Higher Education Institutions New Guidelines for Organizing Music Teaching

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Abstract
Background and Aims: The research is set against the backdrop of China's national strategy emphasizing talent as the primary resource and the prioritization of employment, as outlined in the 20th Party Congress and subsequent educational reforms. It highlights the challenges faced by music education in aligning with rapidly evolving market demands, the need for enhanced university-enterprise cooperation, and the imperative to bridge the gap between academic training and practical skills to improve graduate employability and industry relevance. Therefore, this research aimed to (1) survey the status of music education in higher education institutions and (2) propose new approaches to improve music education. The goal is to make music education in higher education institutions consistent with the professional skills required by the labor market, to increase the competitiveness of graduates, and to meet the needs of employers in finding talented musicians.

Methodology: Data were collected from 4 groups, totaling 194 people: 179 business owners. The research instruments were 179 questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. There were 15 interviews: 5 university lecturers, 5 graduates, and 5 students. The data analysis results were divided into several statistical methods and resulted in an overall picture of the status of music education in higher education institutions.

Results: The results of the study were grouped into 5 areas: curriculum structure, practical experience, interest guidance, career counseling, and university-business cooperation. The results show that optimizing music education in higher education institutions requires a balanced curriculum structure that combines theoretical knowledge with practical industry experience, moving beyond traditional course formats to more project-based collaborations with the cultural and entertainment sectors. Improving teachers' innovative capabilities in content and instructional design is key to promoting student engagement and career development. In addition, offering career guidance courses earlier can provide students with enough time to explore career paths and make informed decisions. Strengthening school-industry cooperation through tailored strategies and drawing on international models will further narrow the gap between education and industry, ultimately improving students' employability and the overall effectiveness of music education.

Conclusion: The author started with a small observation in the workplace, which sparked a curiosity about whether the current situation of organizing music teaching in higher education institutions meets the actual needs of the job market. To achieve these goals, this study investigated the current situation of organizing music teaching, counted the needs of the job market, and explored the degree of fit between music organization teaching and these needs, ultimately identifying areas that need improvement and developing new guidelines for higher education institutions. The results of this study can help universities systematically optimize their music teaching organization to improve students' competitiveness in the job market, thereby supporting national policies, institutional goals, and personal aspirations. The findings suggest that optimizing music education in higher education institutions requires a balanced curriculum structure that combines theoretical knowledge with practical industry experience, moving beyond traditional course formats to more project-based collaborations with the cultural and entertainment sectors. Improving faculty innovation in content and instructional design is key to fostering student engagement and career development. In addition, offering career guidance courses earlier can provide students with enough time to explore career paths and make informed decisions. Strengthening school-industry collaboration through tailored strategies and drawing on international models will further narrow the gap between education and industry, ultimately improving student employability and the overall effectiveness of music education.

Keywords: Music Careers; University Music Classes; Music Student Expertise; Music Program Management

Introduction

In the context of the 20th Party Congress, which clearly pointed out the important assertion that "talent is the first resource, and the implementation of the employment priority strategy" the Ministry of Education decided to implement the "Employment and Entrepreneurship Promotion Actions for the 2023 National Ordinary College Graduates", which is not only aimed at leading the employment and entrepreneurship of college graduates to a new height, but also provides clear support and guarantee for the priority status of students' employment in colleges and universities (Education, 2022) This initiative not only aims to lead the employment and entrepreneurship of college graduates to new heights but also provides clear support and guarantee for the priority status of student employment work in colleges and universities, which highlights the importance of talents to national development and social progress, as well as the priority status of student employment work in colleges and universities. In the context of the current new era of China's rapid development, the Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Comprehensively Deepening Educational Reform in the New Era was released in 2018, a document that is a general deployment of educational reform in the new era. Among other things, it emphasizes policy measures such as improving the quality of talent training and promoting the integration of industry, academia, and research. This document fully demonstrates that at the national level, realizing the consistency between school teaching and social market demand is one of the important goals of current Chinese education policy.

Competition among art colleges and universities is mainly reflected in various aspects such as reputation ranking, enrollment, faculty, teaching resources, university-enterprise cooperation, etc. Each school needs to work hard to improve its competitiveness to attract more excellent students and teachers and stay ahead of the game. Chinese colleges and universities have also worked hard in recent years to respond positively to market demand, strengthen cooperation with enterprises, and adjust teaching content and methods to improve students' competitiveness in employment. For example, some colleges and universities have offered practical courses in cooperation with enterprises and established joint laboratories or studios between schools and enterprises to provide students with more practical opportunities. In addition, schools have strengthened career guidance services, providing more support for career planning and employment information to help students better adapt to changes in the job market. However, despite these measures, there are still enormous problems. This includes issues such as the severe lag in course updates, the rapid development of globalization and information technology, which causes fast changes in market demand, and the need for music education to adapt to the integration of multiculturalism; a lack of mentorship in practical activities, weak goal orientation, and the absence of corresponding evaluation criteria; and the lack of a practical, specific career guidance system, with no rigorous framework for implementation. At the same time, the diversification and rapid change of social values also put forward higher requirements for the content and methods of music education. Educators need to constantly reflect on and adjust the content of education to adapt to the trend of social and cultural development. Therefore, colleges and universities need to continuously improve their education and teaching methods, maintain close contact with the social market, keep the curriculum content up-to-date, deeply explore interdisciplinary teaching and comprehensive ability cultivation, strengthen the construction of faculty, and clarify the goals and social responsibilities of artistic talents training to solve these problems more effectively.

In today's rapidly developing society, job requirements are changing quickly to meet the needs of the times. This demands that music graduates possess the ability to flexibly master and apply knowledge. In

addition to specialized skills such as instrument performance, vocal techniques, music theory, and improvisational accompaniment, they also need to have experience in performance, market awareness, communication skills, and creativity. (Tang, 2023) However, many graduates find that there is a gap between what they learned and the actual demands of the job, leading to confusion and uncertainty, which affects both their mental health and career development. Therefore, schools should strengthen the development of students' comprehensive abilities, provide more opportunities and resources related to practical work, and help students smoothly transition into the workforce.

According to the China Music Education Industry Development Scale and Prospects Industry Chain Planning Report 2024-2030, there is a disconnect between music schools and the development of the music industry, creating a vicious cycle. Schools have failed to keep up with the industry's development, causing a mismatch between teaching content and market demands. The knowledge students acquire often does not align with the skills required in real-world jobs, leading to difficulties in employment after graduation. Meanwhile, companies struggle to find music professionals who meet their needs, hindering company growth and blocking industry development. The increasing difficulty in recruitment has led some companies to seek breakthroughs in other industries, reducing job opportunities in the music field, further exacerbating the employment challenges faced by music graduates, and reinforcing the vicious cycle. (Consulting, 2022) To break this cycle, there should be stronger cooperation between universities and enterprises, adjustments to teaching content, a focus on practical skills, and a focus on cultivating talent that meets market demands. At the same time, enterprises should offer internships and project collaborations to promote a positive cycle within the music ecosystem.

To summarize, under the guidance of the current macro-strategy at the national level, the fierce competition among colleges and universities, the complex background of graduates' job-seeking, employers' employment, and the development of the social market, we have to re-examine the competitiveness of the graduates of music majors of Chinese art colleges and universities in the job market, the gap between professional skills and the market needs, as well as the disconnection between the quality of teaching and the practical ability of the colleges and universities, which have prompted us to rethink and explore the idea of music talent cultivation. These complexities have prompted us to rethink and explore the idea of music talent cultivation, which is also the motivation for my research on this paper.

Objectives

Based on the discussion above, this paper has two research objectives:
- To analyze the current state of music education in higher education institutions.
- To develop actionable guidelines for improving music teaching practices in higher education.

Literature Review
Status of Music Teaching in Higher Education

Highlights the tendency of music education in higher education institutions to focus heavily on theoretical knowledge, often at the expense of practical skills and real-world applications. (Tang, 2023)

Fen conducted a study analyzing the curriculum and teaching methods of music education majors, identifying a significant gap between theoretical instruction and the practical skills required in the job market.

This literature is applied to emphasize the need for a balanced approach in music education, integrating both theoretical and practical components. It informs the research by underscoring the importance of aligning academic training with the demands of the modern music industry.

Stresses the importance of a people-oriented education model in music education, advocating for reforms that prioritize student engagement, creativity, and active learning over traditional, conservative teaching methods. Chenhao explored the impact of student-centered teaching approaches on learning outcomes, demonstrating that fostering students' interest and enthusiasm leads to better educational results. (Li, 2019)

This literature is applied to advocate for innovative teaching methods that engage students and cultivate their passion for music. It supports the research by highlighting the need to move away from outdated educational practices and adopt more dynamic, student-focused approaches.

Discusses the growing demand for interdisciplinary and technology-integrated skills in music education, driven by societal and technological changes. It calls for the integration of digital tools and online platforms into teaching practices. Xiaoming conducted a study on the role of technology in modern music education, emphasizing the need for educators to adapt to digital advancements and prepare students for a tech-driven industry. (Zhao, 2020)

This literature is applied to highlight the necessity of incorporating technology and interdisciplinary skills into music education curricula. It informs the research by suggesting that graduates must be equipped with versatile skills to meet the evolving demands of the music industry.

Current employment status of music students

Examines the narrow employment opportunities for music graduates, revealing that many end up in unrelated fields due to the limited scope of traditional music majors and the oversaturation of roles like music teachers. Chang analyzed employment data from music graduates, showing that a significant portion work in non-music-related industries due to a lack of diverse career options and relevant skills. (Gao, 2023)

This literature is applied to illustrate the disconnect between music education and the job market. It supports the research by emphasizing the need for curriculum reforms, expanded career guidance, and the development of versatile skills to improve graduates' employability and align their training with market needs.

Conceptual Framework
Research Scope

According to the research purpose, this paper divides the research population into four categories, namely, college music students, college music teachers, alumni who have graduated, and employers in the music job market, for data collection and analysis. Among them, data collection is conducted through interviews with students, teachers, and alumni who have graduated, and data collection is conducted through questionnaires for employers in the music job market, that is, music business managers or primary and secondary school principals. In the end, this study collected 15 interview samples, including 5 college teachers, 5 students, and 5 graduated students. A total of 179 questionnaires were collected, of which 74 were from public institutions and 105 were from private institutions.

Table 1 Data collection and sample distribution table

Classification of the study population	Data Collection Methods	Sample size	Remark
Music students	Interviews	5	There are 15 interview samples in total, 5 for each of the three groups of people.
Music Teacher	Interviews	5	
Graduated Alumni	Interviews	5	
Employers	Questionnaire	179	A total of 179 questionnaires were received, including 74 from public institutions and 105 from private institutions.

Research Process

Regarding the two research purposes mentioned above, the overall idea of the research is to understand the current situation, analyze problems, and give suggestions. The specific process is as follows:

To study the current situation of music teaching in higher education institutions.

In the first step, the author analyzed the research purpose and research questions, extracted relevant keywords, and used them to search for literature. Through many literature reviews and the organization of useful information, the author preliminarily explored the current situation and problems of organizing music teaching in higher education institutions, making sufficient preparations for the next step of research.

Second, based on the literature analysis, the author specifically designed the interview outline and questionnaire form from five aspects, namely course structure, practical experience, interest guidance, career guidance, and university-enterprise cooperation, hoping to further restore the current situation of organizing music teaching in higher education institutions through objective and comprehensive information collection.

Third, to consider the reliability of the questionnaire, the author specially invited three experts in the fields of music and education to conduct OCI testing. The experts scored the significance of each question in the questionnaire and its relevance to the research topic, and calculated the scores of the three experts respectively to determine the reliability of the questionnaire.

Fourth, according to the plan, the questionnaire and interview data were collected from the target population, and the first research purpose of this study was achieved through effective data result analysis combined with the relevant content of literature analysis.

To propose guidelines for the organization of music teaching in higher education

The first step is to further observe the problems in the current situation and classify them through the exploration of the first research purpose.

The second step is to analyze the interview and questionnaire data again according to the current problems in different categories, sort out the relevant suggestions of the four interviewees on optimizing these problems, and combine the literature review to compile a complete and comprehensive guide to achieve the second research purpose of this study.

Methodology

Research Instruments

The selection of research tools was based on a comprehensive consideration of the research questions, target populations, and practical circumstances. This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Specifically, the qualitative methods include document analysis and interviews, while the quantitative method involves a survey. The details are as follows:

Qualitative Research Methods

Document Analysis:

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the current state of music education in Chinese higher education institutions, the researcher systematically reviewed relevant literature, including academic journals, research reports, and government documents. This analysis identified issues within the current state and provided a solid foundation for the subsequent research.

Interviews:

Experts in music education, music students, and alumni with music-related degrees were invited for interviews to discuss their perspectives, attitudes, and suggestions regarding five key areas: curriculum design, practical experience, interest cultivation, employment guidance, and school-enterprise collaboration.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen due to their advantages over other research methods:

- Flexibility: The researcher could adjust the sequence and content of questions based on respondents' answers, enabling the exploration of interesting themes, the collection of in-depth information, and clarification of responses for accurate understanding.

- Depth: Open-ended questions allowed respondents to provide detailed descriptions of their experiences and viewpoints, capturing data and nuances that may be missed in questionnaires or structured interviews.

- Authenticity: Interviews allowed respondents to freely express their opinions and experiences, capturing unique perspectives and enhancing the relevance and authenticity of the data.

Through semi-structured interviews with three groups—current students, university music educators, and alumni working in the field—the study explored, Current students' real perceptions of curriculum design, teaching methods, and practical components; Music educators' professional insights and teaching experiences; Alumni's feedback on the alignment between their education and employment, as well as their application of learned skills in their careers. This approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the current state of music education in higher education institutions, supporting the formulation of practical improvement recommendations.

Quantitative Research Method

Survey:

Based on the research objectives, questions, and issues identified in the current state analysis, a targeted survey was designed and distributed to employers and school principals. The survey collected data on their expectations and requirements regarding the job capabilities of music graduates.

The use of surveys for employers offers unique advantages:

- Broader Coverage: Compared to interviews, surveys can be distributed to a larger number of organizations, ensuring the research results are more representative and improving research efficiency by collecting substantial data within a short time.

- Enhanced Data Reliability: Combining quantitative survey data with qualitative interview findings from the three other groups enriches the data sources. This approach allows for cross-validation, improving data reliability and consistency while providing a more comprehensive understanding of the research objectives.

Through this mixed-methods approach, the study draws on diverse data sources to achieve its research goals, offering robust insights into the current state of music education and proposing actionable recommendations for its improvement.

Data Analysis

Questionnaire: This study will first select 30 survey results for reliability and validity analysis and then observe the content of each section in the questionnaire results using the mean, concentration, and dispersion. This article will use descriptive statistical analysis and correlation analysis methods and conduct longitudinal quantitative comparisons for two groups of public and private organizations.

Interview: In terms of interview data, the author will use content analysis to classify the answers of the interviewees, and further summarize, analyze, and analyze them according to different sections. Then, combined with the specific answers of the interviewees, the conflict and consensus of different opinions are presented to reveal the problems and improvement directions in college music teaching. In the specific steps of interview data analysis, the author will also use label sorting, aggregation analysis, multi-perspective analysis, and other methods. In this way, the current situation and adjustment direction of college music teaching can be grasped and theorized to the greatest extent.

Results

1. The current situation

This study conducted interviews with a total of 15 individuals from three cities: Chengdu, Hunan, and Nantong. The interviewees included 5 university teachers, 5 current students, and 5 graduates. Among the university teachers, all were young music educators with more than 5 years of work experience. Among the 5 current students, 2 were in their second year, 2 were in their third year, and 1 was in their fourth year. Of the 5 graduates who had already entered the workforce, 1 was working in a theater, 2 were teaching in primary or secondary schools, and the remaining 2 were employed by music education organizations.

1) Course structure

Surveys and research show that in the current job market, companies have very high expectations for professional performance, singing skills, and interdisciplinary abilities, such as communication and collaboration, project management, etc. This reflects that the market's requirements for graduates have gone beyond single professional capabilities and require students to be multi-skilled. At the same time, companies are not very concerned about students' mastery of theoretical knowledge, such as music theory and music history, and pay more attention to practical skills, such as improvisational accompaniment and music production.

At present, the courses of higher education in music in China are divided into three categories: public courses, compulsory courses, and elective courses. Among them, public courses and compulsory courses are not much different from the unified requirements of the national syllabus, and there are more problems in elective courses. Nearly 70% of the respondents expressed clear dissatisfaction with the quality of elective courses, and the remaining nearly 30% of the respondents expressed "neutral". The problems in elective courses are mainly concentrated in three aspects: a lack of teachers, unclear teaching objectives, and students' lack of attention due to a lack of goal-oriented instruction.

In terms of teaching methods, China's current music education is mainly divided into one-on-one professional course teaching and large-classroom theoretical courses. In addition, a small number of schools provide ensemble group courses. At present, students attach the highest importance to their major courses, but in the follow-up work, graduates mentioned that interpersonal relationships, communication skills, and management skills are the main parts that bring them trouble.

In terms of teaching equipment, in addition to basic teaching tools, the need to provide various music software and hardware for students to learn is becoming increasingly strong. Research data shows that nearly 70% of schools cannot keep up with the rapid development of science and technology, and various music software and hardware equipment are scarce. Some students said that they chose to give up learning because they could not buy expensive software and equipment.

2) Practical experience

Based on the information provided by 15 interviewees, university practical activities can be roughly categorized into the following types:

Competitions: national, provincial, and municipal professional skills competitions for university students; national and provincial industry-related professional competitions; and other comprehensive art competitions.

Concerts: teacher-student concerts hosted by professional instructors; class report concerts; personal graduation concerts; performances held during departmental festivals; and other external performance exchange activities organized by the school.

Teaching practice: generally conducted in the third year of university, with a duration that varies by school, ranging from several weeks to several months.

Community practice: organized performances in community settings and activities, assisting elderly community members during festivals.

Business owners pay more attention to students' practical abilities, among which the top three are music teaching, organizing concerts, and competitions. Interview information shows that college practical activities are mainly divided into competitions (such as professional ability competitions, industry-related competitions, etc.), concerts (including teacher-student concerts, graduation concerts, etc.), teaching practice (generally carried out in the third year, lasting from a few weeks to a few months), and community practice (such as community performances or festival activities). However, the feedback on the richness of practical activities is polarized. Some respondents believe that there are enough activities, while others believe that there are limited activities, and mention the uncertainty of activity opportunities related to active applications or teacher preferences. To encourage students to participate in practice, some colleges and universities link activities with credits and set up a "volunteer" platform, using the accumulated time of activities as reference material for evaluation. The questionnaire results show that business owners want to strengthen teaching practice activities. Compared with music competitions, music teaching ability is more recognized by employers. Overall, college practical activities have been significantly optimized, but practical opportunities are still insufficient, and the types of activities are relatively limited, mainly concentrated in traditional forms such as concerts and competitions, which need further expansion and innovation.

3) Interest Guidance (work enthusiasm)

The questionnaire survey shows that the average score of this column is 4 points, with a total score of 5 points. Business owners pay great attention to this item, among which the willingness to grow, project participation, and attitude towards work challenges rank in the top three, and the overall variance

value is small, indicating that the respondents agree. However, according to the interview results, students' overall interest in the course is low, with negative evaluations accounting for 60%, neutral attitudes accounting for 20%, and only 20% of students think the course is acceptable. Some respondents mentioned that some teachers have not updated courseware or exam questions for many years, and they only need to purchase the materials from the previous class to pass the exam. This situation was also confirmed by another university teacher, who stated that the content and form of some teachers' teaching are indeed outdated and lack innovation. Interest is the source of motivation for learning and work. Business owners and graduates agree that interested graduates have better promotion speed, completion, and stress resistance at work. However, the current students' enthusiasm for the course is not high, and this situation needs to be improved urgently to better stimulate students' interest in learning and promote their active performance in employment.

4) Career Counseling

The four groups of people unanimously stated that the school has opened career guidance courses, ranging from 3 classes to one semester, mostly taught by teachers from other colleges, and provides an internal online job search platform, where students can communicate with companies after registration. However, students and graduates generally reflect that the course effect is limited. 80% of the respondents believe that the course lacks practicality, and the final assignment is mostly a resume submission, with keywords focusing on "no dry goods, postgraduate entrance examination orientation, just making resumes". Most graduates believe that the school provides limited job search channels, mainly relying on personal connections or mainstream recruitment websites.

Business owners are dissatisfied with the school's weak links in career guidance, emphasizing that students need to have a deeper understanding of the industry before graduation, including employment fields, job requirements, necessary skills, career path selection, and job search skills. However, at present, students rely more on personal online searches to obtain this information, showing a confused state, while graduates are confused about the gap between actual employment and expectations. Although some provinces and regions have established overall recruitment platforms, enterprises are mainly large companies, and small and medium-sized enterprises are not sufficiently involved. In addition, the school is relatively passive in external contacts. After the platform is put into operation, it lacks effective intervention in the actual needs of enterprises and students and fails to fully play its coordination role, which further highlights the school's shortcomings in industry information transmission. The questionnaire results show that the lowest average score in this part is 4 points, indicating that strengthening employment guidance is still an urgent problem to be solved.

5) University-Enterprise Collaboration

In the questionnaire survey, this section scored an average of 4.11 points, ranking second only to the employment guidance section. Among them, "long-term and stable internship projects" scored the highest, with a variance value of only 0.38, showing the consistency of respondents' opinions. In addition, business owners also strongly called for the introduction of experienced people to carry out curriculum reforms, organize expert lectures, and hold regular academic exchange meetings. Regarding school-enterprise cooperation, whether it is students, university teachers, or graduates, they generally believe that the connection between schools and industry organizations is seriously insufficient. It is not enough to rely solely on professional university teachers to convey employment or industry dynamics information, because teachers have a limited understanding of the specific needs of employers. The specific needs of enterprises should be achieved by establishing more direct communication with enterprises.

2. The guideline

1) Course structure

Adjust the proportion of courses and teaching design. Optimize the course structure, reduce the proportion of pure theoretical knowledge, and increase the content by combining theory with practice. Through more scenario-based teaching methods, make the course more interesting and practical, and help students consolidate theoretical knowledge in practice.

Promote the development of one specialty and multiple skills. Improve the construction of interdisciplinary courses, systematically open courses such as communication and collaboration, project management, and marketing, meet the market's demand for comprehensive talents, and promote students to master more employment competitiveness in addition to professional skills.

Improve the quality of elective courses. Clarify the meaning and goals of elective courses, align with employment needs, formulate practical teaching plans, and attract students to actively participate. Schools need to strengthen student guidance, plan their employment directions, and help them choose elective courses reasonably. At the same time, improve the quality of teacher preparation, and improve the equipment and software resource support for courses such as music production.

Reform teaching evaluation methods. Enrich the evaluation methods of theoretical courses, reduce single written tests, increase practical evaluation methods such as demonstrations and case analysis, reduce student pressure, and enhance course participation. This diversified evaluation method can more comprehensively reflect students' actual abilities and learning effects.

Strengthen career guidance and improve teaching facilities. Open career guidance courses in advance to help students understand market demand and rationally plan their learning paths and elective course selections. At the same time, increase interdisciplinary cooperation projects and practice opportunities to enhance students' teamwork and project management capabilities. Equip courses with necessary software and hardware facilities, especially the tool support issues for music production courses, to solve students' practical difficulties in learning.

2) Practical experience

Extend and strengthen teaching practice. By extending the length of practice, design long-term teaching practice projects throughout the university to ensure that students continue to accumulate practical experience during college. At the same time, cooperate with enterprises and institutions to carry out targeted practice projects to provide students with systematic and continuous practice opportunities to enhance their depth of practice and professional docking ability.

Enrich the types of practical activities. Colleges and universities should carry out applied practical activities that all students can participate in. In addition, they should focus on how to expand the field of practice, cooperate with tourism bureaus, museums, film and television industries, and new media institutions, and develop diversified practical activities that meet market demands to meet the needs of students' different interests and career development.

Optimize the guidance of practical activities. Strengthen teachers' guidance and organization of practical activities, design practical content with clear processes and goals, and ensure that students can apply what they have learned. To encourage teachers to pay more attention to the cultivation of practical ability, the results of their participation in practical activities can be included in the assessment indicators of professional title evaluation to improve the overall quality of practical activities.

Improve the fairness of practical opportunities. Establish a transparent application and allocation mechanism for practical activities to ensure that all students can participate in different types of practical activities. At the same time, colleges and universities to establish a resource-sharing platform, broaden the coverage of practical activities, and provide more students with fair practical opportunities.

Adjust the matching degree between enterprise demands and practical activities, optimize the content of practical activities according to enterprise feedback, reduce music competition activities with low enterprise recognition, increase music teaching, interdisciplinary cooperation, and other practical forms that are more in line with market demands, and enhance the market adaptability of practical activities and students' employment competitiveness.

3) Interest Guidance (work enthusiasm)

Strengthen the guidance of the course interest. Teachers should constantly update the teaching content, design application-oriented and practical courses in combination with the dynamic development of the industry, and enhance students' interest in learning. At the same time, diversified teaching methods can increase the fun and participation of courses through practical activities, case analysis, and school-

enterprise cooperation projects. In addition, organize teacher training or experience-sharing activities to improve teachers' professional ability and encourage innovative teaching design.

Improve the teaching evaluation system to enrich the evaluation methods of theoretical courses, such as using diversified evaluation forms, such as project presentation, case analysis, and group cooperation reports, to reduce the learning pressure brought by a single written test. At the same time, improve the teacher evaluation system, take the fun of the course as an important indicator of teaching quality evaluation, and encourage teachers to pay more attention to the cultivation of students' interests.

Clarify the importance of interest cultivation. Schools should regard stimulating students' interest as an important part of teaching goals and strengthen their attention to teachers' teaching. At the same time, promote the combination of on-campus practical activities and off-campus cooperation projects, so that students can get in touch with the real market environment earlier, thereby enhancing learning motivation and improving learning effects.

Pay attention to career interests and guidance. Integrate career interest guidance content into the course to provide students with information support on industry trends and job requirements, and help them better plan their career direction. In addition, by establishing a school-enterprise cooperation mechanism, more internship opportunities are provided to students, enabling them to develop interests and abilities in practice and improve their employment competitiveness after graduation.

4) Career Counseling

Optimize career guidance courses and enrich the content of career guidance courses, covering practical topics such as industry dynamics, job requirements, job search skills, and resume preparation, to improve the practical help of the courses. At the same time, practical-oriented links such as real case analysis, simulated interviews, and career experience are integrated to allow students to intuitively understand the professional world. In addition, by inviting industry experts and corporate representatives to participate in the lectures, the practicality and industry connection of the courses are enhanced.

Strengthen school-enterprise cooperation and industry exchanges. Schools should establish special institutions to connect with enterprises, organize lectures or salons regularly, and invite enterprises to share job requirements and career development paths. At the same time, develop practical projects with excellent enterprises to allow students to understand career requirements through practical operations, shorten the adaptation period between graduation and employment, and improve employment ability.

Optimize the functions of recruitment platforms to increase the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises in recruitment platforms, expand the range of job selection, and enhance the attractiveness and utilization rate of platforms. In addition, schools need to strengthen the management and support of recruitment platforms, actively participate in the connection between enterprises and students, provide practical guidance and feedback, solve problems encountered in the process, and improve platform functions.

Improve students' ability to obtain career information. Schools need to integrate resources such as industry dynamics, corporate information, and job descriptions, establish a comprehensive career information database, and provide students with sufficient career information support. At the same time, according to the different needs of students and graduates, design personalized career planning counseling courses to help students clarify their career goals and effectively plan their future development paths.

Pay attention to the relationship between teachers and students' employment, optimize the teacher evaluation system, add employment guidance and student development indicators to the professional title evaluation, and enhance teachers' attention to students' employment issues. Encourage teachers to participate in career guidance-related training, enhance their guidance ability, and enable teachers to play a more active role in employment guidance.

Improve the initiative of schools in recruitment activities. Schools should take the initiative to assist enterprises and students in solving practical difficulties in the recruitment process, provide more accurate services, and improve the efficiency of recruitment activities. At the same time, by building a feedback mechanism, timely collecting opinions from students and enterprises, continuously optimizing employment services and curriculum settings, and ensuring the pertinence and effectiveness of career guidance.

5) School-Enterprise Cooperation

Optimize school-enterprise cooperation, establish long-term and stable internship projects, form a fixed school-enterprise cooperation mechanism, and provide students with continuous practical opportunities. At the same time, invite industry experts and experienced practitioners to participate in

[315]

curriculum reform, lectures, and academic exchanges to enhance the fit between courses and actual needs. Schools need to actively promote cooperation projects with enterprises, fix cooperation forms, deeply build school-enterprise relations, and improve cooperation efficiency and substantive value.

Learn from international cooperation models, refer to successful cases of international school-enterprise cooperation, make local adjustments based on the characteristics of the school, and explore feasible mechanisms for in-depth cooperation. Adopt a project-based cooperation approach, carry out actual projects with enterprises, let students directly participate in enterprise practice, and enhance operational capabilities and understanding of industry needs.

Improve the teaching evaluation system, optimize the teaching evaluation standards, incorporate employment ability improvement-related indicators into the evaluation content, and encourage teachers and students to pay more attention to the needs of the employment market. At the same time, establish a dynamic evaluation mechanism, adjust the evaluation indicators according to market changes, and ensure that the teaching content keeps up with the latest requirements of society and enterprises.

Discussion
1. Current situation
Existing research and the results of this study show that there is a clear tendency to emphasize theory in current college music education. (Tang, 2023) Pointed out that in the process of music education in many colleges and universities, basic knowledge and theoretical research content dominate, which is highly consistent with the actual situation of the current music education curriculum. As the interviewed teachers said, "Students are mainly concerned about how to pass the exam. Now the theoretical knowledge exam still accounts for the largest proportion, so naturally, students' minds are on theoretical courses." This situation has led students to focus more on the study of theoretical knowledge and neglect the cultivation of practical ability. In addition, the market demand for practical courses is increasing, indicating that contemporary colleges and universities should pay more attention to practical teaching and interdisciplinary knowledge and skills training.

On the other hand, regarding the lack of employment guidance, (Xing, 2020) both emphasized this point. Most colleges and universities have deficiencies in employment guidance, and students have a relatively poor understanding of employment opportunities, industry trends, and employment requirements, and lack career planning and clear job search goals. According to (Xing, 2020), many music and art colleges rely on the personal resources of professional tutors to provide employment recommendations for students, but this approach has limitations in helping students enter the workplace. Therefore, students generally lack an in-depth understanding of the industry and find it difficult to enter the workplace smoothly after graduation.

In addition, the current curriculum setting of music education in colleges and universities is also insufficient in terms of elective courses. (Li, 2023) Pointed out that modern music equipment and related skill courses (such as electronic music production) should receive more attention, but the current investment of colleges and universities in this regard is not enough. The setting of elective courses and the improvement of supporting facilities, especially the provision of technical support and practical opportunities, are still shortcomings in music education in colleges and universities.

2. Guidelines
In response to the problems in the current situation, this study proposes some targeted guidelines to help colleges and universities improve the curriculum setting and teaching practice of music education. First, in terms of curriculum setting, schools can reduce the proportion of theoretical courses and adjust the course content to make it more vivid and practice-oriented. For example, theoretical courses can be taught through case analysis and project practice, increasing the combination with practical application, and enabling students to transform theoretical knowledge into practical operational ability. This change can make students more proactive in the learning process while meeting the market's demand for practical ability.

Secondly, schools should further strengthen the setting of employment guidance courses. (Gao, 2023) Pointed out that the career planning courses of music education majors should run through the entire learning cycle of students to help students understand industry development trends and career directions. Schools can provide students with guidance on career planning and employment directions earlier, assisting students to choose appropriate courses and practical opportunities based on their own interests and market needs. In addition, schools should strengthen cooperation with enterprises and provide more employment

information and internship opportunities, so that students can better understand industry dynamics and prepare for their careers in advance.

In terms of practical activities, they emphasized the importance of practical courses and suggested that schools increase the proportion of teaching practice courses. Schools can establish long-term cooperative relationships with enterprises and carry out practical activities regularly to allow students to accumulate experience in a real working environment and improve their employment competitiveness. In addition, schools should also enrich the forms of practical activities and encourage students to participate in cross-disciplinary practical projects, such as cooperation with new media, film, and television industries, to broaden students' career horizons.

Finally, schools should focus on the construction of elective courses and modern music technology courses, especially courses that keep pace with the times, such as electronic music production. This suggestion made by (Li, 2023) is very realistic. Schools can provide students with more learning opportunities and improve their technical capabilities by introducing modern equipment and technology to meet the technical needs of the industry. Through these measures, colleges and universities can not only cultivate students' professional skills but also improve their comprehensive abilities and make them more adaptable to the rapidly changing job market.

Recommendation

Suggestions for Applying the Research Results

To better utilize the findings of this study, I propose two practical suggestions:

1. Course Structure Optimization

Higher education institutions should adopt a more balanced approach to course structure, integrating practical guidance and industry experience while maintaining a strong theoretical foundation. Practical activities should go beyond traditional concerts and performances, incorporating project-based collaborations with cultural tourism institutions and large entertainment companies. Strengthening university-enterprise ties is essential.

2. Enhancing Interest Guidance

Continuous improvement of teachers' innovation is crucial, not only in teaching content but also in instructional design. Encouraging research on teaching methodologies can greatly enhance student engagement, career development, and even industry progress.

3. Career Counseling Reform

Vocational courses should be introduced early, rather than at the final stage before graduation. Integrating career-related education from the beginning allows students more time to explore and find the most suitable career path.

4. University-Enterprise Cooperation

Colleges should tailor cooperation strategies based on their actual conditions and learn from international models to enhance collaboration with industries.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study provides a framework for optimizing music education, but certain limitations exist. Due to the questionnaire format, business owners' insights were not fully captured. Future research should include more interviews with business owners to address this gap. Additionally, inconsistencies in respondents' opinions on certain issues suggest the need for further analysis of the weight of specific factors. Future studies could build on these findings to conduct deeper evaluations, contributing to the continued reform of music education in higher education.

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