

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN EASTERN AND WESTERN AESTHETIC VIEW: A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY AESTHETIC EDUCATION FROM A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Xu Shuyan

Minnan Institute of Technology

Abstract: This study takes a cross-cultural perspective to make a comparative analysis of eastern and western aesthetic ideas and then makes an in-depth discussion on aesthetic education pattern, curriculum system and teaching strategy of different countries or regions. By systematically sorting mainstream aesthetic education theories in China and western countries, thoroughly analyzing practical cases, and investigating the status quo in communication and acceptance of western aesthetic education theories in China, this study aims to reveal the universality and difference of aesthetic education in different cultural contexts. It also discusses how to effectively learn from international experiences to foster self-confidence in Chinese culture.

Key words: Cross-culture, aesthetic education, cultural confidence, aesthetic education theory, comparative study

1. Introduction

Aesthetic education, as an education pattern to shape individual aesthetic appreciation and noble emotion, plays an obvious key role in improving individuals' comprehensive quality. Throughout the long history, both Chinese and western civilization have age-old traditions in aesthetic pursuit and educational practice. Such pursuit and practice give rise to distinctive forms in different cultural environment. By opening a unique observation path, cross-cultural comparative study enables us to have an insight into aesthetic ideas in different cultural contexts as well as the root for its formation.

First, from the perspective of data-type argument, a report released by UNESCO shows that global investment in aesthetic education presents a sustainable growth momentum, which reflects gradually growing concern for aesthetic education in different countries and regions. In the case of China, the proportion of aesthetic education curriculum in primary and secondary school education presents a gradual rising trend in recent years, which undoubtedly shows education authorities' increasing attention to aesthetic education. On the other hand, in western countries like the United States, United Kingdom, etc., aesthetic education curriculums also receive equal attention. In some private schools, aesthetic education curriculum even has greater importance than math and science curriculums.

Second, according to factual evidence, great differences are shown in aesthetic ideas between China and western countries in the course of historical development. In China, traditional aesthetic ideas advocate "literature is the vehicle of ideas", emphasizing the role of art works in ideological content and moral education. In comparison, western aesthetic education ideas focus more on individualized expression and aesthetic independence, with art works emphasizing more about formal and technical exploration. Such difference is deeply rooted in philosophic thought, social architecture and historic tradition of the two cultures.

Furthermore, from the theoretical perspective, cross-cultural comparative study will help us more thoroughly reveal the fundamental nature of aesthetic education. In his theoretical work “Critique of Judgment” on aesthetic education, German philosopher Kant (1790) pointed out that aesthetic judgment is universal and transcends individual experience and interests. Today, cross-cultural views on aesthetic communication gain gradual development based on this theory. Namely, through communication and dialogue, it is possible to understand and integrate aesthetic ideas under different cultural backgrounds.

Thus, this study aims to discuss similarities and differences between eastern and western aesthetic ideas, and talks about how to learn from art education experiences of other countries to provide useful reference for the development and practice of Chinese art education. Comparative analysis of Chinese and western art education will enable us to further understand the nature of art education and provide theoretical support for the development of art education cause in China.

2. Discussion on modern and contemporary mainstream aesthetic education thoughts and their practice in the western countries

In study of modern and contemporary mainstream aesthetic education thoughts and their practice in the western countries, diversified and cross-disciplinary research methods are preferred. Take aesthetic education in Swedish universities as an example. It emphasizes professionalism and independence of education institutions, and employs unique aesthetic education means to highlight the role of aesthetic education in positively promoting curriculum teaching in other subjects.

From Plato and Aristotle in ancient Greek to thinkers after renaissance and then to modern aesthetic education experts, western aesthetic education thoughts experience constant evolution and development. In Plato’s view, aesthetic represents a conceptual existence that transcends perception and form. By contrast, Aristotle emphasizes more about actual experience and perceptibility of aesthetics. In the modern and contemporary world, aesthetic education thinkers make constant and thorough attempts to discuss the concept of aesthetics, exploring how to use art education to influence human emotion and aesthetic taste.

John Dewey, an outstanding American philosopher and psychologist renowned as a pioneer in education reform, produces long-lasting and profound impact on western education field with his aesthetic education ideas, who still occupies a place in Chinese education world today. Dewey argues that, aesthetic education should not be separated from daily life, but should constitute an important part of life. He emphasizes that art education will effectively cultivate individual creativity, aesthetic experience and sense of social responsibility. In addition, Dewey advocates the idea of replacing traditional teaching model dominated by textbooks with active and experiential proactive assignments. In the work “Art As Experience” completed in his old age (1934), Dewey suggested building monist aesthetic system based on “Live Creature” to restore connectivity between art and non-art, and between high art and popular art. On this basis, Dewey raises the aesthetic view point of “art as experience” and expounds in detail the root of art experience and daily experience. In his opinion, art should draw inspiration from diversified sources, and art works are worthy of wide acceptance. Dewey hypothesizes a Utopia where art is not limited to the aesthetic layer of civilization, but rather is civilization itself. He also advocates

the teaching concept of “learning from doing”, encouraging students to develop their potential through practice, exploration and creation. Meanwhile, Dewey opposes to departmental teaching, saying that curriculum content should cater to students’ needs and acceptability, and that teaching should be centered on activities. To conclude, John Dewey’s aesthetic education concept highlights the importance of practice, experience and creation, which still carries important enlightenment meaning in contemporary education.

Herbert Read, a UK poet, art critic and aesthetic education theorist, builds a massive theoretical system from the perspectives of art, psychology and philosophy. In his work “Education Through Art”, aesthetic education is described as the logic core and cornerstone of general education. Read (1958) held that it is through art education that children’s intention will interact and integrate with concept, feeling and thought. Excellent art education will not only develop children’s creativity and logic thinking, but also go a long way in shaping personality. In addition, based on Sigmund Freud’s theory of subconsciousness, Read suggests that art education can eliminate sense of alienation in children’s subconsciousness, re-shape sense of social oneness, alleviate psychological pressure, enhance physical and mental health, and achieve unity of sensibility and rationality in personality, thereby contributing to social harmony.

Elliot W. Eisner, an outstanding US art educator and curriculum theory expert, leaves profound imprints in the field of aesthetic education. His work “Education Artistic Vision” was compiled during the climax of American curriculum reform movement. According to Eisner(1972), the fundamental purpose of art education was to help children understand the role of fine art in cultural evolution, cultivate their ability to evaluate aesthetics, and guide them in creation of art works with sense of beauty and expressive force. In view of several problems facing American art education circle, he raised the education concept of “subject as the center”, a concept creating widespread impact in the late 20th century. Eisner emphasizes that, art education should cover three independent fields of “preparation”, “criticism” and “culture”. In addition, he strongly believes that artistic talent is not a gift, but is gradually cultivated through systematic and programmed learning. Therefore, teaching process should be gradually deepened in order. For instance, in his study on the development of children’s painting, Eisner pointed out that children’s painting undergoes a process from schematic stage to realistic stage. Children tend to express ideas in painting and prefer to use color to convey emotions.

Jean Piaget, a Swedish outstanding psychologist and philosopher, is well-known for his research on children’s growth. With cognitive-development theory creating profound impact on aesthetic education, he is on a par with Sigmund Freud and is renowned as a great master of psychology in the 20th century. Different from Freud who pays attention to personality and development in research, Piaget(1948) focused on changes in children’s way of thinking. By dividing the cognitive theory into four development stages, he expounded in detail children’s unique characteristics in these four stages. Based on these researches, he put forward the theory of children’s cognitive development. Piaget’s theoretical thoughts not only promote development of psychology in America, but also contribute to prosperity in children’s psychology, which points the way for the development of cognitive development theory and provides precious enlightenment for contemporary aesthetic education.

3. Discussion on modern and contemporary mainstream aesthetic education thoughts and their practice in China:

First, from the perspective of traditional aesthetic education concept, China has a profound meaning and a long history in traditional aesthetic education thoughts. For instance, “Book of Rites•Book of Music” introduces the concept of “civilizing people through music”, and highlights the importance of music education in cultivating individual harmony. In addition, literatures like “Book of Songs”, “Songs of Chu” became important materials for aesthetic education in ancient times with their high artistic value. The ancient aesthetic education concept advocates flexible integration between aesthetics, morality and intelligence, and cultivates individual moral feeling and realm of life with the help of aesthetic activities.

In modern times, penetrated and impacted by western aesthetic education theories, China’s aesthetic education concept gradually yields modern aesthetic education system with local characteristics. For instance, writer Lu Xun (1913) raised the aesthetic education concept of “integration of beauty and truth, goodness”, and highlighted the key role of aesthetic education in shaping truth, goodness and beauty in personality. In another example, Zhu Guangqian (1932) considered that the essence of aesthetic education was emotional education, while the core purpose was to elevate people’s emotion and aesthetic quality. Aesthetic education concept in contemporary era gives more emphasis to individual difference and development, and advocates individualized aesthetic education. China’s aesthetic thoughts and practice at the present stage has evolved gradually in the context of integration of traditional cultural essence and modern education concept.

Liang Qichao, an outstanding bourgeoisie politician and education reformer in modern China, also one of the four liberal art research supervisors of the Tsinghua University with far-reaching impact, makes outstanding contribution to the building of theoretical system for aesthetic education. With broad theoretical view and profound thinking, he set up unique, brilliant aesthetic education concept in China’s history of modern aesthetic education thought by integrating wisdom of both ancient and modern times, thus forming unique innovation. In Liang Qichao’s view, emotion education is a key art education to cultivate aesthetic view. Liang Qichao(1922) emphasized that “beauty is an indispensable factor in human life”, and believed that “emotion is the most sacred existence”. He pointed out that, the major tool in emotion education is art that includes three fields of music, fine art and literature. Art is considered as an important path for cultivating human emotion and developing good sentiment. It is not only pursued by traditional scholars and bureaucrats as an ideal aesthetic world, but also a response to the phenomenon of people’s emotional sluggishness and weak sense of responsibility in the society at that time, aiming to reshape national personality through emotional cultivation. In his aesthetic education thought, Liang Qichao always centers on the shaping and cultivation of “new citizens”. It is his strong belief that national quality is crucial to national development. He advocated that, “to reshape a country’s citizens, we must first renovate the country’s novels.” Closely connecting literature and art with a nation’s destiny, Liang Qichao regards literature and art as a key path to shape “new citizens”. In overall, Liang Qichao’s aesthetic education concept not only inherits and carries forward the essence of China’s ancient aesthetic culture and aesthetic education practice, but also embodies characteristics of the times: emancipation of humanity. His aesthetic education ideas are not only progressive in history, but also have important realistic value and enlightenment meaning

for the contemporary development of aesthetic education.

As a famous culture scholar, philosopher and aesthetician in modern China, Wang Guowei contributes important theory construction and unique view to aesthetic education, becoming one pioneer in interpretative construction of China's aesthetic education tradition. In his academic research, Wang Guowei absorbs western concept on aesthetics and aesthetic education, and gives in-depth analysis on its link with Confucius' educational thought. Wang Guowei points out that, Confucius' educational concept and practice can be summarized as starting from aesthetic education and finally making aesthetic education great. Wang Guowei proposed the concept of "complete figures", emphasizing that education aims to cultivate individuals enjoying all-round development in morality, intelligence, physique and art. He advocated that education should be not limited to instruction of knowledge and skills, but should pay attention to the cultivation of morality, emotion and aesthetics, thus leading individuals to a harmonious and free world in spiritual level. In addition, Wang Guowei (1906) was the first to confer independent status to aesthetic education, who specifically pointed out that aesthetic education aims to guide people towards "the most absolute fun". In his opinion, aesthetic education is a way for people to elevate nobility; by creating a clean, orderly and civilized environment, and resorting to diversified audio-visual artistic forms including natural beautiful scenery, painting, poem and music, it is possible to effectively cultivate students' sentiment, thereby fulfilling the final goal of aesthetic education.

Lu Xun, the founder of China's modern science in the field of aesthetic education, makes theoretical contributions mainly by thoroughly revealing the essence of aesthetic education. In his view, the core to aesthetic education lies in emotional cultivation, and the purpose of aesthetic education is to foster noble sentiment in people. Professor Lu Xun further stressed that, the practice of aesthetic education should not be confined to pure experience of beauty appreciation, but should dig into and stimulate individuals' spiritual potential to give an impetus for elevating spiritual outlook of the nation. Not only seeing western art's contribution to aesthetic education, he also emphasized the need to draw inspiration from traditional Chinese art and facilitate innovation and development of local aesthetic value. In conclusion, professor Lu Xun's aesthetic education concept takes people as the starting point and integrates the cultural essence of Han and Tang dynasties to cure social problems in old China and stimulate spiritual vitality of the nation.

Cai Yuanpei's aesthetic education concept takes root in in-depth exploration into eastern and western culture and full understanding of China's status quo in education. He holds that aesthetic education plays an important role in cultivating sentiment and purifying the mind. Under the guidance of this concept, Cai Yuanpei raises the idea of "replacing religion with aesthetic education". Based on comparison between aesthetic education and religion, he pointed out obvious limitation in religion. Cai Yuanpei advocates "replacing religion with aesthetic education" on the ground that aesthetic education features freedom, progressiveness and universality, while religion is characterized by compulsion, conservation and limitation. Thus, aesthetic education can fill the functional gap of religion in modern society and provide people with a spiritual home.

Feng Zikai, an outstanding artist and aesthetician in modern China known as "forefather of domestic cartoon", makes extraordinary contribution to the building of aesthetic education theory. He argues that children are born with the gift of artist because their mind is free from

contamination of secular world. Children's painting is a pure expression of their thinking and hobbies, while the world under their paintbrush is unperceivable by adults, revealing a realm of freedom and purity. Such artistic expression is known as "insulated heart", meaning artistic pursuit without utility. Feng Zikai further explains the importance of aesthetic education, saying that aesthetic education aims to cultivate natural instinct with romantic feel in individuals, as well as empathy towards everything in the world. In addition, he emphasizes that aesthetic education is closely linked to daily life, so we should thoroughly find aesthetic value of objects in life.

Song Xiujian, president of Aesthetic Education Study Institute of Central Academy of Fine Arts, proposes the concept of "infiltration of aesthetic education", emphasizing that aesthetics, as a joyful emotional experience of beauty appreciation, focuses on the flexible combination of individual emotion and spiritual experience. In professor Song's opinion, aesthetic education fulfills beauty appreciation through art education, which should run through the entire education process as a concept and way, especially in the context of China's traditional aesthetic education. Song Xiujian views Chinese traditional aesthetic education as a holistic aesthetic education covering aesthetic education of nature, life, art and humanity. Such tradition of aesthetic education emphasizes "beauty of neutralization" and "beauty of perfection", pays attention to "rites and music education" and "farming and reading", and pursues the personality that "be a complete person" and "lead the world to peace". Song Xiujian suggests eight action strategies for aesthetic education, including efforts to advance teaching reform in aesthetic education, enhance teachers' aesthetic accomplishment, popularize artistic practical activities, create aesthetic education culture in campus, optimize assessment mechanism for aesthetic education, increase aesthetic education quality in villages, enable smart education in aesthetic education and integrate social resources of aesthetic education. By supporting each other, these strategies share a common goal of building a modernized aesthetic education system with Chinese characteristics in schools.

In the layer of practice, China's modern and contemporary aesthetic education activities in varied colorful splendor give birth to numerous representative education models. For instance, by resorting to classroom teaching and extracurricular activities, aesthetic education in schools is dedicated to the cultivation of aesthetic emotion and aesthetic ability in students. Specifically, Chinese institutions of higher learning provide professional art education in art education, and set art appreciation and creation courses among all students. In addition, social aesthetic education plays a non-negligible role. By integrating social resources like museum, art gallery and culture industry, it provides rich aesthetic experiences for the social public. Furthermore, parent-child aesthetic education, as an important form of aesthetic education, cultivates children's aesthetic emotion and aesthetic ability through aesthetic activities at home. In contemporary western countries, practice of community-based aesthetic education also embodies its significance. Mainly including community-based art activities and public benefit activities, community-based practice of aesthetic education aims to attract more persons into aesthetic education, thereby enriching cultural atmosphere of communities and boosting friendship and communication between residents.

To sum up, mainstream aesthetic education concepts and their practice in modern China present the following distinctive features. First, it emphasizes in-depth integration of aesthetic education and other education fields, in particular, the combination of moral education and intellectual development, and highlights the core position of aesthetic education in human quality education.

Second, it emphasizes learners' personality growth and satisfaction of their unique aesthetic need, and advocates sufficient respect and guidance for students' aesthetic interests and creation potential. Finally, aesthetic education is implemented via diversified paths. A comprehensive aesthetic education support system is formed by effectively integrating resources of schools, society and families. These characteristics not only reflect rich diversity of China's aesthetic education concept and broad coverage of practice, but also accumulate precious experiences and enlightenment for further development of aesthetic education cause in China. Nevertheless, in terms of developing the cause of aesthetic education, China should still learn from international successful cases, further strengthen aesthetic education and cultivate high-quality talents with both comprehensive quality and innovation capability.

4. Examination on the communication and acceptance of western aesthetic education theories in China from a cross-cultural perspective

Western aesthetic education theories undergo a long and complicated process to be communicated and accepted in China. Such process involves not only introduction of western aesthetic education theories, but also their adaptation and development in localization in China, as well as innovation and evolution amid practical explorations.

In the turn of 20th century, western aesthetic education theories were gradually known by Chinese academic circle following the introduction of western learning. Among the early promoters, scholars Wang Guowei and Cai Yuanpei made great contributions, who introduced and expounded western aesthetic education concept in their own way. By translating aesthetic thoughts of Kant and Schiller, Wang Guowei discussed how to integrate the thoughts with Chinese traditional values, and put forward the theory of "assisting moral education with aesthetic education". In his work "Confucius Aesthetic Education", Wang Guowei further combined western aesthetic education theories with the thoughts of Chinese ancient educator Confucius, and advocated an education concept of taking aesthetic education as a lead and also the final goal. Cai Yuanpei, on the other hand, stressed the importance of aesthetic education in individuals' comprehensive development and advocated the positive role of aesthetic education in shaping perfect personality. By integrating Chinese and western theories, the two scholars lay solid theoretical foundation for descendants' construction and improvement of theoretical system for aesthetic education.

With the passage of time, various western aesthetic education theories were gradually introduced to China. For instance, research subjects like "History of Western Aesthetic Education Thought", a major project of National Social Science Foundation, provide detailed academic exploration and summarization of western aesthetic education concepts, and analyze their reference meaning for modern and contemporary China. In the example of development of Schiller's aesthetic education concept in China, introduction of his concepts was gradually deepened. From early introduction by Wang Guowei and Cai Yuanpei to in-depth analysis by Zhu Guangqian and others, Schiller's aesthetic education concept produced durable and profound impact on Chinese aesthetic education and personality shaping of the nation. After the reform and opening up, Chinese scholars gradually deepened research on western aesthetic education concepts, and strived to integrate the concepts with Chinese culture. Through academic research, these scholars not only reconstructed Chinese context and localization scheme for the subject of aesthetic education, but also revealed aesthetic

characteristic of Chinese civilization, thus embodying the important position of beauty and art in the traditional system of Chinese values.

While studying western aesthetic education concepts, modern Chinese scholars not only pay attention to theory itself, but also consider the social demand and historical background behind the theory. These scholars made thorough discussions on how to integrate western aesthetic education concept with China's social system, educational practice and aesthetic education, and rethought why Chinese scholars paid attention to aesthetic education and how the western aesthetic education concepts were localized in China. In his work "A Brief Discussion on Communication of Western Aesthetic Education Theories in Modern China", Wu Dongsheng (2004) made detailed research into the communication process of western aesthetic education theories in modern China and its resulting influences. It is believed in the research that, introduction of western aesthetic education theories provides novel perspectives and methods for innovating Chinese aesthetic education theories, producing durable and profound impact on the development of aesthetic education cause in modern China. In the paper "Acceptance of Western Aesthetic Education Thoughts in Contemporary China", Zhan Hongyan and Wang Que (2020) made a systematic review of the communication and acceptance process of western aesthetic education thoughts in contemporary China. They stressed that introduction of western aesthetic education thoughts promoted modernization of Chinese aesthetic education thoughts, and provided important theoretical foundation for the development of aesthetic cause in contemporary China.

5. Comparative study of Chinese and western aesthetic education

5.1 Similarities and differences between Chinese and western view on aesthetic education

Owing to origination from different environment, different cultural background and different ways of thinking, significant differences exist between Chinese and western views on aesthetic education. However, due to universality and generality of human understanding, there are several common points.

By discussing the purpose and way of aesthetic education, we easily find that significant differences exist between western countries and China. In western culture, pursuit of truth is placed above everything else. Embodied in several fields including academic research and artistic creation, such pursuit stresses rationality, science and real evidence. Hence, practice of aesthetic education in the western countries often pays attention to individuals' ability in beauty appreciation and creativity, and encourages individuals to achieve self-value through self-expression.

By contrast, Chinese culture pays more attention to "kindness". The "kindness" not only means perfection in individuals' moral character, but also refers to harmony and unity between individuals and society, and between human and nature. In Chinese traditional culture, aesthetic education not only aims to cultivate individuals' aesthetic ability and creativity, but more importantly, aims to cultivate ideal and perfect personality. Such concept is deeply rooted in Chinese culture tradition. For example, "benevolence", "doctrine of the mean" stressed by Confucian school, "govern by non-interference" advocated by Taoist, "have mercy from the bottom of your heart" of Buddhist all reflect pursuit of "kindness" in Chinese culture.

Owing to different era and cultural background, purpose of Chinese and western aesthetic education is obviously different in practice. In the case of painting education, western painting education stresses individual creativity and expressive force, while Chinese painting education pays more attention to the role of painting in conveying the value of “kindness”. As for the reasons for such difference, on the one hand, it is due to differences between Chinese and western cultural background; on the other hand, it is because of differences between China and west in understanding and purpose of aesthetic education. In future practice of aesthetic education, we should pay more attention to such differences and respect aesthetic education view of different cultures, thereby better fulfilling the goal of aesthetic education.

Despite the differences, there are similarities between Chinese and western views on aesthetic education. If we retrospect to the origin of aesthetic education view, namely, pre-Qin period of China and ancient Greek of the west, it can be seen that the objectives of aesthetic education are consistent. In this period, many Chinese and western aesthetic thinkers agreed that aesthetic education aims to cultivate kind and perfect person with physical and mental harmony.

According to Confucius, one aesthetic education thinker in China’s pre-Qin period, the purpose of aesthetic education is to cultivate people’s moral character and aesthetic taste. Confucius once said: “Set your sights on the way, sustain yourself with excellence, lean upon authoritative conduct and sojourn in the arts”(The Analects of Confucius· Self-evaluation). This shows that, Confucius believes that aesthetic education should base itself on morality to cultivate people’s moral character and aesthetic taste through artistic forms.

Plato, one aesthetic education thinker in ancient Greek, believes that the purpose of aesthetic education is to cultivate spiritual beauty and moral character in people. Plato once said: “Beauty is a kind of kindness and healthy state of soul” (The Republic, Volume 10). This shows that, Plato considers that aesthetic education should base itself on beauty and cultivate spiritual beauty and moral character in people through aesthetic forms.

In addition, because of the turbulent era of their time, both Confucius of pre-Qin period and Plato of ancient Greek adopted a utilitarian approach in advocating the final goal of aesthetic education, believing that aesthetic education should serve society and politics by maintaining social stability. Confucius once said: “It is by Odes that the mind is aroused. It is by the rules of propriety that the character is established. It is from the music that the finished is received”(The Analects of Confucius· Taber). This shows that, Confucius thinks that aesthetic education can maintain social stability by cultivating people’s moral character and aesthetic taste. In “The Republic”, Plato proposes a political system with philosopher king as the core, believing that aesthetic education can cultivate philosopher kings with moral character and aesthetic taste and thus maintain social stability.

In overall, regardless of pre-Qin period of China or ancient Greek of the west, the purpose of aesthetic education is to cultivate aesthetic and kind people with physical and mental harmony. Meanwhile, both Confucius and Plato hold that aesthetic education should serve society and politics by maintaining social stability. Such similarities show that, Chinese and western views on aesthetic education share a common pursuit and purpose from the root.

In short, guided by different spirits of the times, Chinese and western aesthetic education do not

stick to the same purpose, but demonstrate gradual variations in development with the changes in the theme of the times. Regardless of China or west, aesthetic education does not just aim to cultivate ideal personality and foster perfect personality. Instead, it responds to the requirements of the era to take on more social significance.

5.2 Similarities and differences between Chinese and western aesthetic education in modern and contemporary times

In terms of similarities and differences between Chinese and western aesthetic education in modern and contemporary times, Chinese and western education system has very different role positioning for aesthetic education. Such difference originates from different cultural background and education concept between China and western countries. In China, aesthetic education is regarded as an important constituent of national education system, advocating balanced development between moral education, intellectual education, physical education and aesthetic education. Relevant statistic data shows that aesthetic education courses have taken up about 15% of the total courses in Chinese schools, which fully demonstrates the important position of aesthetic education in China's education system. In addition, aesthetic education in China also focuses on the combination with practice including visits to art gallery, museum as a way to enhance students' aesthetic experience.

Meanwhile, in western countries, art education is the main form of aesthetic education, and western education system pays more attention to cultivating students' personality and creativity. In the example of the United States, art education is viewed as an important component of students' all-round development, so schools have relative abundant curriculum setting and teaching practice. In addition, aesthetic courses in western countries emphasize more on cultivation of individual expression and creative thinking in students, and advocate the value of critical thinking and free exploration. For instance, in aesthetic education of western countries, students more often resort to artistic forms such as painting, sculpture to express personality and emotion, which helps cultivate their creative consciousness and critical thinking.

Chinese and western aesthetic education also differs in content and form. In China, aesthetic education emphasizes inheritance of traditional culture, and stresses the unity between collective spirit and social harmony. In Chinese aesthetic education, traditional artistic forms dominate teaching contents, such as calligraphy, Chinese painting and paper cutting. These traditional artistic forms are taught to develop students' understanding and passion towards traditional culture, thereby enhancing their aesthetic quality. Whereas, in western countries, aesthetic education pays more attention to the fusion of diversified culture, and encourages students to explore different art genres and styles. For instance, schools in western countries will train students in artistic forms such as ballet, symphony to develop students' art appreciation ability.

In conclusion, despite certain differences in role positioning, content and form, the ultimate goal of Chinese and western aesthetic education is to cultivate talents will all-round development. By comparing Chinese and western aesthetic education, we can learn from both parties' advantages to better advance the development of aesthetic education in China. For example, we can further add settings of aesthetic education courses, increase the importance of aesthetic education in school education, and also focus on cultivating students' personality and creativity. On the other hand, western countries can learn from Chinese practice of emphasizing inheritance of traditional culture

in aesthetic education, and incorporate traditional artistic forms in aesthetic education to cultivate students' aesthetic quality. In this way, we can better drive development of Chinese and western esthetic education, and jointly cultivate more excellent talents with all-round development.

6. Current problems facing Chinese aesthetic education and suggestions of countermeasures

A series of problems occur in the development course of Chinese aesthetic education, which affect effect and quality of aesthetic education to a certain extent. First, distribution of aesthetic education resources is significantly uneven. Although the government pays more and more attention to aesthetic education in recent years, distribution of aesthetic resources is greatly different between different regions and different schools. In some economically developed regions and excellent schools, aesthetic education course has colorful setting, while in some less developed regions and general schools, setting of aesthetic education course is relatively single, and even professional teachers are absent. Such uneven resource allocation results in different aesthetic education level, thereby affecting students' all-round development. Second, setting of aesthetic education courses is unreasonable. In today's education system, aesthetic education courses are often marginalized, with curriculum setting lacking systematicness and coherence. In some schools, aesthetic education courses are even seemed as dispensable "subsidiary subjects", which makes it difficult for students to effectively improve aesthetic quality. In addition, curriculum contents of aesthetic education are too traditional, lacking connection with modern social life, which is unfavorable for cultivating students' innovative spirit and aesthetic ability. Furthermore, construction of teacher team lags behind in aesthetic education. Aesthetic education teachers are the main executors of aesthetic education, but some problems exist in today's aesthetic education teacher team of China. On the one hand, the insufficient number of aesthetic education teachers can barely meet students' ever increasing needs. On the other hand, aesthetic education teachers have uneven quality, some teachers lack professional quality and teaching ability and can barely undertake the teaching task of aesthetic education. In view of the foregoing problems, the following countermeasures are proposed for China's aesthetic education work.

In the broad context of globalization, it is necessary to develop aesthetic view embodying cultural confidence in students. We should value and maintain China's extensive and profound traditional cultural heritage in diversified artistic forms including classical literature, opera, calligraphy and painting. These artistic forms serve as a witness to the wisdom and aesthetic emotion of Chinese nation. Meanwhile, we should encourage students to embrace nature, feel the beauty of Chinese landscape; participate in various folk art and celebratory folk activities, thoroughly explore and utilize these colorful local aesthetic education resources to develop their aesthetic appreciation ability. Through such practice, students will not only deepen recognition with Chinese traditional culture, consolidate the belief that "Chinese beauty" carries universal value, but also develop a high degree of confidence and proudness towards Chinese culture, thereby learning to appreciate and respect other cultures.

Efforts should be made to strengthen comparative study of aesthetic education across different cultures, and thoroughly explore advantages and uniqueness of aesthetic education in different countries, for instance, aesthetic education models in the United States, Japan and Germany, with a view to providing useful reference for Chinese reform in aesthetic education. In this way, it is

possible to deepen reform in aesthetic education, and innovate methods and contents of aesthetic education based on China's reality, which will help students develop open and diversified aesthetic perspective to a greater degree on the basis of traditional culture.

It is necessary to add investment in aesthetic education and improve resource allocation. Government should further strengthen financial assistance to aesthetic education, and guarantee balanced distribution of aesthetic education resources in different regions and universities. Moreover, it is recommended that all sectors of society participate in the cause of aesthetic education, and make full use of social resources to broaden aesthetic education pathways and make aesthetic education more universal, so that more students can have access to and enjoy excellent aesthetic education resources, thus promoting educational fairness.

The above strategies not only help maintain and carry forward uniqueness of Chinese traditional culture, but also help students build solid culture foundation and broaden their international view. Such practice carries important meaning in cultivating future innovative talents and facilitating sustainable cultural development. Chinese aesthetic education will better serve national talent cultivation strategy, and moreover, help enhance cultural confidence and contribute to socialist modernization drive.

7. Conclusion

As a key field for improving individuals' comprehensive quality, aesthetic education enjoys time-honored tradition in eastern and western cultures. From the perspective of globalization, through systematic sorting of Chinese and western mainstream aesthetic education theories, in-depth analysis of practice cases, study on the communication and acceptance of western aesthetic education theories in China, this paper reveals the commonality and difference of aesthetic education under different cultural contexts. Due to different aesthetic ideas between eastern and western countries, today, different countries or regions have greatly different education models, curriculum systems and teaching strategies for aesthetic education. Only by effectively learning from international experience can we cultivate confidence in Chinese culture.

Western aesthetic education thoughts are diversified and cross-disciplinary, paying attention to innovation, openness and diversification. Scholars including Dewey, Read, Eisner and Piaget created important influence on western aesthetic education, providing precious experiences for China to learn from. On the other hand, Chinese aesthetic education has a profound tradition, with scholars including Liang Qichao, Wang Guowei, Lu Xun and Cai Yuanpei making important contributions to aesthetic education in modern China. In the early period of 20th century, western aesthetic education theories were introduced into China, owing a lot to the significant contribution of scholars Wang Guowei and Cai Yuanpei. Nevertheless, today's China is also faced with problems of uneven resource allocation, unreasonable curriculum setting, and backward construction of teacher team. Accordingly, it is a priority to optimize resource allocation, update curriculum setting and strengthen the construction of teacher team. Contemporary scholars should also carry out in-depth research into western aesthetic education theories, enable their fusion with Chinese culture, and continue to explore how to better learn from international experiences to adapt to the actual circumstances in China.

Though originating from different cultures and different ways of thinking, both Chinese and western aesthetic ideas aim to cultivate talent with all-round development in beauty appreciation and creativity. Although Chinese and western aesthetic education differs in terms of role positioning, content and form, Chinese scholars should still draw common points from the west, strengthen cross-cultural comparative study of aesthetic education, add investment to aesthetic education and improve resource allocation. By learning from international experiences, it is possible to better cultivate confidence in Chinese culture and open up a new path for developing the cause of aesthetic education. All in all, comparative study on aesthetic education from a cross-cultural perspective not only helps to enhance confidence in Chinese culture, but also drives common progress of the world in aesthetic education.

References:

- [1]Liang Qichao(2022). Beautiful Life. Suzhou, China: Gu Wuxuan Publishing House
- [2]Lu Xun(1958). Opinions on Art Communication, The Complete Works of Lu Xun(VII). Beijing, China: People's Literature Publishing House.
- [3]Wu Dongsheng(2004). A Brief Discussion on Communication of Western Aesthetic Education Theories in Modern China. China: Fujian Forum, 9, 17-25.
- [4]Wang Guowei(2006). The Notes and Comments on Ci Poetry. Zhejiang, China: Zhejiang Education Publishing House.
- [5]Zhu Guangqian(2012).Of Beauty. Shanghai, China: East China Normal University Press.
- [6]Zhan Hongyan, Wang Que(2020). Acceptance of Western Aesthetic Education Thoughts in Contemporary China. China: Journal of Foreign Studies, 4,109-112.
- [7]Elliot W. Eisner. (1972). Education Artistic Vision. New York, United States: Macmillan Publishers.
- [8]Georgina Barton. (2023). Aesthetics, Education and Literacies, Aesthetic Literacies in School and Work,1-8.
- [9]Global Education Monitoring Report Group. (2020). Global education monitoring report summary, 2020: Inclusion and education: all means all (chi). Paris, France: UNESCO.
- [10]Herbert Read. (1958). Education Through Art. London, England: Faber and Faber.
- [11]Heybach, J. A. (2020). Aesthetics and Education. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education. Oxford University Press.
- [12]Immanuel Kant (1987).Critique of Judgment (Hackett Classics). Indianapolis, United States: Hackett Publishing.
- [13]Jean Piaget.(1997). The Moral Judgment of the Child. New York, United States: Free Press.
- [14]John Dewey. (2005). Art as Experience. Los Angeles. United States: TarcherPerigee.
- [15]Saunders, J. N. (2021). The power of the arts in learning and the curriculum: a review of

research literature. *Curriculum Perspectives*, 41, 93–100.

[16]Yin, B. (2019). Research on Chinese Modern Art Education Thought. *Art Education*, 6, 2-5.

[17]Yuriko Saito. (2010). *Everyday Aesthetics*. Oxford, England, Oxford University Press.

[18]Wang, Y. (2023). Modern art education ideas and methods. *Art Theory*, Central South University, (7), 20-24.