



Integrating 20th-Century Chinese Socially Engaged Music into University Aesthetic Education: A Multi-Source Analysis of Humanistic Literacy

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Abstract

This study develops an evidence-informed pathway for incorporating twentieth-century Chinese socially engaged music into university aesthetic education while testing the empirical boundaries of claims about humanistic literacy. Research gap: Existing scholarship often discusses music, national culture, aesthetic education, and student development within separate literatures; it rarely distinguishes direct curricular evidence from structural benchmarks and population-level contextual indicators. A convergent multi-source design combines directed analysis of Chinese aesthetic-education policies and an officially recommended patriotic-song repertoire; structural analysis of 100 Chinese songs in SongFormBench; weighted regression using World Values Survey China data (analytic $n = 2,917$); province-fixed-effects models using the Chinese General Social Survey 2006 (model $n = 8,041-9,096$); and weighted cross-sectional and lagged models using China Family Panel Studies 2018–2020 (cross-sectional $n = 26,022$; panel $n = 15,984-16,076$). The datasets were analyzed separately and integrated through a joint display. The documentary layer directly supports the relevance of historically and socially situated repertoire to Chinese university aesthetic education. SongFormBench shows a chorus- and verse-centered contemporary structural benchmark with four modestly differentiated structural clusters. In WVS China, education and cross-group trust have small positive associations with an additive humanistic-orientation proxy. In CGSS, music/opera engagement is positively associated with cultural openness, but not with civic orientation, national solidarity, or life satisfaction. In CFPS, education and book engagement predict aesthetic orientation cross-sectionally, whereas aesthetic orientation does not predict later trust, life satisfaction, or happiness after baseline adjustment. The analysis separates what is documented, what is statistically associated, and what remains untested. Practical relevance: Universities can use historically contextualized listening, comparative structural analysis, discussion, performance, and reflection as a curriculum sequence, but should evaluate humanistic outcomes prospectively rather than infer them from general cultural participation.

Keywords: aesthetic education; Chinese music; humanistic literacy; cultural openness; music information retrieval; multi-source triangulation; higher education

Introduction

In the last ten years, aesthetic education has come to occupy a more explicit institutional status in the field of higher education in China. The Ministry of Education's opinion (2019) on strengthening aesthetic education in universities highlights aesthetic and humanistic literacy within the wider

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educational process: to educate the whole man. The central opinion (2020) suggests that aesthetic education should be implemented throughout the entire educational process. The agenda of public art courses' national guidance (2022) and aesthetic-education immersion action (2024) have transitioned from a general aspiration to course design, participation and assessment (Central Committee of the Communist Party of China & State Council, 2020; MoE, 2019, 2022, 2024). The documents provide an important policy justification for exploring the implications of teaching historically significant pieces of music in the university. They do not, however, answer the question of pedagogical appropriateness about repertoire, learning processes or measures of learning.

The twentieth century Chinese socially engaged music work serves as a challenging test case, for it brings together art form, history memory, or collective experience, political communication, and daily cultural identity. No single genre of songs could be said to be revolutionary, patriotic, construction-era, reform-era or socially reflective. They arose within various institutional contexts, passed through schools, radio, films, public performance, work units, and then via digital media, and were given different meanings from one generation to the next. In his analysis of Cultural Revolution songs, Bryant (2005) demonstrates that musical memory can survive beyond the ideological message as a stable memory of the past, but also as nostalgia and as a contested recollection. Gao (2015) also illustrates how state and market logics are negotiated in the construction of patriotic popular culture, and Li and Yan (2020) reveal that today's participation in red song culture may be engaged in through the nostalgia, performance, identity, and political interpretation. The importance of the repertoire for education is, therefore, in being educationally relevant, despite not being easily simplified into simple moral teaching.

There is more than a conceptual link between history and policy. The 100 patriotic songs selected by mass voting and experts nationwide in 2009 include songs related to the struggle for revolution, socialist construction, and development during the reform era (People's Daily Online, 2009). The concept of repertoire programs in relation to social harmony, historical memory, and nationalism is discussed in Chinese music education by Law and Ho (2011). Meanwhile, Ho & Law (2012), Law & Ho (2015) and Ho (2017) report about the conflicts between official, traditional, global and popular repertoires for curricular space. Aesthetic education is expected not to just provide an appreciation for approved works, but to develop judgment, imagination, cultural understanding, and ethical reflection, so these tensions are important for universities.

Empirical research in the past few years further clarifies this issue. After conducting a 8-week national-music course, Fu and Tu (2023) discovered that subjective wellbeing was found to be enhanced among Chinese university students, with no change in national identity or self-esteem. He et al. (2025) found that across time, red musical identity was positively correlated with feelings of awe and prosocial behavior, which positively related to later wellbeing, but noted that these findings were based on a limited sample from a single university and a large proportion of female participants. Wider music participation studies show that coordinated music activity could facilitate social bonding and prosociality, but its effects are contingent on context, participation type, baseline levels and measurement (Ilari et al., 2021; Savage et al., 2021). The results suggest that neither dismissal nor exaggeration is appropriate: Music can be educationally significant, but the history one performs does not necessarily have a specific moral content.

A second challenge is in regard to evidence architecture. The research on music education in China has grown significantly, though as Yang and Welch (2023) report in their systematic review, there are

ongoing issues of the failure to specify the context in which music education research is carried out, the lack of methodological diversity in the research, and the inability of findings to be transferred to China's education system. The field of higher-education research has taken up sustainability and curriculum modernization, as well as the role of art education in the institution, and recent studies on the subject of textbooks indicate that citizenship and moral values continue to be part of the current music curriculum in China (Wang et al., 2025; Ho, 2025). However, research often takes the form of one of a number of distinct approaches: policy analysis, classroom survey, repertoire interpretation, or technical music analysis. A paper that progresses through these levels should not allow evidence from one level to be interpreted as evidence from another.

The present study addresses that methodological gap by separating five evidence layers. A documentary layer validates the policy setting and the historical repertoire domain. A computational layer examines formal organization in a contemporary Chinese popular-song benchmark, providing tools for curriculum sequencing without claiming historical representativeness. Three social datasets then examine distinct contextual questions: how education and trust relate to humanistic-value proxies; how music/opera engagement relates to cultural, civic, and wellbeing indicators; and how education, reading resources, aesthetic orientation, and later wellbeing are associated over time. The samples are never merged. Their findings are integrated only at the level of a joint-display synthesis.

Humanistic literacy is treated here as a higher-order educational objective rather than as a directly observed latent variable. It includes capacities for cultural-historical understanding, respect for difference, reflective judgment, social responsibility, and the ability to connect aesthetic experience with questions of common life. No available dataset measures this complete construct. Accordingly, WVS child-quality selections, cross-group trust, CGSS cultural openness and civic items, and CFPS aesthetic orientation and wellbeing are described as indicators or proxies with explicit limitations. This construct discipline follows the warning by Flake and Fried (2020) that measurement choices become hidden threats to validity when labels are broader than the variables that carry them.

The study asks three questions. RQ1: What institutional, historical, and structural evidence supports the design of a university aesthetic-education pathway centered on twentieth-century Chinese socially engaged music? RQ2: Across independent Chinese social datasets, how are education, cultural resources, music engagement, trust, aesthetic orientation, and selected humanistic-value proxies associated? RQ3: Where do these evidence layers converge, diverge, or remain silent, and what bounded curriculum propositions follow? Four analytical propositions guide interpretation: structural variation can support comparative rather than monolithic repertoire teaching; education and cross-group trust should be positively related to the additive WVS humanistic-orientation proxy; music/opera engagement should be associated more consistently with cultural openness than with broad civic or wellbeing outcomes; and aesthetic orientation should be associated with cultural resources cross-sectionally but may not independently predict later social and wellbeing outcomes after baseline adjustment.

The contribution is threefold. Theoretically, the study integrates social cognitive, experiential learning, and cultural capital perspectives across different levels without treating them as interchangeable. Methodologically, it shows how documentary evidence, music-information-retrieval features, cross-sectional surveys, and panel data can be triangulated while preserving their distinct units of analysis. Practically, it converts the evidence into a curriculum pathway that can be prospectively tested. The article proceeds from the literature and theoretical framework to the multi-source method, separate

results, cross-study synthesis, implications, and a conclusion that states plainly which questions remain unresolved.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Socially Engaged Music as Historical Repertoire and Contested Memory

Socially engaged music in this article is an analytical umbrella, not an assertion of the multifarious nature of music in its function as socially engaged. Works which are physically linked to the collective memories, public ideals, national progress, labor, war, social change, and civic vision. These connections span from revolutionary mass songs to anti-war and patriotic songs, through socialist construction songs and songs of reform and modernization, to popular works that stuck to public narratives of nation and society in twentieth-century China. It is a broader but not so broad as Chinese popular music category as the red music.

Scholarship in the history of this repertoire warns against seeing this tradition as an unproblematic repository of values. Bryant (2005) demonstrates how remembered Cultural Revolution songs can simultaneously instigate feelings of belonging, pain, generational solidarity, and nostalgia. According to Li and Yan (2020), the role of red-songs in modern China is both politically organized and experientially diverse. Gao (2015) puts patriotic popular culture in context of a shifting relationship between the state, markets and consumers. These studies together indicate that teaching the works at the university should focus on the process of their production, circulation, reception, and memory and not exclusively on the content of the lyrics as self-explanatory moral.

There is also a conflict between cultural continuity and musical relevance in curriculum debates. According to Law and Ho (2011), Chinese school music education is a space in which social harmony, nationalism, historical memory, and global cultural exchange are intertwined. Ho and Law (2012) demonstrate that popular music does not simply come as a matter of student choice but rather alters the cultural politics of what is deemed legitimate knowledge. Furthermore, Law and Ho (2015) talk about students' dilemmas in making repertoire choices for music education, and Ho (2017) links Chinese popular-music education with Chinese Dream, personal aspiration and Confucian values. A defensible university pathway, therefore, requires for its possibility critical comparison of official, historical, local, popular and global musical frames.

The 2009 recommended repertoire is a useful document for anchoring the music, but not meant to be a definitive list of repertoire. It confirms that works of twentieth-century social engagement have been publicly assembled as an educational and cultural space, and that the space is related to various historical periods. It cannot make judgments about the interpretations of any given work by its students now and it has no control over the selection of the object that will be aesthetically pleasing and pedagogically effective. However, in the context of the current design the purpose of its use is to establish a universe of repertoire from which a later University study can sample a purposive and historically balanced sample.

Aesthetic Education, Humanistic Literacy, and the Problem of Outcome Inflation

In China, aesthetic education policy integrates the cultivation of aesthetics with humanistic education, imagination, moral sentiment, cultural self-confidence and all-around development. The language of the policy is deliberately general since it provides the direction for the institutions. Empirical research,

on the other hand, should produce more specific and observable results. Aesthetic engagement is connected to, but also differs from, music aesthetic literacy, cultural knowledge, empathy, tolerance, social responsibility, national identity, wellbeing and creativity. All of them taken alone represent an incomplete measure of humanistic literacy.

The recent higher education literature shows promise and fragmentation. Wang et al. (2025) trace the development of the higher art education's role in the sustainable advancement of aesthetic education in the university and highlight the themes of curricular diversity, cultural inheritance and social adaptation. This study, conducted by Ho (2021), delves into the complex relationship between governance aspirations, national restoration, global perspective, and music education in today's China. Fu and Tu (2023) provide evidence that national-music lessons may improve subjective wellbeing without changing national identity or self-esteem over eight weeks. He et al. (2025) identify red musical identity, awe, prosocial behavior, and wellbeing as a plausible longitudinal chain, but their single-site evidence does not establish a general curricular effect. These studies reveal a field moving toward mechanism testing while still relying heavily on institution-specific samples.

Music psychology and social-bonding research provides a complementary perspective. Bandura's (2001) social cognitive account explains how symbolic models, affective arousal, anticipated consequences, and self-reflection can shape learning. Musical activities can create shared attention, temporal coordination, and opportunities for perspective taking; however, prosocial consequences are not invariant. Ilari et al. (2021) found relationships among musical activities, prosocial behavior, and executive functions in children, while Savage et al. (2021) propose music as a mechanism of social bonding across cultures. These studies justify testing social and empathic pathways, but they do not warrant assuming that listening to historically significant music will produce the same outcomes in university students.

For this reason, the present study distinguishes proximal from distal outcomes. Proximal outcomes include attention to musical form, emotional engagement, historical understanding, interpretive complexity, and willingness to discuss conflicting perspectives. Distal outcomes include durable cultural openness, prosocial orientation, social responsibility, and community engagement. The public datasets can illuminate some distal correlates and contextual inequalities, but only a future course-based design can observe whether specific teaching sequences change proximal or distal outcomes.

Computational Music Structure as a Pedagogical Resource-not a Historical Substitute

Music information retrieval offers reproducible ways to describe segmentation, repetition, section diversity, and formal organization. Audio-based music structure analysis typically identifies boundaries and functional sections such as intro, verse, chorus, bridge, and outro; it remains challenging because formal labels are culturally and analytically ambiguous (Nieto et al., 2020). Recent work has also highlighted the limitations of music-generation and evaluation systems when long-range form is weakly represented (Dai et al., 2022). Datasets such as CCMusic broaden computational resources for Chinese music, while SongFormer and SongFormBench provide new tools for song-form analysis and evaluation (Hao et al., 2025; Zhou et al., 2025).

These developments are useful for aesthetic education when they are kept in their proper role. Structural descriptors can help teachers compare how songs distribute repetition, contrast, instrumental space, and sectional return. They can support repertoire sequencing from formally accessible to structurally complex works and can make musical evidence visible to non-music majors.

They cannot determine historical meaning, social engagement, emotional response, or educational value on their own. SongFormBench is therefore used here as a contemporary Chinese popular-song benchmark for analytical procedures, not as a sample of the twentieth-century socially engaged repertoire named in the title.

Integrated Theoretical Framework

Three theories organize the pathway at different levels. Social cognitive theory operates at the level of modeled action, emotional response, self-reflection, and anticipated social consequences (Bandura, 2001). In a classroom, performances, narratives, documentary materials, peer interpretations, and teacher framing become symbolic models. The theory predicts neither automatic imitation nor uniform agreement; it directs attention to how students observe, interpret, and regulate responses to modeled values.

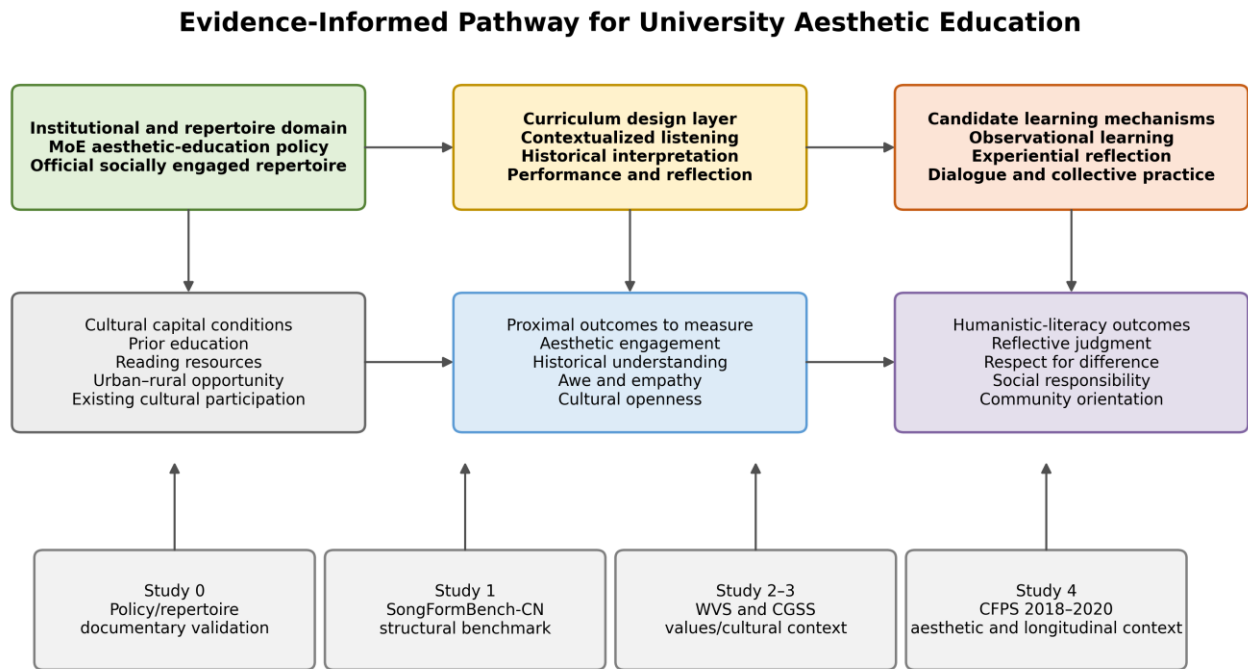
Experiential learning theory describes the pedagogical cycle through which encounters become learning: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). For socially engaged music, the cycle can begin with listening or performance, continue through historical and musical analysis, move to conceptual comparison of social themes, and culminate in reinterpretation, creative response, debate, or community-oriented presentation. This structure prevents the course from becoming either a lecture on political history or an uncontextualized listening session.

Cultural capital theory locates participation within unequal distributions of knowledge, dispositions, resources, and institutional recognition (Bourdieu, 1986). Students arrive with different levels of music training, reading habits, family cultural resources, digital access, and familiarity with historical repertoires. CFPS evidence on education and books is used to examine these contextual conditions, not to label students by cultural worth. The theory predicts that curriculum access and interpretive confidence may be socially patterned, which makes scaffolding and multiple modes of participation necessary.

The theories are integrated sequentially rather than blended into a single omnibus model. Cultural capital conditions shape access and readiness. Experiential learning structures the course. Social cognitive processes help explain how students may attend to models, emotions, and social meanings during that experience. Proximal aesthetic and interpretive outcomes may then contribute to broader humanistic development, but the latter link remains a hypothesis for future intervention research. Figure 1 presents this evidence architecture and explicitly separates theory-guided mechanisms from the secondary datasets used to contextualize them.

The framework yields four propositions. P1: a repertoire taught through comparative structural and historical analysis should offer richer interpretive opportunities than a repertoire presented as a uniform ideological category. P2: education and cross-group trust will show positive, although small, associations with the WVS additive humanistic-orientation proxy. P3: general music/opera engagement will be more consistently related to cultural openness than to broad civic, solidarity, or wellbeing outcomes. P4: education and reading resources will be related to aesthetic orientation, whereas aesthetic orientation alone will not necessarily predict later trust or wellbeing after baseline levels are considered.

Figure 1: Evidence-Informed Conceptual Framework



Evidence layers constrain curriculum propositions; they do not form a single respondent-level causal model.

Methodology and Data Analysis Strategy

Research Design and Claim Architecture

A convergent multi-source design was used to address a problem that no single available dataset could measure directly. Mixed-method design principles informed the separation of components and the use of a joint display, but the study does not merge incompatible units or compute a synthetic cross-dataset score (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Five components were analyzed: (0) documentary validation of policy and repertoire; (1) structural analysis of a Chinese song benchmark; (2) WVS China analysis of humanistic-value proxies; (3) CGSS analysis of music engagement and cultural/civic indicators; and (4) CFPS analysis of aesthetic orientation, cultural resources, and later outcomes.

The title is interpreted as the educational problem and design objective, not as a statement that an intervention effect has already been estimated. 'Integrating' refers to the proposed curriculum pathway derived from bounded evidence. 'Twentieth-century Chinese socially engaged music' is directly anchored through historical scholarship and the official repertoire documents. 'University aesthetic education' is directly anchored through higher-education policy. 'Humanistic literacy' is treated as an overarching construct represented imperfectly by multiple indicators, none of which is renamed as a validated full scale.

Table 1 summarizes the unit of analysis, period, variables, and permissible claims. The documentary evidence answers questions of institutional relevance and repertoire scope. The music corpus answers questions of formal organization only. The survey and panel analyses answer questions about associations among education, cultural resources, engagement, values, and wellbeing in Chinese populations. They do not identify the effect of teaching a particular repertoire.

Table 1: Topic–Dataset–Theory Alignment and Variable Operationalization

Component	Source	Unit	Period	Construct/ domain	Indicators	Permissible claim
Study 0: Policy/repertoire	Policy and repertoire documents	Document	2009; 2019– 2024	University aesthetic education; historical repertoire domain	Directed coding of mandate, period, educational function and claim boundary	Direct scope validation; no outcome estimation
Study 1: SongFormBench- CN	Chinese subset of SongFormBench	Song	Contemporary benchmark	Formal organization	Segments, unique sections, normalized entropy, transition diversity, repetition, section-duration shares	Structural benchmark only
Study 2: WVS China	World Values Survey Wave 7, China	Adult respondent	2018	Humanistic orientation and trust context	Additive child- quality proxy; cultural identity; cross-group trust; generalized trust; ISCED education; age, sex, urbanity	Weighted associations; no music exposure
Study 3: CGSS	Chinese General Social Survey	Adult respondent	2006	Music engagement and cultural/civic context	Music/opera listening; reading; internet; cultural openness; civic orientation; national solidarity; life satisfaction; controls and province FE	Cross- sectional associations; no repertoire/co urse
Study 4: CFPS	China Family Panel Studies	Adult/panel respondent	2018–2020	Aesthetic orientation, cultural resources and wellbeing	Aesthetic orientation item; education years; books; trust; life satisfaction; happiness; age, sex, urbanity	Cross- sectional and lagged associations; no intervention

Study 0: Documentary Validation

The documents included the MoE's opinion on university aesthetic education (2019), the central opinion on school aesthetic education (2020), the guidance on the courses of public art in higher

education (2022), the opinion on the aesthetic-education immersion action of the MoE (2024), and the list of 100 patriotic songs recommended by the MoE (2009). A directed coding frame was used to read documents related to goals of education, curricular mechanisms, repertoire periods, expected humanistic function and evidentiary status. To ensure the traceability of the documents' language and the categories of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021), reflexive thematic principles were applied.

The documentary analysis was not employed for ideological intensity or for inferences of student response. It was more focused in purpose and was designed to assess the possibility of direct support of the institutional and repertoire domains of a fixed title, instead of through proxies. Studies of the history of the repertoire, however, complicated rather than confirmed official framing, particularly when repertoire may bring with it contested memories or multiple reception histories (Bryant, 2005; Li & Yan, 2020).

Study 1: SongFormBench Structural Benchmark

300 songs are fully annotated in SongFormBench by language groups, of which 100 songs are chosen as Chinese songs for this study. Song-level durations and section annotations are provided for each record. The analysis recovered the order of the section sequence and calculated the number of segments, number of distinct section labels, average length of segments, proportions of chorus, verse and bridge, repetition ratio, diversity of transitions, and normalized entropy of the section sequence. Entropy was calculated as $H^* = -\sum p_j \ln(p_j) / \ln(J)$, where p_j is the duration share of section type j and J is the number of observed section types. Higher H^* indicates a more even distribution of duration across section types.

Continuous features were standardized and summarized with principal components. K-means solutions from $k = 2$ to $k = 6$ were compared using average silhouette width, and the best tested solution was retained. Cluster interpretation was descriptive because the corpus was not sampled to represent a historical population. The analysis did not infer social meaning from form and did not compare Chinese and English subsets, thereby removing the inconsistent t-tests and unsupported cross-language claims identified in the earlier review.

Study 2: World Values Survey China

The WVS Wave 7 cross-national file was filtered to China, yielding 3,036 respondents. The main complete-case weighted model contained 2,917 respondents. The dependent variable was an additive proportion based on four child qualities: responsibility, imagination, tolerance and respect for others, and unselfishness. Because WVS respondents select a limited number of qualities, the resulting score is ipsative and is not treated as a reflective psychometric scale. Cultural identity combined national pride and local, regional, and national closeness (Cronbach's $\alpha = .706$). Cross-group trust combined trust in people met for the first time, people of another religion, and people of another nationality ($\alpha = .690$).

The main model was weighted least squares with HC3 robust standard errors: $H_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Education}_i + \beta_2 \text{Identity}_i + \beta_3 \text{CrossGroupTrust}_i + \beta_4 \text{GeneralizedTrust}_i + \beta_5 \text{Age}_c + \beta_6 \text{Age}_c^2 + \beta_7 \text{Female}_i + \beta_8 \text{Urban}_i + \varepsilon_i$. A fractional-logit generalized linear model provided a distributionally appropriate robustness check for the bounded proportional outcome. The WVS dataset and country-wave documentation follow Haerpfer et al. (2022).

Study 3: Chinese General Social Survey 2006

The uploaded SPSS file was identified from its labels and structure as CGSS 2006, not a pooled 2015–2019 dataset. It contains 10,151 respondents and 1,311 variables. This correction is important because historical context, sampling, and variable meaning are wave-specific. Bian and Li (2012) provide a detailed account of the CGSS sampling design and data quality across early waves.

Music/opera engagement was reverse-coded from leisure-frequency item qe3805 so that higher values indicate more frequent listening. Reading and internet engagement were coded in the same direction. Cultural openness reversed agreement with the statement that foreign films and related cultural products harm Chinese culture. Civic orientation measured support for residents' right to participate in community or village affairs. National solidarity reflected support for the country, and life satisfaction was a single reverse-coded item. Education years, standardized age, sex, and province fixed effects were controls.

For outcome Y in province p , the model was $Y_{ip} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Music}_i + \beta_2 \text{Reading}_i + \beta_3 \text{Internet}_i + \beta_4 \text{Education}_i + \beta_5 \text{Age}_i + \beta_6 \text{Female}_i + \delta_p + \varepsilon_{ip}$. HC3 standard errors were used. A binary logistic model of high cultural openness and an education-based tertiary-proxy subsample were genuine robustness checks. No composite reliability coefficient was reported for single-item outcomes; alpha would be inappropriate.

Study 4: China Family Panel Studies 2018–2020

CFPS is a nationally oriented longitudinal study of Chinese individuals, families, and communities (Xie & Hu, 2014). The analysis used adult files from 2018 and 2020. Aesthetic orientation was represented by a single 2018 item on the importance of artistic and aesthetic experience. Education was measured in years. Reading resources were operationalized as $\log(1 + \text{number of books read})$, with respondents who explicitly reported not reading coded as zero books rather than missing. This structural-zero correction increased the valid cross-sectional model from 6,634 in the earlier draft to 26,022 and removed a serious selection problem.

The cross-sectional weighted model estimated aesthetic orientation from standardized education years, standardized book engagement, generalized trust, centered age, sex, and urban residence with HC3 standard errors. A binary logit of high aesthetic orientation and an 18–35 age subsample tested robustness. Three lagged models then predicted 2020 trust, life satisfaction, and happiness from 2018 aesthetic orientation while controlling the corresponding baseline outcome, book engagement, education, age, sex, and urban residence: $Y_{i,2020} = \alpha + \beta \text{Aesthetic}_{i,2018} + \rho Y_{i,2018} + \gamma X_{i,2018} + \varepsilon_i$. These models assess temporal prediction, not causal treatment effects.

Missing Data, Assumptions, Reliability, and Sensitivity

The non-substantive user defined codes were recoded as missing before analysis. There was a relatively low rate of missingness in the core variables (<1.2% missing for the WVS). The missingness of CGSS was greater in the case of cultural openness (13.2%), national solidarity (11.1%), education years (9.9%) and civic orientation (7.9%). Structural zeroes were corrected and the CFPS missingness for each item ranged from 9.0% (education) to 19.6% (aesthetic orientation), with book engagement missing at 12.7%. Complete case estimation was used as the procedure was common across all the sources, and an imputation model common to all data sources would be

inappropriate. This is because they are based on the cases observed and selection bias may be present, particularly in CGSS and CFPS.

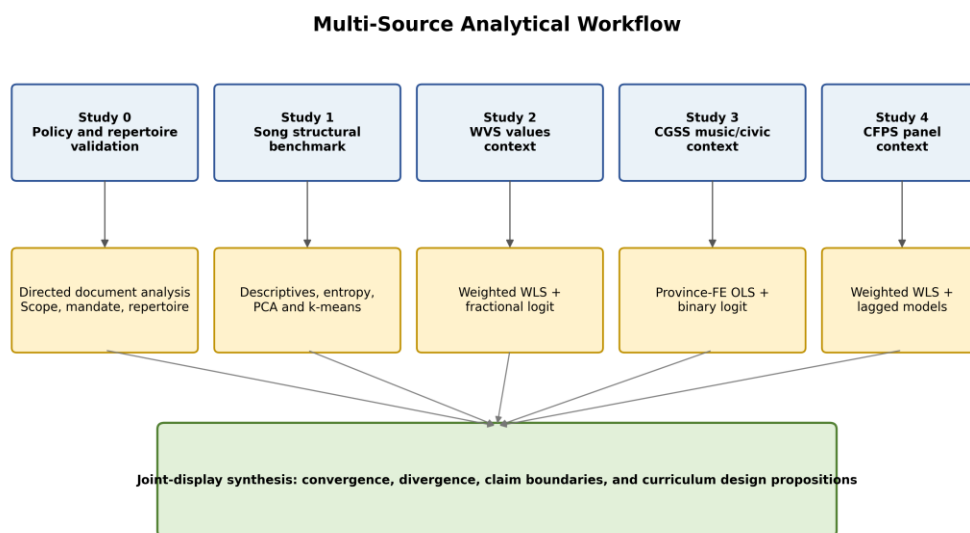
The variance-inflation factors were low, (maximum of 1.53 in the WVS, 2.56 in the CGSS, and 1.64 in the CFPS). All major models included exhibited heteroskedasticity, as confirmed by Breusch–Pagan tests, which called for HC3 standard errors. The Jarque-Bera tests were sensitive to the presence of non-normal residuals in the large CGSS and CFPS samples, and the robust inference and alternative binary/fractional specifications did not require normality. For the CGSS cultural-openness model, the maximum Cook's distance was .0041 and 5.19% of observations had a Cook's distance greater than $4/n$, so the results were compared with the binary outcome and tertiary-proxy subsample. The low R^2 values can be interpreted as indicating these are not prediction models but contextual association models.

Internal consistency was assessed only where there were multiple items that likely constituted reflective indices. The WVS cultural-identity and cross-group-trust indices also passed moderate consistency levels. A humanistic-orientation score is additive and ipsative, the CGSS and CFPS focal outcomes are single items, so alpha is not reported. The CGSS 2021 Excel file was audited and not used for inferential analysis due to the lack of a variable codebook coded into the columns of the file to be able to validate the meaning of the constructs.

Integration Procedure and Ethics

Findings were combined with a shared display of findings grouped by evidence layer, directness, result and limitation of inferences. Convergence did not need to mean the same sign for the coefficients in unrelated samples. This resulted in the inclusion of a divergence. For instance, there is no lagged association between aesthetic orientation and wellbeing, and this does not preclude a positive association between music engagement and cultural openness, as these are two distinct exposures, outcomes, and periods.

Figure 2: Multi-Source Research Workflow



No respondent-level merging across datasets; no causal effect of a university intervention is estimated.

All quantitative data were anonymous secondary data either public-use or publicly shared. There was no participation in contact, and no attempt to re-identify and no reports of sensitive individual level records. Hence this secondary analysis did not require ethical approval. The workflow is shown in Figure 2.

Results

Documentary Validation of Scope

The study is located within the university aesthetic education which is clearly defined in the policy documents. The 2019 opinion sees aesthetic education as a component of the development of talent in university and advocates for reform in the curriculum, practice, faculty and governance. The central opinion for 2020 continues the aesthetic education of the students from primary to secondary and post-secondary education and connects it with aesthetic and humanistic literacy. The public-art curriculum guidance issued in 2022 clarifies the provision of courses on public-art at higher education institutions, and the 2024 immersion action calls for public-art to be incorporated into teaching, campus culture, public-art practice and social participation (Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and State Council, 2020; MoE, 2019, 2022, 2024).

The official 100 song list and related historical scholarship create a domain of repertoire that is socially engaged, and that can be broken down into revolutionary, construction and reform narratives. Works appear in the list at various times during the twentieth century and were spread via mass singing, schools, broadcasting and commemorative performance. It serves as a starting point for future repertoire sampling that can be reproduced. But also a critical boundary was identified, which is that policy and official selection is not about the effectiveness of learning, but about relevance. Nostalgia, coercive memory, personal biography, cultural pride or aesthetic pleasure can all be conveyed by similar songs, depending on cohort and context (Bryant, 2005; Li & Yan, 2020).

This is a specific solution of the earlier title issue, that is, this is a documentary layer. Two domains of the title are now clearly found, but the social datasets do not explicitly reference the presence of university participants and course exposure. The remaining studies are used to find structural tools and population circumstances that the university curriculum should face and then evaluate.

Study 1: Structural Profile of the Chinese Song Benchmark

For Chinese, there were 100 songs, with an average duration of 235.20 seconds ($SD = 43.74$). Songs averaged 11.96 annotated segments ($SD = 2.45$) and 5.31 unique section types ($SD = 0.83$). The mean (SD) normalized section entropy was .874 ($SD = .048$) which suggests that the duration was not all in one section type. The mean score of transition-diversity was .701 ($SD = .111$), while the mean repetition ratio was .544 ($SD = .085$).

The longest time shares were chorus with .382 and verse with .270. Throughout the corpus there were 462 occurrences of chorus segments and 8,922 seconds of chorus segments, and 310 occurrences of verse segments and 6,119 seconds of verse segments. There were 115 instrumental sections, 105 intros, 98 pre-choruses, 86 outros, and 20 bridges. Small mean bridge share (.017) and positive skew shows that although bridges were not found in many songs, a small number had large numbers of bridges.

Among $k = 2-6$ solutions, $k = 4$ had the highest silhouette score (.269), modest rather than strong separation. Relatively concise songs and songs with a variety of transitions, songs with some repetition in the chorus, songs with a lot of bridge material, and songs with a lot of repetition in the verses but a lower complexity were separated by the clusters. It does not demonstrate that these contemporary forms characterize the historical repertoire or that one cluster is educationally superior.

Descriptive Statistics and Within-Dataset Associations

Table 2 reports selected descriptive statistics. The WVS additive humanistic-orientation proxy averaged .475 (SD = .180). Cultural identity was relatively high ($M = 3.20$ on a four-point range), while cross-group trust was lower ($M = 1.95$). In CGSS, music/opera engagement averaged 3.14 on a seven-point frequency scale; cultural openness averaged 2.32 on a four-point scale. In CFPS, aesthetic orientation averaged 3.03 on a five-point scale. The distributions confirm that the variables have sufficient variation for association analysis, although several ordinal outcomes are not normally distributed.

Table 2: Selected Descriptive Statistics

Dataset	Variable	n	Mean	SD	Min	Max
SongFormBench-CN	Duration (seconds)	100	235.203	43.742	95.100	336.142
SongFormBench-CN	Segments	100	11.960	2.453	6	18
SongFormBench-CN	Unique sections	100	5.310	0.825	3	7
SongFormBench-CN	Normalized entropy	100	0.874	0.048	0.725	0.976
WVS China	Humanistic-orientation proxy	3022	0.475	0.180	0	1
WVS China	Cross-group trust	3012	1.954	0.503	1	4
WVS China	Education (ISCED)	3006	2.834	1.909	0	8
CGSS 2006	Music/opera engagement	10151	3.138	2.364	1	7
CGSS 2006	Cultural openness	8811	2.322	0.737	1	4
CGSS 2006	Life satisfaction	10102	2.690	0.611	1	4
CFPS 2018	Aesthetic orientation	30020	3.027	1.196	1	5
CFPS 2018	Education years	33974	7.713	4.776	0	23

The separate Spearman matrices in Table 3 avoid the earlier error of presenting variables from different datasets as though they belonged to one sample. In WVS, the humanistic proxy correlated with education ($\rho = .131$) and cross-group trust ($\rho = .082$), but not cultural identity ($\rho = -.006$). In CGSS, music/opera engagement correlated moderately with education years ($\rho = .373$) and weakly with cultural openness ($\rho = .098$); correlations with civic orientation, national solidarity, and life satisfaction were close to zero. In corrected CFPS data, aesthetic orientation correlated with education ($\rho = .100$) and book engagement ($\rho = .127$). Life satisfaction and happiness showed the strongest within-dataset correlation ($\rho = .441$).

Table 3: Separate Within-Dataset Spearman Correlations

Dataset	Variable 1	Variable 2	ρ	Pairwise n
WVS	Humanistic proxy	Education	0.131	2992
WVS	Humanistic proxy	Cultural identity	-0.006	2988
WVS	Humanistic proxy	Cross-group trust	0.082	2999
WVS	Humanistic proxy	Generalized trust	0.048	2995
CGSS	Music/opera engagement	Education years	0.373	9143
CGSS	Music/opera engagement	Cultural openness	0.098	8811
CGSS	Music/opera engagement	Civic orientation	-0.027	9351
CGSS	Music/opera engagement	National solidarity	-0.032	9025
CGSS	Music/opera engagement	Life satisfaction	0.069	10102
CFPS	Aesthetic orientation	Education years	0.100	28177
CFPS	Aesthetic orientation	Book engagement	0.127	29891
CFPS	Aesthetic orientation	Trust	0.034	29942
CFPS	Aesthetic orientation	Life satisfaction	0.044	30015
CFPS	Aesthetic orientation	Happiness	0.070	30007

Main Models

In the WVS weighted model, education had a small positive association with the humanistic-orientation proxy ($b = .00486$, $SE = .00240$, $p = .042$, 95% CI [.00017, .00956]). Cross-group trust was also positively associated ($b = .01887$, $SE = .00793$, $p = .017$). Cultural identity and generalized trust were null. Urban residence was marginal at $p = .054$. The model explained 2.1% of variance, confirming that the proxy is shaped by many factors outside the model. P2 is supported for education and cross-group trust, but not for cultural identity or generalized trust.

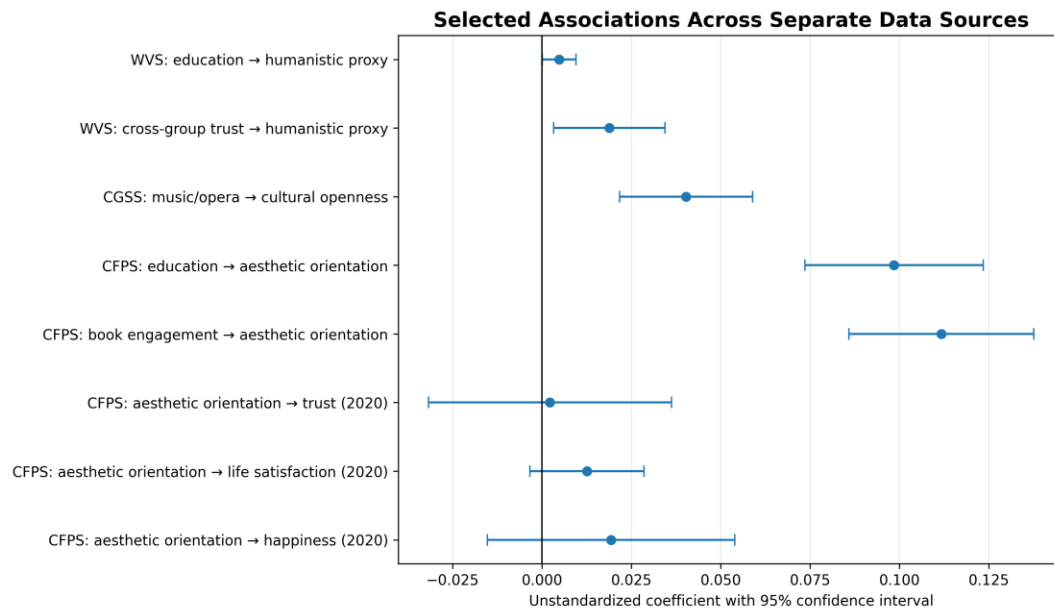
In CGSS, music/opera engagement was positively associated with cultural openness ($b = .04037$, $SE = .00949$, $p < .001$) after education, reading, internet use, age, sex, and province were controlled. It was not associated with civic orientation, national solidarity, or life satisfaction. Education was negatively associated with the civic item at a very small magnitude ($b = -.01960$, $p = .048$), while reading, internet use, and education were positively associated with life satisfaction. These results support P3: general music engagement aligns more clearly with openness to external culture than with broad civic or wellbeing indicators.

The corrected CFPS cross-sectional model showed that education ($b = .09851$, $SE = .01273$, $p < .001$) and book engagement ($b = .11177$, $SE = .01317$, $p < .001$) predicted stronger aesthetic orientation. Trust was not significant at the 5% level, and urban residence was negatively associated with the outcome after covariate adjustment. The model explained 2.5% of variance. In lagged analyses, 2018 aesthetic orientation did not predict 2020 trust ($b = .00229$, $p = .895$), life satisfaction ($b = .01263$, $p = .122$), or happiness ($b = .01938$, $p = .273$) after the corresponding baseline outcome and controls were included. Baseline outcomes were, as expected, the dominant predictors. Book engagement predicted later trust, while education positively predicted later trust but negatively predicted life satisfaction at a small magnitude. P4 is therefore supported: cultural resources are linked to aesthetic orientation, but the single aesthetic item does not independently forecast the selected later outcomes.

Table 4 reports the focal coefficients and model statistics. Figure 3 displays selected estimates with confidence intervals. Because outcomes and scales differ, coefficient magnitudes should not be compared across datasets; the figure is intended to show direction and uncertainty, not a common effect-size metric.

Table 4: Main Empirical Model Results

Outcome/model	Focal term	b	Robust SE	p	95% CI low	95% CI high	n	R ²
WVS: humanistic proxy	Education (ISCED)	0.005	0.002	0.042	1.70e-04	0.010	2917	0.021
WVS: humanistic proxy	Cultural identity	0.002	0.009	0.848	-0.015	0.019	2917	0.021
WVS: humanistic proxy	Cross-group trust	0.019	0.008	0.017	0.003	0.034	2917	0.021
WVS: humanistic proxy	Generalized trust	0.002	0.009	0.812	-0.015	0.019	2917	0.021
CGSS: cultural openness	Music/opera engagement (z)	0.040	0.009	<.001	0.022	0.059	8041	0.055
CGSS: civic orientation	Music/opera engagement (z)	-0.004	0.008	0.613	-0.020	0.012	8455	0.035
CGSS: national solidarity	Music/opera engagement (z)	-0.012	0.009	0.180	-0.030	0.006	8190	0.049
CGSS: life satisfaction	Music/opera engagement (z)	0.008	0.008	0.321	-0.007	0.022	9096	0.051
CFPS: aesthetic orientation	Education years (z)	0.099	0.013	<.001	0.074	0.123	26022	0.025
CFPS: aesthetic orientation	Book engagement (z)	0.112	0.013	<.001	0.086	0.138	26022	0.025
CFPS: trust 2020	Aesthetic orientation 2018	0.002	0.017	0.895	-0.032	0.036	15984	0.132
CFPS: life satisfaction 2020	Aesthetic orientation 2018	0.013	0.008	0.122	-0.003	0.029	16050	0.191
CFPS: happiness 2020	Aesthetic orientation 2018	0.019	0.018	0.273	-0.015	0.054	16076	0.212

Figure 3: Selected Associations Across Separate Data Sources

Coefficients are outcome-specific and are not directly comparable in magnitude across models.

Robustness and Sensitivity Analyses

The robustness analyses altered outcome specification or sample composition rather than repeating the main tests. In WVS fractional logit, education ($b = .01948$, $p = .026$) and cross-group trust ($b = .07585$, $p = .004$) remained positive. In CGSS binary logit, music/opera engagement predicted the log-odds of high cultural openness ($b = .13034$, $p < .001$). In the tertiary-proxy subsample, the music coefficient remained positive but was not significant at .05 ($b = .05029$, $p = .063$), suggesting reduced precision and possible heterogeneity among more educated respondents. In CFPS, binary logit results supported positive associations of education and book engagement with high aesthetic orientation. Among respondents aged 18–35, education ($b = .17620$, $p < .001$) and book engagement ($b = .06781$, $p < .001$) remained positive. Trust remained null. These analyses strengthen the cross-sectional cultural-resource result but do not alter the null lagged findings.

Table 5: Genuine Robustness and Sensitivity Checks

Model/sample	Term	b/log-odds	Robust SE	p	95% CI low	95% CI high	n
WVS fractional logit	Education	0.019	0.009	0.026	0.002	0.037	2917
WVS fractional logit	Cross-group trust	0.076	0.027	0.004	0.024	0.128	2917
CGSS binary logit: high openness	Music/opera engagement (z)	0.130	0.028	<.001	0.076	0.184	8041
CGSS tertiary-proxy	Music/opera	0.050	0.027	0.063	-0.003	0.103	1132

OLS	engagement (z)						
CGSS tertiary-proxy	Education years	-0.090	0.043	0.037	-0.174	-0.006	1132
OLS	(z)						
CFPS binary logit:	Education years	0.088	0.016	<.001	0.056	0.119	26022
high aesthetic	(z)						
CFPS binary logit:	Book engagement	0.193	0.016	<.001	0.162	0.224	26022
high aesthetic	(z)						
CFPS age 18–35	Education years	0.176	0.029	<.001	0.119	0.233	6261
WLS	(z)						
CFPS age 18–35	Book engagement	0.068	0.019	<.001	0.030	0.105	6261
WLS	(z)						

Joint-Display Synthesis

The synthesis in Table 6 replaces the earlier untraceable radar chart. Each row states what a source directly addresses, the empirical finding, and the boundary beyond which inference should not travel. Three patterns are most important. First, the title's institutional and repertoire domains are supported directly by documents and historical scholarship, while the quantitative studies remain contextual. This removes the need to describe general-population respondents as university students. Second, cultural resources and engagement show small, selective associations rather than a uniform humanistic effect. Education, books, and cross-group trust are related to particular indicators; music engagement is related to cultural openness but not to every civic or wellbeing outcome. Third, the CFPS lagged null results are substantively useful. They suggest that valuing aesthetic experience, measured by one item, should not be treated as a sufficient mechanism for later social trust or wellbeing. A curriculum that aims at humanistic literacy must include historical interpretation, dialogic practice, and reflective assessment rather than assume exposure alone is transformative.

Table 6: Joint Display of Evidence, Findings, and Inference Limits

Evidence layer	Source	Direct focus	Finding	Inference limit
Policy/repertoire validation	MoE policy; 2009 official list	University aesthetic education and historical repertoire	Direct scope alignment is established.	No student outcomes.
Structural benchmark	SongFormBench-CN, n=100	Formal organization	Chorus/verse dominance; k=4 modest clusters.	Contemporary corpus, not target repertoire.
Values context	WVS China, n=2,917	Education, identity, trust, humanistic proxy	Education and cross-group trust positive; identity and generalized trust null.	General population; no music exposure; ipsative proxy.
Music/cultural context	CGSS 2006, n=8,041–9,096	Music engagement and cultural/civic outcomes	Music engagement predicts cultural openness only.	Cross-sectional; no repertoire/course.
Aesthetic/longitudinal context	CFPS 2018–2020, n=26,022	Aesthetic orientation,	Education/books predict aesthetic	Single-item proxy; observational

and 15,984– 16,076	resources, outcomes	later	orientation; aesthetic item does not predict later outcomes.	panel.
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Discussion, Contributions, and Implications

What the Findings Establish—and What They Do Not

What matters most is not any one coefficient but rather the overall method. The evidence needed to serve different functions in the process of including twentieth century Chinese socially engaged music in university aesthetic education is different. Documents of policy and repertoire provide historical and institutional context. Structural annotation provides a clear language of structure analysis. The distribution and association of education, cultural resources, trust, music engagement, and selected value indicators are revealed in population surveys. Panel data test aesthetic orientation prediction of later outcomes. None of these elements, individually, can determine that a course brings about humanistic development.

This distinction overcomes a common inferential shortcut. Historical significance is neither pedagogical effectiveness nor music engagement; engagement with music is not general-population correlations; pedagogical effectiveness is not general-population correlations; exposure to socially engaged repertoire is not the engagement with music; aesthetic orientation is not complete measure of humanistic literacy; humanistic literacy is not complete measure of aesthetic orientation; pedagogical effectiveness is not university intervention effect; university intervention effect is not pedagogical effectiveness. The results still have significance as they will reduce the design space. They suggest that cultural openness is more likely to be a short-term social correlate of music engagement than general civic responsibility and that education and reading resources are key background factors for aesthetic orientation. They also demonstrate that there is a lack of correlation between the broad identity measure and the WVS humanistic proxy.

The negative results of the CFPS should be highlighted. The baseline adjusted aesthetic orientation was not associated with later trust, life satisfaction or happiness. This does not contradict aesthetic education. The item reflects the importance of the aesthetic experience rather than the quality of the course, historical experiences, emotion, discussion, or collective performance. Instead, the result comes with a warning as to “outcome inflation” that positive attitudes to art do not necessarily transfer to a positive attitude to social trust or wellbeing.

Theoretical Contributions

The analysis enriches a historically situated music education by revealing the modeled content which future research should record. A socially engaged song can illustrate acts of courage, sacrifice, solidarity, labour, conflict or national allegiance, and students can accept, resist, reinterpret or historicise the model. Bandura's (2001) account does not warrant a direct linkage of lyrics to values, but it does call attention to observation and self-reflection. The proposed pathway, therefore, engages students as less passive than simply accepting the interpretation, rather than relying on the interpretation, but instead involves peer discussion and reflective evidence.

The sequence of historical repertoire to become educational experience is contributed by experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984). Listening and performance are concrete encounters, documentary

context and musical analysis support reflection, concepts such as 'collective memory', 'cultural identity', 'propaganda', 'solidarity', 'modernization' support abstraction and creative reinterpretation or public presentation support experimentation. This cycle is precise in the structural analysis, which provides students with visible formal characteristics to discuss along with historical meaning.

The theory of cultural capital is used to account for differential participation in the same course. The results of the CFPS indicate that aesthetics orientation and education are related; even among younger adults. This pattern matches with Bourdieu's (1986) claim that cultural dispositions and resources build up unevenly. The idea is not to give students a head start when they start looking at the music, but rather to create bridges of guided listening, translated historical documents, accessible notation or visual form maps, a variety of response options, and space for students who lack formal music training to add historical or social analysis.

The theories can be combined into a level specific model. Initial access depends on cultural capital, pedagogy is organized by experiential learning, social cognitive processes are possible mechanisms in the process of participation, while humanistic outcomes must be directly measured. This is more defensible than weaving three theories around to crop up after every coefficient.

Methodological Contributions

The study provides a contribution of a claim-boundary approach to multi-source research. For each source there is a statement of what is measured, what is approximated and what is not supported. This practice is particularly relevant for titles with historically and institutionally specific concepts, but for which there are no public datasets available but indications of the concepts are present in the surrounding texts. The analysis does not need to commit to a structural equation model with proxies, allowing analysis to be conducted separately on each sample, and then synthesizing implications with a joint display.

The computational element also has a limited application of sophisticated techniques. Instead of decorating the paper with machine learning, we used the same approach of the K-means clustering to describe form variation. The silhouette score is reported and interpreted honestly, with a low score. Analysis does not make any claims that clusters match historical genres or learning outcomes. The use of robust regression, fractional logit, binary logit, fixed effects, and lagged baseline adjustment in the survey studies is due to their ability to deal with scale, heteroskedasticity, omitted regional context, or temporal ordering. Methods were not escalated to SEM due to the focus outcomes being single items or additive proxies of validated latent constructs.

Finally, CFPS demonstrates the crucialness of the data cleaning decision as a significant methodological question in the corrected treatment of structural zeros. The number of books coded non-reader would have limited the sample to readers and the model. Coding verified non-readers as zero books, to obtain an analytic sample of 26,022 and a more interpretable cultural resource measure.

Curriculum and Policy Implications

The evidence doesn't indicate that one repertoire should supplant all others, but rather identifies a repertoire pathway. A University module might start with an example of the 20th Century repertoire that is documented, a sample that has been historically balanced according to the twentieth century experience of resistance and revolution, socialist construction, social reform, national development,

and later reinterpretation. Historical importance, musical contrast, contested reception, availability of primary sources, suitability for non-music majors are all factors for consideration in criterion. The module should also incorporate works that challenge periodization or suggest regional, gendered, ethnic and popular viewpoints.

A five-stage sequence follows from the framework. First, students encounter the work through attentive listening or performance without an immediate authorized interpretation. Second, they map formal features—section return, repetition, contrast, instrumental space, vocal texture, and pacing—using accessible structural annotations. Third, they examine historical sources concerning production, circulation, and reception. Fourth, they compare interpretations in structured dialogue, including questions about memory, social values, artistic autonomy, and present relevance. Fifth, they produce an evidence-based response: a critical essay, podcast, annotated performance, digital exhibition, arrangement, or community presentation. Signs of aesthetic engagement are attention, structural understanding, interpretive vocabulary, and reflective depth. Different indicators of historical perspective taking, tolerance of disagreement, empathy, social responsibility, and reasoned judgment are needed for humanistic learning. Performance tasks and reflective portfolios should be used in conjunction with pre-course, post-course and delayed measures. The studies presented by Fu and Tu (2023) and He et al. (2025) in the University context confirm that it is possible to use a longitudinal design and that different outcomes can change at different rates.

Equity measures are also crucial. As cultural resources are socially patterned, universities should not organize the course around presupposed knowledge of either notation, a canon of history, or a political lexicon. Lower barriers can be achieved through the use of introductory listening guides, low stakes discussion, multilingual resources (when applicable), and through analytical, performative, and creative participation. The negative urban–rural educational effect in CFPS does not imply that there is a stronger negative effect on rural education, but it underscores the importance of testing heterogeneity at the institutional and regional level, and not only designing for the top university in the metro area.

The key take-away for policy makers is evaluation discipline. There is a good progression in 2019-2024 policy, building on aesthetic education, but there needs to be more detail around this in the implementation of the policy. Attendance, completion of the course and performance frequency cannot replace aesthetic or humanistic learning. It is important that universities register curriculum pilots, publish instruments and analysis plans, report null findings and refrain from claims that are too marketing-oriented for what is found.

JSCI and Competitive-Intelligence Relevance

While the manuscript is not a traditional competitive-intelligence analysis, the evidence architecture is applicable to strategic intelligence in higher education. Before allocating institutional resources, there is a need for curriculum leaders to review policy, historical resources, student characteristics, cultural participation, digital music data and outcome evidence. The process is similar to an intelligence cycle of defining a decision problem, gathering a wide range of evidence, validating sources, analyzing the multiple streams, drawing implications, and incorporating outcomes into curriculum design and evaluation.

The study is therefore making a contribution to issues of a JSCI nature not due to redicating ordinary educational data as 'competitive intelligence', but rather because of methodological transparency. The

question of how the universities can differentiate aesthetic-education provision, while satisfying the expectations of the national policy and not falling into symbolic compliance is strategic. In addition to providing support for environmental scanning, open datasets and reproducible structural analysis can also be helpful for performance assessment, which still needs institutional pilots or student-level evidence.

Conclusion, Limitations, and Future Research

Despite the title's high demand, this study kept the evidence design as is instead of hiding the limitations of the evidence sets. Documentary analysis clearly demonstrated the policy relevance of aesthetic education in universities and the presence of a repertoire of historically grounded socially engaged practices. The structural analysis was given by SongFormBench, a modern and transparent benchmark. WVS, CGSS and CFPS provided individual evidence relating to values, music engagement, cultural resources, aesthetic orientation, trust and wellbeing in the context of China. They did not combine their samples and did not consider their results as intervention effects.

The inferences lead to a conservative conclusion. There are certain connections between education and reading resources, between cross-group trust and music engagement, aesthetic orientation and all of these, but in a non-uniform way, nor is there a uniform path from cultural participation to humanistic literacy. Cultural openness rather than all civic-related or wellbeing measures is associated with general music/opera engagement. Education and books are linked to aesthetic orientation, while baseline outcomes do not predict later trust or wellbeing, related to the aesthetic item. These findings justify a curriculum taught through form, history, dialogue, performance, and reflection, plus prospective evaluation.

Several limitations remain. First, it was not possible to find a documentarily validated target repertoire, but one that was available as an annotated audio corpus, SongFormBench is a contemporary benchmark and cannot reproduce twentieth century socially engaged music. Secondly, WVS and CGSS are general-population cross-sections and the CGSS wave relates to 2006. Third, the proxies of the focal items are not a recognized instrument of humanistic-literacy. Fourth, CFPS aesthetic orientation is one component and is impossible to cover the whole experience of aesthetics in the course. Fifth, there is a possibility of non-random missingness in complete-case analysis. Sixth, there are strong limitations of the observational estimates due to unobserved confounding, and the lagged models do not imply causality.

Future research should build a versioned, rights-cleared corpus of twentieth-century Chinese socially engaged music with verified composition date, historical period, social theme, lyrical text, recording provenance, formal annotations, and reception history. A multi-university cluster-randomized or stepped-wedge pilot could compare contextualized experiential teaching with conventional appreciation teaching. Measurements should include a validated humanistic-literacy battery, aesthetic engagement, historical Validated humanistic-literacy battery, aesthetic engagement, historical perspective taking, empathy, cultural openness, social responsibility, classroom climate, prior music training, and cultural resources are to be measured. Baseline, course completion and 3- to 6-month follow-up would differentiate immediate engagement from lasting change.

A second stream should build on institutional differences in the implementation of the 2019, 2022, and 2024 policy directives, as long as the timing of adoption and the extent of measurement is well

documented for causal inference purposes. The qualitative aspect should be explored in the sense of how students from diverse geographical, subject and family cultural backgrounds are understanding competing pieces of history. It is not a question of whether to demonstrate beforehand that socially motivated music can enhance students, but a question of creating an environment in which aesthetic encounter, historical evidence, and reflective disagreement can be analyzed seriously.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The author(s) declare no conflict of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The study uses publicly available or publicly shared secondary data. The repositories are listed below. The analysis workbook accompanying this manuscript reports the corrected descriptive, correlation, regression, robustness, missingness, reliability, and diagnostic outputs.

SongFormBench JSONL: <https://huggingface.co/datasets/ASLP-lab/SongFormBench/resolve/main/data/SongFormBench.jsonl?download=true>

World Values Survey Wave 7 file: <https://osf.io/36dgb/download>

CGSS supplementary SPSS file:

https://plos.figshare.com/articles/dataset/Chinese_general_social_survey_data_CGSS_/28568735

CGSS 2021 Excel record (audit only):

https://plos.figshare.com/articles/dataset/Data_Open_with_Excel_/28134935

CFPS shared archive: <https://figshare.com/ndownloader/articles/25992055/versions/1>

Ethics Statement / Institutional Review Board Statement

Ethical approval was not required because the study used publicly available or publicly shared anonymized secondary data and public documents. No direct human-participant recruitment, intervention, or identifiable private information was involved.

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