Semasa dan Tindak Balas Pendidikan Muzik di Sekolah Rendah dan Menengah di kawasan luar bandar di Shaanxi, China

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ABSTRACT

Music education is an important means of quality education and plays an irreplaceable role in inducing all-round development of students. China's rural areas are weak areas for popularization of education. Music is a scarce subject in rural schools, but it is not a dispensable subject. Rural students should receive strict and formal education. Music education is important for cultivating students' physical and mental health and healthy thinking. The influences and feelings produced by, aesthetic taste, etc. cannot be replaced by other disciplines of education. Currently, music education in rural primary and secondary schools in Shaanxi province, China is restricted by various factors while still being far from achieving requirements of modern education. This research aims to study, investigate and analyse the current situation of music education in rural areas, highlight the problems in music education in rural area as well as proposing related solutions to promote the development of music education in rural Shaanxi province in China. To solve the problems of music education in rural primary and secondary schools in Shaanxi, it is necessary to increase the importance of leadership to music education in rural primary and secondary schools in Shaanxi, increase investment in music education in rural primary and secondary schools in Shaanxi, and innovate the training and supply mechanism of music teachers in rural primary and secondary schools in Shaanxi.

Keywords: China; Countermeasures; Current Situation; Music Education; Shaanxi Province

ABSTRAK

Pendidikan muzik adalah salah satu kaedah yang penting dalam pendidikan berkualiti dan pada masa yang sama, pendidikan muzik juga memainkan peranan yang tidak dapat diganti dalam mendorong perkembangan secara menyeluruh bagi setiap pelajar. Kawasan luar bandar China adalah kawasan yang lemah untuk mempopularkan pendidikan. Muzik adalah subjek yang jarang berlaku di sekolah luar bandar, tetapi ia bukan mata pelajaran yang boleh dibuang. Pelajar luar bandar harus mendapat pendidikan yang ketat dan formal. Pendidikan muzik penting untuk memupuk kesihatan fizikal dan mental pelajar dan pemikiran yang sihat. Pengaruh dan perasaan yang dihasilkan oleh, rasa estetik, dan lain-lain tidak dapat digantikan oleh disiplin pendidikan yang lain. Pada masa ini, pendidikan muzik di sekolah rendah dan menengah yang berada di luar bandar dalam wilayah Shaanxi, China telah dibatasi oleh pelbagai faktor dan masih jauh dari mencapai keperluan pendidikan moden. Penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji, menyelidik dan menganalisis keadaan semasa pendidikan muzik di luar bandar, mengenalpasti masalah dalam pendidikan muzik di luar bandar serta mencadangkan penyelesaian yang berkaitan untuk menggalakkan pembangunan pendidikan muzik di kawasan luar bandar wilayah Shaanxi, China. Untuk menyelesaikan masalah pendidikan muzik di sekolah rendah dan menengah luar bandar di Shaanxi, perlu meningkatkan kepentingan kepemimpinan terhadap pendidikan muzik di sekolah rendah dan menengah luar bandar di Shaanxi, meningkatkan pelaburan dalam pendidikan muzik di sekolah rendah dan menengah luar bandar di Shaanxi, dan menginovasikan mekanisme latihan dan persediaan guru muzik di sekolah rendah dan menengah luar bandar di Shaanxi.

Kata kunci: China; kawasan luar bandar; keadaan semasa; pendidikan muzik; Wilayah Shaanxi

INTRODUCTION

In China, the question on how to promote the development of high-quality art education in rural areas remains one of the most critical matter to be

solved in the educational field (Yang et al. 2018). Generally, arts are very important in life since arts not only provides noteworthy human ideas, but also because of the ability of arts to create interesting experiences that may allow human to

have fulfilling life (Smith 1987). Nowadays, many educational researchers come to an agreement to acknowledge the importance of education in both ethical and character aspect for children in which schools should start to actualize programmes as well as courses that teach students to care for each another and the world around them instead of just focusing on the factual knowledge (Brook 2013). Music education plays an important part in quality education since music education is an indispensable part in shaping students with healthy personality. Previous researches have proven that students who received intensive artistic education will tend to have greater resistant to frustration while at the same time are creative and willing to take risks (Egana-delSol 2019). Furthermore, several advantages that the students possess by receiving music education such as creative thinking, academic achievement, effective functioning and arts appreciation will definitely benefit the students in the future (Luftig 2000).

In order to effectively promote the reformation and development of art education in schools while improving the aesthetic as well as humanistic literacy for both primary and secondary school students, in 2018, the Chinese Ministry of Education China had issued three documents including “Methods for Evaluating Artistic Quality of Primary and Secondary School Students” for 102 experimental areas in 31 provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government of the People’s Republic of China). The issued documents indicate that art-based curriculum is no longer an interest-based class, but have become compulsory classes. The documents also imply that art education which have not been valued properly previously in campus education is now finally been affirmed at a national policy level. The importance of art education is once again being highlighted and emphasized by the Chinese government. The implementation of aesthetic education which include music and art education with the noble purpose of cultivating talents with all-round development has become the key point for quality education at schools in China. With the promulgation of various reform policies on aesthetic especially music education, nowadays, music education in schools has been taken seriously. However, due to geographical environment, economy level and many other historical reasons, music education in schools at rural areas is still comparably weaker than the music education in schools at urban areas. The first

document that was issued by the central government of the People’s Republic of China had announced the comprehensive deployment and implementation of strategy on revitalizing rural areas with the main motto of “Focusing on the planning to promote overall development in economic, political, cultural, social, ecological civilization as well as the government whereby by the year 2050, the rural areas should be fully revitalized.” With the implementation of the proposed policies, developments shall be initiated in various rural areas whereby elite members from the urban areas will enter rural areas for knowledge exchanging and learning process while introducing various activities such as music as well as other cultural activities into the countryside areas. Thus, through the cultural as well as knowledge exchange process, music education in schools at rural areas will definitely gain many new and crucial opportunities to help in developing the rural areas.

I am engaged in training primary and secondary school music teachers in colleges and universities, mainly concerned about the current situation and countermeasures of rural basic music education. In the early stage, I conducted field research on the current situation of rural basic music education in central, northern and southern Shaanxi Province. Currently, music education can only be perfectly executed at elementary schools in cities. Music education at all level in rural areas is not optimistic since the schools still faced some unavoidable constraints. In order to improve the existing artistic talents while discovering as well as cultivating new talents among students at rural primary and middle school in Shaanxi province, traditional music education model for rural schools in Shaanxi must be updated and improved. In order to improve current music education system used by rural primary and secondary schools in Shaanxi province, China, extensive investigation on the problems affecting the music education in rural primary and secondary schools will to be carried out based on the perspective of the students.

CURRENT SITUATION OF MUSIC EDUCATION IN RURAL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

THE OUTDATED CONCEPT FOR MUSIC EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS AT RURAL AREAS

Currently, quality education that the China government is vigorously promoting is unable to

fundamentally alter the teaching concepts of most rural school teachers and their school administrators. Moreover, the proposed changes seem hard to be applied onto current music education in schools at rural areas due to the lack of education resources in the rural schools along with insufficient effort of the rural schools in organizing activities related to music education for their students. In some rural schools, music lessons are not even included in the curriculum of their student which in turn led to weak music foundation among students from schools in rural areas. Teachers from rural primary and secondary school generally think that music lessons are not important whereby the teachers often take over the time for music lessons to give lecturers on other mainstream subjects. Meanwhile, some schools in the rural areas even exclude music curriculum in the evaluation standard during their class evaluation process that further encourage the teachers to replace music lesson for lessons on mainstream subjects. On the other hand, primary as well as secondary schools always give a huge priority on honorary professional titles and awards for excellent teachers only to teachers who teaches mainstream subjects. The proportion for primary as well as secondary schools' teachers that teach either music, art, physical education or other elective courses to receive honorary titles and awards is extremely small as compared to those of mainstream subject teachers. The unequal treatment delivers a heavy blow on the work enthusiasm of music teachers which even makes them disregard music education even more and lost interest in teaching music lessons.

Family education is the earliest type of education that a student will receive which eventually affects the growth of the student in the future. The concept of education from parents will definitely have a subtle influence on the aesthetic standard and sense of worth of the students. Commonly, musical literacy and passion on creativity are the results from careful cultivation on the students by their parents. However, for most of the parents, music lesson is just an auxiliary subject and the parents tend to encourage their children to focus all their energy on the mainstream subjects such as Mathematics, Chinese Language as well as English Language instead of spending their precious time on auxiliary subjects. With the restrictive economic conditions and serious shortage of resources for music education at schools in rural areas, most of the parents nowadays are willing to invest more

money to improve their children knowledge in Mathematics, Chinese, English and other main courses. Parents also believe that any educational concept that is in contrast with the "all in for college entrance examination" ideas is considered as wrong and an incorrect educational concept.

Schools, teachers and parents in rural areas generally emphasize exam-oriented education in the primary as well as secondary educational stages. All misleading educational concepts which only focuses on the middle school entrance examination and the college entrance examination indirectly makes the students grow to dislike music education that forced them to attend time wasting music related lessons (Sun, 2014). Through visiting and interviewing students in rural schools, it was surprising to see that some students in the rural schools still like music but however most of them seems to dislike music lessons. Rural primary and secondary schools will usually force the students to revise their mainstream subject instead of giving the actual music lesson to their students. Thus, in a long run, student may feel reluctant to learn music. The students might instead consider music lessons as a form of coping method whereby their main efforts are still being focused on mainstream subject. Current learning pattern has proven that schools, parents as well as students themselves take the entrance examination as their main goal whereby everything that the students learn and study is only to pass and excel in their college entrance examination.

SITUATION OF MUSIC EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS THAT REQUIRE IMPROVEMENTS

In general, the significant as well as the situation of music education varies from county to county and between provinces. Currently, the status, function as well as values of music education for quality education and aesthetic education in rural schools still require more improvement before it is able to conform to the standard model (Dwyer 2011; Thøgersen 2002). For parents nowadays, greater priority is still given to the examinations while the phenomena of occupying music lessons for other more important purposes still exist. The current subservience toward music education in rural primary as well as secondary schools is mainly due to the allocation of resources especially financial resources that does not meet the fixed standard model, insufficient music teachers and the absence of coordinated improving mechanism.

There are several undesirable factors such as unsuitable music educational curriculum, inadequate content for music education, minimal organization of music activities and the social culture that lead to the current situation of music education at primary as well as secondary schools in rural areas (Freedman, 2003; Xu, 2017). In the context of pragmatic examination-based education system, music education is definitely being alienated due to the serious shortage of music teachers that has not been improved throughout the years along with the lack of reasonable as well as professional standards in music education. With rapid decrement in student resources along with the merging of schools, schools in rural areas lack the top-level design and institutional guarantee system for music education since evaluation system as well as teacher development plan for music education have not been established yet. These problems have directly restricted the development of music education in rural schools.

Through in-depth investigation and visits that have been done, the mentioned phenomenon seems to be more prominent in remote areas such as schools in rural areas. However, resources for music education are abundant and more than enough for schools in cities as well as economically prosperous areas when compared to schools in rural areas. Schools situated in the cities as well as economically prosperous areas seem willing to pay more attention to music education whereby their students are more willing to learn music. Urgent supports for music education in rural primary and secondary schools is desperately required since the gap between rural music education and urban music education is increasing which will eventually aggravate unfair education between urban and rural areas in China.

RESTRICTIONS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSIC TEACHERS IN RURAL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

In any educational reforms, teachers are the key agents that will affect the final outcome (Ab Kadir 2017). Teachers are dynamic agents that constantly weigh up the condition of their students while playing the crucial role of implementing the latest curriculum (Dome'nech Betoret and Go'mez Artiga 2004). In its current situation, amidst the educational reform that are being introduced by the Ministry of Education China, there are still non-negligible shortage of professional music teachers in rural

schools in which many schools tend to have their cultural class teachers teach music classes instead of professional music teachers. Cultural class teachers tend to possess little and basic knowledge on the curriculum of music classes. The severe shortage of professional music teachers limits and hinders the progress of music courses in rural schools which will lead to uneven development of music courses. Based on surveys done on rural schools in Shaanxi province, it seems that currently there are only very few schools that are currently equipped with professional music teachers. According to recent studies carried out in United States, teachers stationed in rural schools often had to perform other extra tasks such as teaching other unrelated subjects while at the same time organizing co-curricular activities aside from teaching their own subjects (Sun and Leong 2014). Thus, even though when some schools have the chance in being equipped with professional music teachers for a certain period of time, the music teachers often did not stay in the school for long. Through surveys, the general situation for each school seems roughly the same whereby music lessons are often being assigned to teachers that teaches main subjects to be taught as a "subsidiary subject". Although music classes are prepared for the students, the content of the music classes is too simple which will not only affect the understanding of music in the students, but also influence the enthusiasm of the students for music. It is obvious that music education cannot be done without the presence of a team of professional music teachers.

The most significant problem with music teachers in rural primary and secondary schools is that the music teachers are heavily affected by staffing arrangement and local employment policies. Music teachers that are not equipped with sufficient access and the existence of prominent contradiction between demand and supply of music teachers result to even lesser professional music teachers are currently available for employment (Xuehui 2018). In recent years, over-reliance on free normal university student and "Rejuvenation Plans" to recruit teachers to meet the needs for teaching staff, lack of knowledge in the structure of the subject, poor stability as well as serious non-professionalism had caused current professional music education as still being unable to truly meet the requirements for quality education. The age factor of professional music teachers that seems to be highly polarized and not suitable for diversified development in current

music education system make it difficult to achieve the latest “Internet era” of tutoring style music teaching. Generally, issues in recruiting qualified professional teachers for schools in rural areas has become a worldwide phenomenon mainly due to the financial, geographic, living and emotional conditions of the teachers (Zhai 2019). At the same time, methods required to retain the teachers especially excellent teachers in rural school are also considered as a worldwide educational concern. Literatures on the retention of teachers reported that the willingness of a teacher to enter and stay in the teacher labour market are heavily dependent on the resources of the schools, community amenities and salaries allocated to the teachers (Guarino et al. 2006). Previously in China, the total amount of full-time teachers in schools at rural areas had drastically declined from 3.23 million in 2012 to 2.81 million in 2017 with average decreasing rate of 2.754% annually (Li et al. 2020). Besides from the financial, geographic, living and emotional conditions of the teachers, low social status of music teachers, poor treatment, poor working environment, weak guarantee mechanism, the absence of systematic planning for teacher development, inadequate initiative as well as promoting channels for personal growth also led to the declining amount of professional music teachers in rural areas. However, some teachers in rural schools did find true happiness in teaching and nurturing the neediest students in the poor rural areas whereby the teachers were often willing to stay in rural schools to help in improving the academic performance of the rural students (Tang 2018; Jimerson and Haddock 2015). Dialogues, interactions, exchanges and collaborative innovations for growth of educational teams from both urban as well as rural primary and secondary schools are still insufficient and need to be carried out soon in order to improve the condition of music education in rural areas.

BASIC TEACHING EQUIPMENT AND INADEQUATE FUNDING

Many educational institute especially schools in rural areas tend to disregard music education whereby even if the schools did have the required equipment for music teaching purposes, instead of fully utilizing the equipment for daily teaching, the equipment are used as props or in disused in order to cope with inspection that are carried out by the

Ministry of Education. Some schools do not have an independent music classroom which make the schools fail to guarantee constructive music teaching conditions for music teachers. The lack of various teaching equipment and corresponding audio as well as video materials necessary for music teaching is very unfavourable for the development of music teaching in rural schools. Music education in rural primary and secondary schools is the foundation for aesthetic education. Corresponding measures such as supplying the required music equipment, increasing funding and improving the quality of music teachers need to be taken urgently to overcome the shortage of music teachers, improve the quality of music teachers and pique the student’s passion towards music education in order to gradually cultivate the basic music knowledge among primary and middle school students. In short, the current urgent task that need to be done is to improve the quality of music education in primary and secondary education at rural areas in order to narrow the gap between urban and rural areas.

In short, through previous researches, local education administrations and schools generally agreed to an urgent need to establish professional and highly qualified music teacher team that are capable of being stationed at a specific institution for a long time which will definitely bring a great significance to primary and secondary music education in rural areas. Although people generally believed that the influence of music education is far-reaching, there are still many problems and obstacles at present time. However, infrastructure and benefits for music teachers should be further strengthened. Thus, on this basis, music education in primary and secondary schools in Shaanxi must actively attend on issues related to the supply, talent training as well as collaborative innovation models of music teachers at schools in rural areas. A systematic music education management system as well as a working mechanism must be set in order to integrate various types of education resources with current development in music education field. Effective music education along with a working mechanism should be in rural schools in Shaanxi province, China in order to solve the shortage of music teachers, which will definitely have crucial theoretical and practical significance to the music education field.

COUNTERMEASURES FOR MUSIC EDUCATION IN RURAL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

PROMOTING THE BASIC CONCEPTS OF MUSIC EDUCATION IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Generally, the good thinking and effective models of creative learning can be found in art education (Sawyer 2017). Hence, proceedings, dialogues, interviews, investigations as well as seminars among all levels of administration authorities should be carried out in order to spread the basic understanding on music education in rural primary and secondary schools. The communication should allow education administration and schools at all levels to further understand the important as well as worth value of music education in rural primary and secondary schools in Shaanxi, China. There are a number of intriguing activities and exemplary practices of music education in rural primary as well as secondary schools that have been carried out throughout the years. For instance, except for West Zhangbao Elementary School in Liquan, primary schools in other rural town currently do not have music classrooms. The teachers need to bring along electronic pianos or use tape recorders for every music lessons. Thus, to solve this issue, organization from West Zhangbao Elementary School had organized “Children’s Palace” whereby in two class periods at every Wednesday afternoon, teachers with various music skills are invited to teach piano classes, erhu classes, choir classes, painting classes and Chinese calligraphy class for the students

Currently, application to continue education reform project in Shaanxi province named “Exploration on the Mechanism and System Innovation for Continuing Education Project of Music Education Teachers” is being carried out. Leaders of the research group from the project have to conduct music education counselling lectures for Xunyi, Xingping and Liyang area in Xianyang, Shaanxi province, China. The main members participating in this meaningful project also have to participate in the planning as well as reviewing the cultural, music and other festivals between involving districts to improve the overall music education in Shaanxi province, China.

PROMOTE FULL-TIME MUSIC TEACHERS

Since current education level in rural areas is very different from that in the cities, more and more parents from rural areas are transferring their children to urban schools for a better education. As a result, the number of students in rural primary schools decreases until some schools in rural areas have only few students left in the whole school. Hence, in order to overcome this situation, two aspects including the amount of professional music teachers and the level of music education desperately needed urgent improvement. However, due to the limitation on the arrangement of teachers, the settlements of teaching staff cannot be completed within a short period of time. The non-stop request for professional music teachers nationwide has improved the efforts of the government to train and produce more qualified music school teacher. At the same time, in order to reduce the desperate need for music teachers at rural schools, teachers of other disciplines with tendency as well as interest in music field can be tapped to be encouraged to join education and teaching in the music discipline. Prejudice that traditional examination subjects are more important than music subjects need to be changed while promoting the importance of music subjects for quality education of students.

The school administration authorities should treat music related subjects equally to those of mainstream subjects by increasing the time period for music lessons, increasing the number and proportion of music courses, improving the treatment for music teachers while improving the status of music teachers in rural schools. The environment, facilities and equipment prepared by school administration authorities should allow music teachers to teach without worries while retaining music teachers in the rural schools. Music lecturers from universities can also be arranged to teach at primary and secondary schools in the rural areas while at the same time-sharing music teaching equipment to make full use of limited music education resources.

IMPROVE MUSIC TEACHING PROCESS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Generally, music curriculum which includes the content for classroom teaching as well as all

activities that related to music is jointly developed by the school and the music teachers. According to surveys, students in rural schools do not prefer their music teachers utilize teaching method that involving singing word by word because that particular learning method is monotonous and seems boring for the students. Students from rural school prefer teaching technique that require teacher-student interaction in order to create fun and interesting music learning environment. Music teachers should employ interesting teaching methods such as the Orff Approach as well as the Kodaly Method to help their students to understand the conveyed music content and to pique their interest in learning music. Students of different ages will have different mental states according to their developmental characteristics. Thus, music teachers should adapt to the students, guide them, tap into the music potential of the students, stimulate their interest to learn music while encouraging the musical perception and musical expressiveness of the students. Interesting and intriguing teaching plans for music related subject should be designed in order to allow the students to have interest in music related disciplines.

Through practical music activities, students should be able to experience different, new and interesting learning process as compared the dull classroom lesson. Students also need to have a direct music experience which appears to be one of the crucial strategies in order to induce quality education. Data from surveys indicate that most schools in the rural areas only organize singing contests and "Cultural Night" event once a year while some schools do not even organise any music related events. The two music related events in a year definitely unable to provide students with enough chances to express their musical talent. Instead of just organizing music related events, rural schools can try to set up school choirs and even various music-based club such traditional local opera club, instrumental band club as well as vocal music club for students to join according to their own interest. After the official school hours, schools should allow music teachers and even music experts from outside of the school to teach or have rehearsals with the students. The progress of the students should be accessed through performances, events or singing competition such as "Top Ten Best Campus Singer"

that are held regularly. The regularly organized music related events may enrich music activities in the campus and promote fun as well as interesting music atmosphere in the campus.

ACTIVELY PROMOTING COLLABORATIVE INNOVATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS THROUGH RESOURCE INTEGRATION AND CULTURAL INNOVATION

By organizing distinctive teaching practices, cultural services, teachers training courses along with the promotion on the value of demonstration as well as discourse-led teaching method in music education by lecturers from colleges and universities, chances for music collaboration, cultural co-construction along with quality of both aesthetic education and the music teachers can be greatly improved. Professional music colleges as well as universities can be utilized as a platform in order to explore collaborative mechanism to promote the two-way interactive staffing, assigning music expert in rural schools, forum training, public welfare promotion, cultural performances, field investigations, project planning and cultural related activity. The collaboration should be able to promote the establishment of high-level, diversified and rationally structured public cultural innovation team to enhance the ability of university personnel in training school teachers and local talent as well as cultural management. The interaction may create beneficial development on cultural heritage along with a possible new path and brand in term of training school teachers.

Collaboration between universities, colleges, local governments, primary and secondary schools to explore as well as implement new mechanisms to train rural primary and secondary school teachers should be highly promoted. Actively developing national training programs in the city as well as rural areas while strengthen trainings for primary and secondary school teacher especially rural music teachers will also help in solving issues related to insufficient professional music teachers. Establishment of inter-school aesthetic education collaboration zones that allow the training courses for music teachers held by a few collaborating schools in accordance with three main aspects of "matching, improving and integrating" plan might contribute to increasing number of professional music teachers for schools in rural areas.

DEVELOPING ONLINE MUSIC EDUCATION MODULE FOR SCHOOLS IN RURAL AREAS

Any effective teaching practices should incorporate both dialogical and cooperative learning strategies that consider the knowledge as well as the learning abilities of the students (López-Íñiguez and Pozo 2016). With the development of “Internet Plus”, online education has made a tremendous impact on the education industry. Currently, various benefits as well as advantages of online education via Internet Plus have managed to improve the overall education system especially music education in rural areas. Online music education might be able to solve the critical shortage of professional music teachers and curriculum resources for schools in rural areas. A combination of online music education as well as traditional offline education will definitely provide an extra music learning opportunity since the online music classes can be taken by the students anytime and anywhere with internet connection even when the student is at home. Through the combination of both online and offline music lessons, students might be able to save some time that they need to travel to their school to attend fully offline music lessons. The students can also gain more music knowledge faster since online music education are not limited by time or location. Contents from online music education students may allow the students to skip the waiting or downloading process while greatly improving the efficiency of music teaching and learning. Via online music education, during online live broadcast music classes, the streaming platform will record the whole teaching process to allow the students to re-watch the lesson, carry out some necessary practise to let the students to fully understand the knowledges that are being taught by the music teachers. In traditional offline teaching classrooms, the lessons will not be recorded whereby at the end of each class, some students may not understand some knowledges that are being taught to them. Nowadays, depending only on traditional offline music education is not considered as an effective method to systematically accumulate knowledge in student point of view even though the traditional offline education system has been proven to induce independent learning ability of students. In traditional teaching process practiced by teachers in China, excessive participation of teachers in the learning process makes it difficult for the students to exercise their autonomy. Recently, the latest curriculum seems to advocate that students are the protagonist with teachers having the crucial leading role in both online as well as offline

classroom which will give the students more time to learn and study independently.

MAKING FULL USE OF LOCAL TRADITIONAL MUSIC RESOURCES

China is a country with history of thousands of years which at the same time possess music that is rich with its local characteristics and culture. The curriculum standards for compulsory educational disciplines as formulated by the Ministry of Education China have made a very specific requirements on the promotion of national culture in every music classrooms. The newly formulated curriculum standards clearly state that “The excellent traditional music of all ethnic groups in China should be regarded as important content in music education. By learning all the traditional music, students will be familiar with and love their motherland’s music culture while at the same time enhancing national awareness as well as cultivating patriotism.” In “Several Opinions of Ministry of Education on Promoting Development of Art Education in Schools” that have been promulgated by the Ministry of Education China, the government department clearly encourages all types of schools to develop art courses based on national and regional characteristics which currently or previously present in China. Through this proposed strategy, the inheritance value of music culture in music classroom has been raised to a very important and respectively high position.

With history for thousands of years, China has become a country that is rich with folk and traditional arts. To date, there are more than 300 type of local traditional operas that illustrate the culture and lifestyle of various ethnic groups especially those that resides in rural areas. Local cultures as well as arts should be incorporated into music education for rural primary and secondary schools by combining general music knowledge and local culture in order to establish “local culture and art-oriented education model”. Nowadays, for a country that is intensively promoting its national and traditional cultures, it is particularly important to introduce local ethnic culture into classroom teaching module for both primary and secondary schools in rural areas.

RECONSTRUCTION OF RURAL CULTURAL SPIRITUALISTIC ECOSYSTEM

The artistic features and realistic functions of rural aesthetic education which includes art as well as music education should be actively explored

based on the document “Opinions of the General Office of the State Council on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving Aesthetic Education in Schools”. Solving recent urgent issues on the shortage of music teachers at both primary and secondary schools in rural areas will indirectly hasten the creation of advanced but beautiful rural area. Without gradual development and full participation of new qualified music teachers, the reconstruction of beautiful rural areas with cultural spiritualistic ecosystem might never be realized. Similarly, along with the promotion on “new urbanization” nationwide strategy and the “culturally strong province” regional strategy, developments in rural areas has reached an undelayable and imperative stage. Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Education China need to research on how to fully utilize the power of music teachers in primary and secondary schools to implement the concept guidance as well as practical guidance of music teachers in rural music education. Joint cooperation between the two ministries is urgently required in order to improve the current shortage of music teachers and to improve music education at both primary and secondary schools in rural areas.

CONCLUSION

Generally, through extensive studies as well as investigation done in this research, issues related to music teachers at primary and secondary in rural areas can be separated into three levels which are the upper, middle, and lower. The “upper” level refers to the design, supply and guarantee of rural music education at all levels of education by administrative departments, local governments as well as cultural ministry. The “medium” level refers to “integration of music teachers and music education at schools in urban as well as rural areas” that should exist in the structure of rural music teacher. The “lower” level refers to the context of fundamental rural aesthetic education and cultural construction under the strategy of rural revitalization and new urbanization. In order to bring about changes on the current backward music teaching standard in rural primary and secondary schools in Shaanxi, the quality of music teachers that assigned to rural primary and secondary schools need to be improved, the professional teaching ability of music teachers need to be enhanced while increasing financial allocation for music education in rural schools. The

traditional educational concepts need to be changed and updated from the ideological level. Promotion on the importance of music education for quality education should be done so that the status of music education especially in rural primary and secondary schools can be improved and at the same time enhanced as soon as possible.

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