



## Evaluation of the Quality of Public Art Education in Universities: Origins and Current Situation

Xueyan Wang<sup>\*</sup>

Jian Li<sup>\*\*</sup>

### Abstract

*The study had comprehensively assessed the current situation of public art education evaluation in Chinese universities by sorting out existing literature in a scientific, effective, and objective manner, pointing out the problems of non-standard evaluation system and a single mode of evaluating public art education in Chinese universities. This study recommended that the evaluation of public art education in universities should involve establishing unified evaluation standards, emphasize personalized development, and adopt diversified evaluation methods. Through establishing a sound evaluation system for public art education in universities as well as promoting the integration of public art education evaluation and teaching practice, can the quality of talent cultivation in Chinese universities be effectively improved.*

**Keywords:** Public art education, Evaluation system, Multivariate evaluation

### Introduction

With the strong emphasis for comprehensive human development in modern society, the value and role of public art education of shaping well-rounded individuals have been increasingly emphasized. In particular, since the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the state has attached great importance to art education, issuing many art education documents and implementing art education evaluation policies to facilitate development and reform in the evaluation of art

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<sup>\*</sup>, <sup>\*\*</sup> Panyapiwat Institute of Management

education in schools. However, due to the relatively late construction and establishment of the evaluation system in Chinese universities, as well as the absence of an independent evaluation system for public art education, there has been a lack of focus on the distinctiveness of art education in terms of setting evaluation criteria and choosing evaluation methods. The substantial differences in levels, quality, and nature of higher art education in China, as well as the accumulation of historical and cultural factors, present challenges in formulating clear evaluation plans. Additionally, the construction and initiation of the evaluation system in Chinese universities have been relatively late, lacking an independent evaluation system for public art education and failing to highlight the distinctiveness of art education in terms of setting evaluation criteria and choosing evaluation methods. As a result, the quality evaluation system for public art education in Chinese universities is not yet comprehensive enough.

### **Research Origins**

Public art education is an educational approach that uses art as a medium to enhance people's aesthetic taste, innovation abilities, and overall qualities. Its core objective is to improve aesthetic taste, awaken human nature, evoke people's sense of value and awareness of life, and elevate cognitive abilities. As art education receives increasing attention, the evaluation of public art education is also gaining more significance. However, due to the short development time, rapid growth, large scale, and excessive number of training programs in China's art education, there is a lack of orderly development. A comprehensive, scientific, quantifiable, and characteristic evaluation system for art education has yet to be established.

Furthermore, the lack of in-depth research on the complexity of artistic research results, the absence of comprehensive evaluation methods for determining the value of artistic research results, the setting of unreasonable evaluation indicators, the rigid evaluation mechanism, and the lack of standardized evaluation processes have resulted in distorted evaluation outcomes. This irrational evaluation process and results mislead the development direction of art education. The lag in art education evaluation research has become a bottleneck that hinders the healthy development of the discipline of art in China.

Moreover, the construction and initiation of the evaluation system in Chinese universities started relatively late. There are no independent evaluation systems specifically for public art education, nor do they highlight the uniqueness of art education when it comes to setting evaluation indicators and selecting evaluation methods. As a result, there are many controversies in the construction of the quality evaluation system for public art education. Therefore, the evaluation of the quality of public art education has become a weak link in the education system.

### **Research Objectives:**

1. By sorting out the existing literature, we aim to identify the issues in evaluating public art education in Chinese universities.
2. Our goal is to present a viable solution for evaluating public art education in Chinese universities.

### **Evaluation of Public Art Education in Chinese Universities**

Currently, with growing attention to Chinese higher education in art and the rapid development of higher education evaluation, many scholars have conducted in-depth explorations from both theoretical and practical aspects. Overall, China's research on evaluation of higher art education still mainly focuses on the teaching evaluation of art colleges. Based on a review of existing literature, it is found that the research focus of public art education in universities includes the evaluation system of higher art education, evaluation methods and functions in university art education, evaluation of classroom teaching in higher art education, and evaluation methods for higher art education teachers.

Various scholars, such as Duan Peng and Song Kai (2016), argue that there is a lack of an independent artistic achievement evaluation system in the evaluation of higher art education, and they suggest the necessity of establishing an artistic outcome evaluation system and measures for its implementation. Pan Lusheng (2016) pointed out that the current art education in China faces various issues, such as uneven development and serious homogenization. The talent cultivation design does not meet the needs of national development, and the concept of talent cultivation is disconnected from social demands. The fundamental reason lies in the

lack of standardized management and an independent applicable evaluation system for art disciplines. Su Yan (2017) pointed out that the current evaluation of art education in China overly emphasizes a “conclusive” evaluation focusing on “results” and neglects the “process-oriented” evaluation. There are few successful cases of process-oriented evaluation in art education in China, indicating a lack of a three-dimensional process evaluation system with clear evaluation criteria, functions, contents, and forms. Measures for the application of process-oriented evaluation in higher art education were proposed. Cao Yiqiang (2017) believes that in order to establish a sound disciplinary evaluation system for art studies, it is necessary to scientifically adjust the first-level disciplines, properly handle the relationship between artistic creation and academic research, and scientifically construct a degree system for both professional and research aspects. Wang Wenna, Gang Gang, and Xu Hongming (2018) pointed out that the evaluation method of “uniformity and one-size-fits-all” is particularly prominent in the evaluation of art education in universities. They proposed that attention should be paid to discipline construction, integrating creation and research, and establishing a comprehensive, scientific, and reasonable artistic talent evaluation system that meets the needs of the times and follows artistic principles. Wu Yana, Guo Xin, and Yang Maosen (2020) pointed out that educational evaluation should be guided by educational thoughts and policies, and based on various educational evaluation goals, methods, and systems. They emphasized the importance of exploring typical cases of educational evaluation to promote educational reform and development. In terms of curriculum evaluation, a multidimensional and stereoscopic curriculum education evaluation model should be constructed, with the goals of “application-oriented evaluation objectives, process-oriented evaluation methods, and diversified evaluation subjects.” Jiang Xiaodong (2021) analyzed the current situation of arts education in Chinese universities and discussed the existing problems and the key areas for reform. They proposed a reform plan of “integrating the two ‘wings’ and focusing on multiple domains.”

Most of the above scholars’ research is based on the evaluation system of Chinese higher education, and they have not conducted a comprehensive exploration of the evaluation system. Their research viewpoints mainly focus on analyzing the current situation of China’s higher education evaluation system and constructing evaluation schemes.

In addition, other scholars have also studied the construction of evaluation organizations, supporting regulations, and how to further improve and perfect the evaluation system in Chinese universities. They suggested that China should learn from advanced foreign practices in the evaluation system and methods of higher education, in order to realize the scientific and social evaluation of the higher education system, and promote the development and improvement of Chinese higher education.

Zeng Fanren (2009) pointed out that in the development of public art education in universities, it is necessary to combine the characteristics of universities, follow the laws of art education development, and always adhere to the Chinese characteristics, taking the path of art education development with Chinese characteristics. Song Bei and Li Hongju (2008) believe that China's higher art education lacks unified evaluation criteria, the theoretical foundation of art education evaluation is weak, the design of the indicator system is not scientific enough, and a sound evaluation system for higher art education has not been established. The work of art education evaluation is relatively lagging behind. The art education evaluation framework matrix developed by the United States' National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) based on the "National Standards for Arts Education" is worthy of reference and learning for China. It is necessary to establish a reasonable assessment system based on the current status of art education in China, learn from the excellent achievements of foreign art education, further scientifically optimize art education and teaching, incorporate factors that influence the evaluation of higher education art education into the university's public art education evaluation system, emphasize the process of evaluation, and integrate the development of students' artistic ability and humanistic literacy. Duan Peng (2016) pointed out that considering the experience of art education in the United States, Chinese higher education art education, which is in the stage of reform, should conform to the international development trend of art education, find its own characteristics and positioning, and play the role of "educating people through aesthetics." It should focus on cultivating the quality and abilities of talents in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and improve students' aesthetic level and comprehensive artistic literacy. Zhang Xudong (2017) stated that based on the relevant experience of art evaluation in the United States' NAEP, the reform of art education evaluation in China should be based on curriculum and develop assessment

tools. It should be guided by social needs to enhance students' artistic literacy. It should conduct stratified sampling evaluation based on educational fairness. It should also prioritize students and emphasize process-oriented assessment, and establish a scientific, practical, and qualitative and quantitative combined evaluation system to stimulate students' potential in art learning and improve the quality of art education in China. Li Jing (2022) pointed out that the evaluation of art education in the United States has shifted from "teaching-centered" to "student-centered" and has formed a comprehensive evaluation system. Compared with the comprehensive art education evaluation system in the United States, there is less research on the practice of art education evaluation in China. Currently, Chinese art education is transitioning from the focus on "knowledge and skills" to the focus on "ability and literacy." Art education evaluation should focus on improving students' learning ability, and evaluation methods should be consistent with students' learning goals. Strengthening teacher-student interaction and sharing evaluation responsibilities can fundamentally achieve the ultimate goal of promoting student learning development.

Overall, there is limited research on the evaluation of higher education art education in China. Currently, China is in a transitional period, and evaluation work is still a part of conventional higher education evaluation rather than a developed evaluation system that is tailored to its own characteristics.

### **The issues with the evaluation of public art education in Chinese universities are as follows**

1. Lack of unified evaluation standards: Currently, each university has different evaluation methods and criteria for public art education, lacking a unified set of evaluation guidelines. This leads to subjectivity and unfairness in evaluation results, hindering the improvement of educational quality.

2. Excessive focus on form rather than substance: Some evaluations place excessive emphasis on students' performance in public art performances or exhibitions, neglecting the evaluation of their actual artistic cultivation and creative abilities. As a result, evaluation results may not align with students' actual levels.

3. Neglect of personalized development: Traditional evaluation methods often overlook students' individualized development and innovative abilities, emphasizing standardized training and selection. This restricts the cultivation of students' unique artistic styles and creative abilities, limiting their growth potential.

4. Lack of diversified evaluation methods: Current evaluation methods primarily rely on exams, competitions, and scoring, lacking other diversified evaluation methods. For example, introducing student artwork exhibitions, portfolio evaluations, and practical project assessments can provide a more comprehensive understanding of students' overall abilities and potential.

### **Measures that can be taken for the evaluation of public art education in Chinese universities**

1. Establish unified evaluation standards: Universities should collectively discuss and formulate unified evaluation standards for public art education, establishing a fair and scientifically-based evaluation system.

2. Comprehensive evaluation of form and substance: Evaluations should consider both students' performance in public art performances or exhibitions and their actual artistic cultivation and creative abilities. Evaluation results should reflect students' actual levels more objectively and accurately.

3. Emphasize personalized development: Evaluations should focus on student's individualized development and innovative abilities, encouraging them to showcase their unique artistic styles and creative abilities. Evaluation results should be able to reflect students' personal strengths and potential.

4. Diversify evaluation methods: Evaluations should employ various methods, including exams, competitions, and scoring, while also incorporating student artwork exhibitions, portfolio evaluations, and practical project assessments to gain a comprehensive understanding of students' overall abilities and potential.

## Conclusion

Constructing a scientific and applicable evaluation system based on the development laws of art education, implementing the principle of “diversified classification” in disciplinary evaluation, and promoting evaluation to return to its fundamental function of “evaluation to promote construction” will help supervise and ensure the quality of public art education. It will also inspire teachers to innovate in teaching content and methods and establish a self-restrained and self-improving mechanism. Only by breaking through the bottleneck of evaluation in public art education, establishing an evaluation system that integrates theory and practice and integrates disciplines and specialties, can we promote the healthy development of public art education in Chinese universities, improve the overall quality of talent cultivation in Chinese universities, and fulfill the fundamental task of cultivating virtue and nurturing talents in Chinese universities.

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