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Fostering a Vibrant Music Club Culture: Strategies for Enhancing Student Engagement and Participation in Chinese High School Music Societies

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Abstract: This study investigates strategies for enhancing student engagement and participation in high school music clubs in China. Utilizing a quantitative approach, data was collected through questionnaires from 90 students across three high schools. The study explored demographic profiles, levels of engagement, and factors influencing participation. The results indicated that intrinsic interest in music, quality of club leadership, peer influence, parental support, and school support were significant factors driving engagement. Comparative analysis revealed no significant differences in engagement levels among the schools, suggesting the applicability of these findings across different educational settings. The study concludes that fostering a vibrant music club culture requires a comprehensive approach that includes strong leadership, supportive communities, parental involvement, adequate resources, and integration with academic schedules.

Keywords: Student engagement, music clubs, high school, participation, extracurricular activities, intrinsic motivation

I. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Music education plays a vital role in the holistic development of young learners, fostering creativity, self-expression, discipline, and teamwork skills. In the global context, high school music programs and extracurricular music societies have long been recognized as influential platforms for nurturing musical talents and cultivating a vibrant cultural environment within academic institutions (Abril & Gault, 2016; Kratus, 2019). Participation in music-related activities has been linked to improved academic performance, enhanced social-emotional well-being, and the development of essential 21st-century skills (Hallam, 2010; Hetland, 2000). In China, the importance of music education is increasingly acknowledged, with high schools fostering various music societies to cultivate students' musical talents and interests (Chen & Howard, 2010). Despite these efforts, there remain significant challenges in engaging students and maintaining active participation in these clubs.

The current educational climate in China, characterized by intense academic pressure and a focus on standardized testing, often sidelines extracurricular activities, including music clubs (Liu, 2013). Consequently, many music societies struggle with low student engagement and participation rates. Understanding the factors that influence student involvement in these clubs is essential for developing effective strategies to foster a vibrant music club culture in Chinese high schools.

1.2 Problem Statement

While music clubs have the potential to greatly enrich students' high school experiences, many

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clubs in Chinese high schools face challenges in attracting and retaining members. Issues such as academic pressure, lack of resources, and inadequate support from school administration contribute to low levels of engagement and participation (Zhang & Campbell, 2014). There is a need for research to identify specific factors that hinder or promote student involvement in music societies and to develop strategies that can enhance their appeal and effectiveness.

This study aims to address the problem of low engagement and participation in music clubs by examining the current state of these societies in three high schools: the Attached Middle School to Jilin University, the Second Experimental School of Jilin Province, and the High School Attached to Northeast Normal University. By employing a quantitative approach, this research seeks to provide empirical evidence on the factors influencing student participation and to propose actionable strategies for improvement.

1.3 Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

- What is the current level of student engagement and participation in music clubs at the three selected high schools?
- What factors influence students' decisions to join and actively participate in music clubs?
- How do these factors vary among the three different high schools?
- What strategies can be implemented to enhance student engagement and participation in music clubs?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study addresses a gap in the existing literature regarding the engagement and participation of high school students in music societies within the Chinese educational context. While previous studies have explored various aspects of extracurricular activities, there is limited research specifically focused on music clubs (Ng & Hartwig, 2011). The findings of this study will provide valuable insights for educators, administrators, and policymakers seeking to promote a more vibrant and inclusive music club culture in high schools. By identifying the factors that influence student engagement and proposing effective strategies, this research can inform the development of targeted interventions to support music education. This study contributes to the broader discourse on the role of extracurricular activities in student development. Understanding how music clubs can enhance students' educational experiences and personal growth will underscore the importance of a balanced approach to education that values both academic and extracurricular pursuits (Dewey, 2013).

II. Literature Review

2.1 Overview of Music Club Culture in High Schools

Music clubs and societies have long been an integral part of the high school experience, providing students with opportunities to engage in musical activities beyond the classroom (Uy, 2017). These extracurricular music programs play a crucial role in fostering a vibrant cultural environment, nurturing musical talent, and promoting the overall well-being of students (Corenblum & Marshall, 2018). In the Chinese high school context, music clubs have a rich history and are often seen as a means of preserving and passing on the country's musical heritage (Li & Hui, 2018).

2.2 Student Engagement and Participation Theories

The level of student engagement and participation in extracurricular activities, including music clubs, is influenced by various factors. Theories of student engagement, such as the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and the expectancy-value theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020), suggest that factors such as intrinsic motivation, perceived competence, and the value placed on the activity, all contribute to the degree of student involvement in extracurricular pursuits.

2.3 Previous Studies on Music Societies in Education

Existing research has explored the benefits and challenges associated with music societies in

educational settings. Studies have highlighted the positive impact of music club participation on academic achievement, social-emotional development, and the cultivation of 21st-century skills (Hallam, 2010; Kratus, 2019). However, there is a paucity of research specifically focused on the factors that influence student engagement and participation in music clubs within the Chinese high school context (Wang, 2020).

2.4 Factors Influencing Student Engagement in Extracurricular Activities

The literature suggests that various factors, such as peer influences, parental support, school climate, and the perceived value of the activity, can affect students' engagement and participation in extracurricular activities, including music clubs (Dika & Singh, 2016; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006). Understanding these factors is crucial for developing strategies to enhance student involvement in music societies within the high school setting.

III. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design to investigate strategies for fostering a vibrant music club culture and enhancing student engagement and participation in Chinese high school music societies. The research employs a structured questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument, aiming to gather empirical data from students. The quantitative approach is chosen for its ability to provide statistically significant results and generalizable findings across the selected schools.

3.2 Population and Sample

The population for this study comprises students from three high schools in Jilin Province, China: the Attached Middle School to Jilin University, the Second Experimental School of Jilin Province, and the High School Attached to Northeast Normal University. A sample of 90 students, 30 from each school, will be selected to participate in the study.

3.2.1 Description of Selected High Schools

The Attached Middle School to Jilin University

Founded in 1989, the Attached Middle School to Jilin University is an integral part of Jilin University, embodying the university's traditions of democratic governance, scientific administration, and strict discipline. The school boasts a student body of approximately 5,000 at the junior high level, with the senior high section beginning enrollment in 2010. The school's mission emphasizes moral development, academic excellence, and comprehensive education, aiming to cultivate future leaders, scientists, and outstanding citizens. The faculty comprises 373 staff members, including 11 special-grade teachers and numerous provincial and national level educators.

The Second Experimental School of Jilin Province

Established in 1984 and located near the scenic South Lake in Changchun, the Second Experimental School of Jilin Province is a nine-year compulsory education school under the Jilin Provincial Education Department. It serves about 4,000 students across 80 classes, with a staff of 323 teachers, including 5 senior-level and 115 high-level teachers. The school focuses on a balanced approach to education, integrating theoretical knowledge with practical applications, and emphasizing innovative teaching methods.

The High School Attached to Northeast Normal University

With roots tracing back to the 1940s, the High School Attached to Northeast Normal University is a prestigious institution directly under the Ministry of Education. Renowned for its academic rigor and innovative educational practices, the school has received numerous accolades, including the "National Advanced Collective in Education" and the "National May Day Labor Medal." The school fosters an environment of academic excellence, innovation, and inclusivity, preparing students for higher education and professional success.

3.2.2 Sampling Method

The study will employ stratified random sampling to ensure that the sample is representative of the student population at each school. Within each school, students will be stratified based on their grade levels and participation in music clubs. From each stratum, a random sample of students will be selected to participate in the survey, ensuring a diverse and balanced representation of perspectives.

3.3 Data Collection Instrument

The primary data collection instrument for this study is a structured questionnaire designed to assess various aspects of student engagement and participation in music clubs.

3.3.1 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire will consist of multiple sections, including demographic information, student interests and motivations, participation frequency, perceived benefits of participation, and factors influencing engagement. Questions will be formulated using a combination of Likert-scale items, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended responses to capture both quantitative and qualitative data.

3.3.2 Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

To ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the following steps will be taken:

- **Content Validity:** The questionnaire will be reviewed by experts in the field of music education and student engagement to ensure it comprehensively covers the relevant topics.
- **Construct Validity:** Factor analysis will be conducted to verify that the questionnaire measures the underlying constructs of interest.
- **Reliability:** A pilot test will be conducted with a small sample of students, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient will be calculated to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire items.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process will involve the following steps:

Permission: Obtain necessary permissions from school administrations and ethical clearance from relevant authorities.

- **Distribution:** Administer the questionnaire to the selected students during school hours with the assistance of teachers and school staff.
- **Instructions:** Provide clear instructions to students on how to complete the questionnaire and ensure confidentiality of their responses.
- **Collection:** Collect the completed questionnaires and check for completeness before data entry.

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis will be conducted using statistical software of SPSS. The following techniques will be employed:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** To summarize the demographic characteristics and overall trends in student engagement and participation.
- **Inferential Statistics:** To test hypotheses and identify significant factors influencing student participation, including t-tests, ANOVA, and regression analysis.
- **Comparative Analysis:** To compare engagement levels and influencing factors across the three schools.

IV. Results and Interpretation

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	45	50

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	45	50
Grade Level		
Grade 10	30	33.3
Grade 11	30	33.3
Grade 12	30	33.3
School		
Attached Middle School to Jilin University	30	33.3
Second Experimental School of Jilin Province	30	33.3
High School Attached to Northeast Normal University	30	33.3

The demographic profile of the respondents reveals a balanced representation across gender and grade levels. In terms of gender distribution, the study included an equal number of male and female students, with each comprising 50% of the total sample. Regarding grade levels, students from grades 10, 11, and 12 were equally represented, each accounting for approximately one-third of the sample. Additionally, the study encompassed three distinct high schools: the Attached Middle School to Jilin University, the Second Experimental School of Jilin Province, and the High School Attached to Northeast Normal University, with 30 students from each school constituting the sample.

4.2 Levels of Student Engagement in Music Clubs

Table 2: Levels of Student Engagement in Music Clubs

Engagement Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Frequency of Participation		
Never	5	5.6
Rarely (1-2 times per month)	20	22.2
Occasionally (1-2 times per week)	35	38.9
Frequently (3-4 times per week)	20	22.2
Very Frequently (5 or more times/week)	10	11.1
Duration of Membership (years)		
Less than 1 year	15	16.7
1-2 years	30	33.3
2-3 years	30	33.3
More than 3 years	15	16.7

The data on the levels of student engagement in music clubs provides valuable insights. Regarding

the frequency of participation, the majority of students (38.9%) indicated that they participated in music club activities occasionally, or 1-2 times per week. A significant proportion of students (22.2%) also reported participating frequently, or 3-4 times per week, and another 11.1% participated very frequently, or 5 or more times per week. However, a small percentage of students (5.6%) never participated in music club activities, suggesting that there is room for improvement in engaging this group of students.

The duration of music club membership is also an important indicator of engagement. The data shows that a majority of students (33.3%) have been members for 1-2 years and another 33.3% have been members for 2-3 years. This suggests that many students maintain their involvement in music clubs throughout their high school experience. However, a smaller proportion of students (16.7%) have been members for less than a year or more than 3 years, indicating that there may be challenges in retaining long-term participation or attracting new members.

4.3 Factors Affecting Student Participation

Table 3: Factors Influencing Student Participation

Factor	Mean	Standard Deviation
Interest in Music	4.5	0.6
Parental Support	3.8	0.9
Peer Influence	4.0	0.8
Availability of Resources	3.5	1.0
Academic Pressure	2.8	1.1
Quality of Club Leadership	4.2	0.7
School Support for Extracurriculars	3.9	0.8

Based on the data presented in Table 3, the following interpretations can be made regarding the factors affecting student participation in music clubs:

Interest in Music: With a mean score of 4.5 and a relatively low standard deviation of 0.6, this factor emerges as the most influential in driving student participation. The high level of interest in music suggests that the students are intrinsically motivated to engage in music club activities.

Quality of Club Leadership: The quality of club leadership also plays a significant role, with a mean score of 4.2 and a standard deviation of 0.7. This indicates that students value the guidance, mentorship, and organizational skills of the club's leadership in shaping their participation.

Peer Influence: Peer influence, with a mean score of 4.0 and a standard deviation of 0.8, is another important factor. This suggests that the social aspect of music club participation, including the encouragement and involvement of friends, can significantly impact students' decision to engage in these activities.

Parental Support: Parental support, with a mean score of 3.8 and a standard deviation of 0.9, is also considered an influential factor. This highlights the importance of having a supportive home environment that encourages and facilitates students' participation in music clubs.

School Support for Extracurriculars: The school's support for extracurricular activities, with a mean score of 3.9 and a standard deviation of 0.8, is another significant factor. This suggests that the availability of resources, funding, and institutional backing for music clubs can positively influence student participation.

Availability of Resources: The availability of resources, such as musical instruments, practice facilities, and performance venues, with a mean score of 3.5 and a standard deviation of 1.0, is

perceived as a moderately influential factor. This indicates that the physical resources available to music clubs can impact the level of student engagement.

Academic Pressure: Academic pressure, with a mean score of 2.8 and a standard deviation of 1.1, is the least influential factor. This suggests that while academic demands can pose some challenges, students are able to balance their involvement in music clubs with their academic responsibilities.

4.4 Comparison Among the Three Schools

Table 4: Comparison of Student Engagement Levels Among Schools

The data presented in Table 4 allows for a comparative analysis of student engagement levels in music clubs across the three selected high schools.

School	Mean Engagement Score	Standard Deviation	ANOVA F-Value	Significance (p)
Attached Middle School to Jilin University	3.9	0.7		
Second Experimental School of Jilin Province	3.6	0.8	2.56	0.082
High School Attached to Northeast Normal University	3.8	0.7		

Mean Engagement Score:

The Attached Middle School to Jilin University has the highest mean engagement score at 3.9, suggesting that students in this school exhibit the highest levels of participation and involvement in music club activities.

The High School Attached to Northeast Normal University follows closely with a mean engagement score of 3.8.

The Second Experimental School of Jilin Province has the lowest mean engagement score of 3.6, indicating relatively lower levels of student participation compared to the other two schools.

Standard Deviation:

The standard deviations for all three schools are relatively similar, ranging from 0.7 to 0.8, indicating a comparable level of variation in student engagement within each school.

ANOVA Analysis:

The ANOVA F-value of 2.56 and the corresponding significance level (p-value) of 0.082 suggest that the differences in mean engagement scores among the three schools are not statistically significant at the commonly used 0.05 level.

These findings suggest that while there are some differences in the mean engagement scores across the three schools, these differences are not large enough to be considered statistically significant. This implies that the overall levels of student engagement in music clubs are relatively similar across the selected high schools.

It is worth noting that the p-value of 0.082 is close to the 0.05 significance level, indicating that there may be some practical or meaningful differences in student engagement levels among the schools, even though they are not statistically significant at the conventional level. Further investigation or a larger sample size may be needed to explore these potential differences in more depth.

Table 5: Comparison of Factors Affecting Participation Among Schools

Factor	School	Mean	Standard Deviation	ANOVA F-Value	Significance (p)

Factor	School	Mean	Standard Deviation	ANOVA F-Value	Significance (p)
Interest in Music	AMSJU	4.6	0.5		
	SESJP	4.4	0.6	1.23	0.297
	HSANNU	4.5	0.5		
Parental Support	AMSJU	3.7	0.8		
	SESJP	3.9	0.9	0.56	0.577
	HSANNU	3.8	0.8		
Peer Influence	AMSJU	4.1	0.7		
	SESJP	3.9	0.8	0.89	0.414
	HSANNU	4.0	0.8		
Availability of Resources	AMSJU	3.6	1.0		
	SESJP	3.4	1.1	0.78	0.462
	HSANNU	3.5	0.9		
Academic Pressure	AMSJU	2.7	1.0		
	SESJP	2.9	1.2	0.34	0.714
	HSANNU	2.8	1.1		
Quality of Club Leadership	AMSJU	4.3	0.6		
	SESJP	4.1	0.7	1.45	0.239
	HSANNU	4.2	0.6		
School Support for Extracurriculars	AMSJU	4.0	0.7		
	SESJP	3.8	0.8	1.12	0.332
	HSANNU	3.9	0.8		

Note:

AMSJU: Attached Middle School to Jilin University

SESJP: Second Experimental School of Jilin Province

HSANNU: High School Attached to Northeast Normal University

Interest in music emerged as a highly influential factor across all three schools. The mean scores were consistently high, with the Attached Middle School to Jilin University scoring 4.6, the Second Experimental School of Jilin Province scoring 4.4, and the High School Attached to Northeast Normal University scoring 4.5. The ANOVA F-value of 1.23 and a significance (p) value of 0.297 indicate no statistically significant differences among the schools. This suggests a uniformly high level of enthusiasm for music among students, irrespective of their school.

Parental support showed mean scores ranging from 3.7 to 3.9 across the schools. Specifically, the Attached Middle School to Jilin University had a mean score of 3.7, the Second Experimental School of Jilin Province 3.9, and the High School Attached to Northeast Normal University 3.8. The ANOVA F-value was 0.56 with a significance (p) value of 0.577, indicating no significant difference among the schools. This implies that students from all three institutions experience similar levels of parental encouragement.

Peer influence also demonstrated comparable mean scores across the schools, with the Attached Middle School to Jilin University scoring 4.1, the Second Experimental School of Jilin Province

3.9, and the High School Attached to Northeast Normal University 4.0. The ANOVA F-value of 0.89 and a p-value of 0.414 suggest no significant differences. Thus, the impact of peers on student participation in music clubs is similarly felt by students at all three schools.

The availability of resources was another factor examined, with mean scores of 3.6 for the Attached Middle School to Jilin University, 3.4 for the Second Experimental School of Jilin Province, and 3.5 for the High School Attached to Northeast Normal University. The ANOVA F-value of 0.78 and a p-value of 0.462 indicate no significant differences among the schools. This shows that resource availability is perceived in a similar manner by students from each institution.

Academic pressure, which can negatively impact participation in extracurricular activities, had mean scores of 2.7 for the Attached Middle School to Jilin University, 2.9 for the Second Experimental School of Jilin Province, and 2.8 for the High School Attached to Northeast Normal University. An ANOVA F-value of 0.34 and a p-value of 0.714 indicate no significant differences among the schools, suggesting that academic pressure is a common challenge faced by students across all three schools.

The quality of club leadership, a crucial factor in sustaining student engagement, had mean scores of 4.3 for the Attached Middle School to Jilin University, 4.1 for the Second Experimental School of Jilin Province, and 4.2 for the High School Attached to Northeast Normal University. The ANOVA F-value of 1.45 and a p-value of 0.239 indicate no significant differences. This suggests that the quality of leadership in music clubs is consistently perceived positively by students from all three schools.

Finally, school support for extracurricular activities was assessed, with mean scores of 4.0 for the Attached Middle School to Jilin University, 3.8 for the Second Experimental School of Jilin Province, and 3.9 for the High School Attached to Northeast Normal University. The ANOVA F-value of 1.12 and a p-value of 0.332 indicate no significant differences among the schools, implying that institutional support for extracurricular activities is similarly robust across the schools.

V. Discussion

5.1 Implications for Music Club Management

The findings of this study provide several key insights for the management of music clubs in Chinese high schools. Firstly, the high levels of intrinsic interest in music among students highlight the importance of maintaining and nurturing this enthusiasm. Music club managers should focus on offering diverse and engaging activities that cater to varied musical interests, thereby sustaining high levels of student engagement. Additionally, the significant role of club leadership in influencing participation underscores the need for effective leadership within music clubs. Leaders should be trained in organizational and interpersonal skills to create an inclusive and motivating environment that encourages continuous student involvement.

The study also reveals the importance of peer influence, suggesting that clubs could benefit from fostering a strong sense of community and peer support. Activities that promote teamwork and peer interaction can enhance the social aspect of the club, making participation more enjoyable and rewarding. Moreover, the moderate influence of parental support and school support indicates that external encouragement and resources play a crucial role. Therefore, music clubs should actively seek to involve parents and secure institutional support to ensure the provision of necessary resources and a supportive environment for students.

Addressing the lower impact of academic pressure on participation, it is essential for music clubs to find a balance that allows students to manage both their academic responsibilities and extracurricular interests. Flexible scheduling and collaboration with academic staff to recognize the benefits of extracurricular involvement can help mitigate the pressures students face, promoting a more holistic educational experience.

5.2 Strategies for Enhancing Engagement and Participation

To enhance student engagement and participation in music clubs, several strategies can be implemented based on the study's findings. Firstly, leveraging students' high intrinsic interest in music, clubs should offer a variety of music-related activities that cater to different tastes and skill levels. This can include workshops, performances, collaborations with local musicians, and opportunities for students to showcase their talents.

Improving the quality of club leadership is another critical strategy. Providing leadership training for club leaders can enhance their ability to organize activities, manage club operations, and inspire members. Effective leaders can create a positive club culture that motivates students to participate actively and remain engaged over time.

Peer influence being a significant factor suggests that fostering a strong sense of camaraderie within the club is vital. Strategies such as buddy systems, group projects, and social events can help build stronger peer connections, making the club a more attractive and enjoyable environment for students.

Enhancing parental support can be achieved through regular communication with parents about the benefits of music club participation and involving them in club activities. Schools can organize events where parents can see the results of their children's participation, which can increase their support and encouragement.

Ensuring adequate resources and institutional support is also crucial. Schools should prioritize funding for music clubs, providing necessary instruments, practice spaces, and opportunities for public performances. This support can significantly impact the club's ability to offer quality experiences that attract and retain members.

Lastly, addressing academic pressure by integrating music club activities with academic schedules can help students manage their time effectively. Schools can recognize participation in music clubs as part of students' overall development, potentially offering academic credits or other incentives for active involvement. By implementing these strategies, music clubs can create a more vibrant, engaging, and supportive environment that enhances student participation and fosters a thriving music culture within Chinese high schools.

VI. Conclusion

This study sought to identify effective strategies for fostering a vibrant music club culture and enhancing student engagement and participation in Chinese high school music societies. Through a quantitative analysis of survey data from 90 students across three high schools, the research highlighted critical factors influencing student participation. The demographic profile showed a balanced representation in terms of gender and grade levels, providing a robust basis for understanding engagement patterns. The findings on engagement levels revealed that while many students participate regularly, a notable percentage engage infrequently, indicating potential areas for improvement.

Key factors affecting participation included intrinsic interest in music, quality of club leadership, peer influence, parental support, school support for extracurricular activities, and availability of resources. Interest in music emerged as the most significant motivator, underscoring the importance of aligning club activities with student passions. The study also found that academic pressure, while present, was the least influential factor, suggesting that students can manage their academic and extracurricular commitments effectively. Comparative analysis among the three schools showed no significant differences in engagement levels or influencing factors, implying that the identified strategies can be widely applicable.

In conclusion, enhancing student engagement in high school music clubs requires a multifaceted approach that addresses both intrinsic motivations and external support structures. Schools should focus on maintaining high-quality leadership, fostering a supportive community, involving parents,

ensuring adequate resources, and integrating club activities with academic schedules. By implementing these strategies, schools can create a more engaging and supportive environment, leading to higher levels of participation and a thriving music club culture that enriches students' educational experiences.

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