



A Review of Music Education Research Based on Multiple Intelligences Theory in China

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Abstract. Dr. Howard Gardner, a prominent American psychologist and educator, introduced the theory of Multiple Intelligences in his seminal work, “Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences” published in 1983. The subsequent translation of his work, titled “Multiple Intelligences” by Chinese Professor Shen Zhilong in 1999, significantly enhanced the visibility of this theory within Chinese educational circles. The field of music education has also been significantly influenced by Multiple Intelligences theory. Since 2003, a substantial body of research literature has emerged, with numerous scholars dedicating their efforts to this area over the past two decades. Their focus has primarily centered on two key aspects: the theoretical exploration and the practical application of Multiple Intelligences theory within music education. However, there remains a lack of comprehensive analyses and syntheses of the research findings related to Multiple Intelligences theory in the context of music education in China. Consequently, this paper aims to systematically collect, organize, classify, and analyze the relevant research literature on music education informed by Multiple Intelligences theory in China, thereby providing a valuable reference for future studies.

Keywords: China, Multiple Intelligences Theory, Music Education

1 Introduction

The theory of Multiple Intelligences was proposed by Dr. Howard Gardner, a renowned American psychologist and educator, in 1983 in his book *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*^[1] and has been continuously developed and refined by Gardner. He posits that human intelligence is pluralistic and that at least eight distinct intelligences exist within every individual: linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, musical intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, self-knowledge intelligence, and naturalistic intelligence. In 1999, the book *Multiple Intelligences*^[2] translated by Professor Shen Zhilong in China, helped to popularize the theory in that country and garnered the attention of music education academies. In 2003, Wang Gongbin^[3] was the first to publish an article emphasizing the significance of music education in the development of Multiple Intelligences and the applicability of Multiple Intelligences for the development of music education.

Over time, scholarly inquiry into the theory of Multiple Intelligences within the field of music education has evolved, expanding its focus from preschool children to higher education institutions, including teacher training colleges and universities. The scope of research has also broadened to encompass various aspects such as piano instruction, vocal training, sight-singing, ear training, music appreciation, and local music cultures. Despite the proliferation of research and the diversity of topics explored, there remains a significant lack of comprehensive studies examining the entirety of the application of Multiple Intelligences theory in music education within the Chinese context. This paper aims to address this gap by providing a thorough analysis of the existing literature, thereby offering a valuable reference for future research endeavors.

Currently, a search using keywords such as “Multiple Intelligences Theory”, “Music Education”, “Multiple Intelligences Theory and Music Education”, “A Review of Chinese Research on Music Education Based on Multiple Intelligences Theory”, etc. has yielded over 200 relevant scholarly articles from various online academic platforms. The research primarily focuses on two main categories: theoretical explorations and practical applications of Multiple Intelligences theory in music education. The following sections will provide a detailed account of these findings.

2 Types of Music Education Research Based on Multiple Intelligence Theory in China

2.1 Theory Explore

This category includes one book and over 50 papers, with research content that encompasses four aspects: historical development, educational value, reform and innovation, and curriculum evaluation.

Historical Development. This aspect includes more than 10 papers that primarily explore the historical development and analysis of the current application of Multiple Intelligences theory in the field of music education in China.

Regarding the historical trajectory of Multiple Intelligences theory in the field of music education in China, Li Jiangxia[4] examined the dissemination of Multiple Intelligences theory in the music education sector in China and discussed its impact of the theory on the reform of music education in China. Additionally, in her book *Chinese Music Education and Multiple Intelligences Theory*[5], Li Jiangxia initially designed a curriculum programme for music education in higher vocational education and proposed a vision for the application of Multiple Intelligences theory in the future reform of music education in China.

In terms of analysing the status quo of Multiple Intelligences theory in the field of music education in China, Wu Yueyue et al.[6] provided recommendations for enhancing educational concepts, application theories, music teaching materials, and evaluation systems of music education in Chinese kindergartens from the perspective of Multiple Intelligences theory. This aspect of the literature lays a certain foundation for subsequent in-depth research on Multiple Intelligences theory in Chinese music education.

Educational Value. This aspect includes more than 10 papers that emphasize the importance of Multiple Intelligences theory in music education, and explore the value of Multiple Intelligences theory in relation to the teaching subjects in music education.

Among them, Guo Shengjian[7] elaborated on the nurturing value of music education and emphasised the importance of music education to the future society. Fong Mengzhen[8] stressed the necessity of university art education from the

perspective of Multiple Intelligences theory, and analysed and discussed the nurturing value of university art education.

Reform and Innovation. This aspect contains more than 10 papers. It primarily elaborates that the theory of Multiple Intelligences provides theoretical support for the reform and innovation of music education in China, and guides us to pay attention to individual differences and apply the theory to teaching strategies and curriculum innovation.

In terms of teaching strategies, Wang Yihong[9] applied the theory of Multiple Intelligences to reform the phenomenon of imbalance between intellectual and non-intellectual structures in the teaching of piano group lessons at Normal University. This approach enables students to fully assimilate knowledge through teaching strategies tailored to their individual needs. In order to enhance children's interest in music, perception, expression, and understanding ability of music culture, Ye Qianyun[10] reformed and innovated children's music education through "immersion" teaching method under the perspective of Multiple Intelligences theory, providing new theoretical and practical guidance for music education. By exploring the relationship between the theory of Multiple Intelligences and music teaching, Xiao Li[11] analyzed the current situation of music teaching in higher vocational education, and further proposed the reform path of music teaching mechanism.

In terms of curriculum innovation, Jin Shiyu[12] emphasized the diversity and individuality inherent in the Multiple Intelligences theory and adopted a contextualised "Music Intelligence Demonstration" assessment method to innovate the development of a school-based curriculum for local vernacular music. This aspect of the paper is instructive for teachers regarding practical teaching strategies.

Course Evaluation. This aspect encompasses more than 10 papers. It primarily investigates the evaluation models of music curriculum from the perspective of Multiple Intelligences theory, with a view to continuously improve the content framework of music education and construct a new evaluation mode, so as to provide assistance to teachers in better discovering and exploring students' strengths, as well as perfecting students' Multiple Intelligences.

Among them, in terms of curriculum standards, Yao Yuhua[13] advocated for reforming the music curriculum and evaluation system based on the theory of

Multiple Intelligences. This approach aims to promote students' personalised development and foster innovation in music education.

In terms of curriculum evaluation, Ren Luyao[14] focused on the evaluation of music academic quality in primary schools. From the perspective of Multiple Intelligences theory, she established the evaluation dimension of the evaluation of music aesthetic perception of academic quality in the lower grades, constructed the evaluation framework, and improved students' music aesthetic perception ability and music literacy. Taking the evaluation of junior high school music curriculum as the research content, Chen Jing[15] proposed the application of Multiple Intelligences theory in the evaluation of junior high school music curriculum, and designed the evaluation model from four aspects: principles, contents, methods and tools.

2.2 Practical Application

This category contains more than 170 papers, the research covers the content, method, evaluation and other aspects of music education, specifically describes the application of Multiple Intelligences theory in music education, and demonstrates it with examples. The research objects involve groups such as pre-school children, primary and secondary school students, secondary vocational school students, as well as higher education students.

As for the education of primary and secondary school students, Wang Jianhui[16] discussed the application of Multiple Intelligences theory in the music appreciation course of primary school, and proposed the teaching methods that emphasize teaching according to the individual's abilities, the teaching objectives that development the strengths of the intelligences, the diversified classroom teaching contents, the affirmative and differentiated teaching evaluations. Tao Jingru[17] integrated the theory of Multiple Intelligences with the music contextual teaching of junior middle school, and made practical comparisons, in order to improve the quality of teaching in junior high school and promote the development of students' multiple intelligences. Wen Yongqi[18] focused on the research of music teaching in high school, and with the aim of cultivating students' multiple intelligences and comprehensive qualities, and constructed the teaching model of "exploration-teaching-learning-evaluation" music core qualities from the perspective of Multiple Intelligences theory.

In addition, some of the research results in this category did not involve specific examples of course practice, but also contributed their own reflections on the practical

application of the theory, which has certain reference significance for teaching practice. In terms of overall research, Wang Gongbin^[3] pointed out the importance of music education for the holistic development of students through the theory of Multiple Intelligences, and pointed out the research direction of the interdisciplinary integration of music education, which promoted the development of musical intelligence. In terms of research at all stages of education, by analyzing the internal relationship between the theory of Multiple Intelligences and music teaching, Chen Yun et al.^[19] used diversified teaching methods to cultivate students' creative thinking and develop their musical creative practical ability, so as to enhance the effectiveness of music education in educating people. Huang Shamei^[20] focused on the teaching of percussion in primary and secondary schools as well as kindergartens. At the level of education, she integrated the theory of multiple intelligences into teaching and focused on the development of students' multiple intelligences, so as to enhance the comprehensive quality of students and cultivate all-rounded development of talents.

3 Insufficient Research on Music Education Based on Multiple Intelligence Theory in China

At present, there are numerous relevant research results, which are of some significance for subsequent research. However, in the process of research, the author has observed that most of the research on Multiple Intelligences theory in music education primarily concentrates on the three aspects: students, teaching, and evaluation, but the research of Multiple Intelligences theory on teachers, schools, and curricula in music education requires further discussion. At the same time, there is also a need to further expand the research on the intersection of Multiple Intelligences theory with music education and other disciplines, and so on. Therefore, more scholars are expected to join in this area of research.

4 Research Vision of Music Education in China Based on Multiple Intelligences Theory

After analysing the above research on the application of the theory of Multiple Intelligences in the field of music education and combining it with the challenges faced in practice, it is believed that: on the part of teachers, they should have a series of teaching skills such as knowledge base and interpretation of the theory; on the part

of schools, they should focus on the development of students' Multiple Intelligences through music education and pay attention to the reform of music and arts education, so as to promote cross-research between music education and subjects such as languages, mathematics and the English language, to drive education in a wide range of disciplines, to stimulate students' latent intelligences and to promote the diversified construction of music teaching and teaching aids; on the part of curricula, they should accelerate the construction of diversified music school-based curricula with localised characteristics from the side of the students, and make efforts to pass on and carry forward the excellent traditional Chinese music culture, and so on.

5 Conclusion

Since its introduction by Dr. Howard Gardner, the Multiple Intelligences theory has been translated into Chinese by Professor Shen Zhilong and has been widely disseminated and discussed within the Chinese music education sector. Currently, the research results of music education in China based on Multiple Intelligences theory can be broadly divided into two categories: theoretical discussion and practical application. Among them, the theoretical exploration category includes four aspects: historical development, educational value, reform and innovation, and curriculum evaluation. The emergence of many research results has laid a solid foundation for in-depth studies in related fields.

However, during the course of the study, the author also found the shortcomings of the study, which are centred on the low attention to the teachers, schools, curricula, and the intersection with other disciplines in the field of music education, and thus need to be paid attention to by the scholars. At the same time, the author also attempts to address the shortcomings of the study, and puts forward his own insights from the three aspects of teachers, schools, and curricula, with the aim of promoting the research on the application of the Multiple Intelligences theory in other fields and accelerating the construction of a music teaching system that pays attention to individual differences and stimulates the potential of the human body, with the hope of contributing to the subsequent research in a small way.

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