

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Research on the aesthetic psychology and psychological health effects of ancient Chinese music

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ABSTRACT

There is no clear system of music psychological aesthetics in ancient China, but a large amount of psychological aesthetics related content is contained in the music aesthetic imagination, music dissemination function, music ideals and other concepts of the pre Qin philosophers. The study focuses on the Confucianism and Taoism in China, analyzing the educational and natural aesthetic tendencies of ancient Chinese music aesthetic psychology. Moreover, based on two aesthetic psychological tendencies, the social dissemination role of ancient Chinese music is analyzed. The study conducted empirical research based on questionnaire surveys to explore the impact of ancient music aesthetic activities on the mental health of college students. The experimental results showed that students' horror psychology ($p<0.01$), anxiety psychology ($p<0.01$), and interpersonal sensitivity ($p<0.001$) were affected by the aesthetic activities of ancient music. At the same time, ancient music aesthetic activities strengthened students' psychological practical literacy ($p<0.05$) and emotional characteristic literacy ($p<0.05$). Therefore, the aesthetic of ancient Chinese music has a positive impact on mental health. Wisdom research divides the social dissemination of ancient music into three levels: self dissemination, political dissemination, and human divine dissemination, and sequentially analyzes the functions of music as a medium and as the essence of art.

Keywords: ancient Chinese music; aesthetic psychology; social dissemination; ritual and music; medium

1. Introduction

The ancient Chinese music culture is based on the ritual and music system of the Zhou Dynasty. Through the development of Confucian thought on ritual and music, as well as the exploration of the essence of music art by Taoism, a music concept related to psychological aesthetics had already been formed in China during the pre Qin period. This part of the music psychological aesthetic concept sets the tone for the philosophical exposition of modern music aesthetics, while the social dissemination of music under the ritual and music system also lays the foundation for the dissemination of modern music ideas. Chaloupková took the music creation of Xiao Youmei et al. as an example to compare and explore the music aesthetics of modern China and the music creation models of the East and the West, and analyze the changes in the interactive ways within the Chinese music environment ^[1]. Lu and Tan analyzed John Cage's music practice based on Chinese music philosophy. By drawing on the philosophical terminology of Taoism, a music

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education philosophy style that mainly emphasizes the usefulness of nothingness has been proposed ^[2]. Patt-Shamir analyzed the explanatory power of music in Confucianism based on two Confucian works, the *Analects* and the *Book of Rites*. This study explored the role of music in the self-cultivation and cognitive construction of gentlemen, and analyzed the political education function of Confucian music thought ^[3]. The above research results indicate that in the exploration of ancient Chinese music ideas, most of them have separated the instrumental and artistic essence of music dissemination. The innovation of the research lies in the comprehensive analysis of the dissemination function of the different views of Confucianism and Taoism on music aesthetic psychology. The purpose of the study is to explore the aesthetic psychology and dissemination of Chinese music, promote the development of modern music practice, and guide the orderly activities of the current music market.

2. Aesthetic psychology of ancient Chinese music

2.1. The educational and aesthetic psychology of music

Music aesthetic psychology is a discipline that studies the psychological phenomena, characteristics, structures, and laws exhibited by people in the process of music aesthetics. It focuses on the psychological processes of perception, cognition, emotional experience, and the formation of aesthetic preferences in music aesthetic activities. Leonard B. Meyer's theory of music expectation holds that the theoretical origin of music aesthetic expectation is the bidirectional nature of psychological tendencies. The aesthetic concepts of "the beauty of harmony" and "the beauty of artistic conception" emphasized in ancient Chinese music traditions have similarities with the research results of modern music aesthetic psychology. For example, traditional Chinese music emphasizes the expression of emotions and imagery through music, which is in line with the theories of emotional experience and image processing in music aesthetic psychology. In addition, the ancient Chinese music tradition was deeply influenced by Confucianism, Taoism, and other ideologies, emphasizing the educational and self-cultivation functions of music. To some extent, these ideas have influenced the Chinese people's aesthetic psychology of music, making them more inclined to pursue harmony, balance and internal emotional expression.

The idea of aesthetic psychology in ancient Chinese music first appeared in the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period. The views on aesthetic psychology in music after the pre Qin period were basically influenced by the music ideas of the Spring and Autumn Period (770 BC—476 BC) and the Warring States Period (476 BC—221 BC). In the exploration of music aesthetic psychology during the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, the influence of Confucianism and Taoism was the most profound. Firstly, the Confucian aesthetic psychology of music revolves around the educative role of music. Therefore, in Confucianism, music works with aesthetic value need to possess the following characteristics. Firstly, music needs to have an educational function, which can evoke psychological resonance among the audience towards social systems (mainly *Rites of Zhou*). Secondly, music needs to provide the audience with a driving force for psychological development. Therefore, the Confucian aesthetic concept of music does not focus on the essential level of artistic music works, but on the dissemination role of music works in society, as well as the shaping effect of music as a media tool on people ^[4].

Firstly, Confucian music aesthetics believe that music has a regulating effect on the psychological emotions of individual audiences. During the traveling of various countries, Confucius(551 BC — 479 BC) gradually perfected his own music aesthetic thinking and summarized a music aesthetic psychology centered on "pure and innocent thinking". Confucius believed that musical works need to have the function of expressing psychological emotions, while also conveying correct values. Therefore, in the practice of music, Confucius expected that gentlemen could relieve their worries through singing when they were emotionally

low, and transfer negative emotions through the medium of music ^[5]. In Confucius' perspective on music aesthetic psychology, he believed that there is a connection between pleasant music and the rhythm of music and the soul. Therefore, in Confucius' simple aesthetic concept of auditory experience, the aesthetic psychology of music has already established a transmission relationship and synesthetic effect with the emotional experience of the audience. Therefore, Confucius' aesthetic ideas on music provided a cognitive foundation for the psychological counseling of music in ancient China and later generations.

Secondly, Confucian music aesthetics believe that music can stabilize social etiquette norms through psychological resonance between groups. Confucius' music philosophy was influenced by the music practice and music etiquette system of the Zhou Dynasty ^[6]. In the music system of the Zhou Dynasty, official music was mainly used for two activities: worship and politics (including war), in which music needed to convey the ideology of kingship, that is, official social norms. Combining the aesthetic psychology of music with the individual's psychological and emotional regulation function, Confucius believed that music can satisfy the aesthetic psychological needs of a group through harmonious rhythms and pleasant sounds, thereby completing the education of the group. Therefore, Confucius' music aesthetic psychology evolved from individual psychological regulation and shaping to the education of the entire society. Confucius believed that through the aesthetic psychology in music, groups can connect and unify different people's understanding of the world, life, and individual cultivation, thereby promoting the change of inappropriate attitudes towards life among people from all walks of life and achieving the political ideal of overall social harmony and smoothness.

Finally, Confucian music aesthetic ideas became a psychological concept of music aesthetics under the improvement of Xunzi (About 313 BC — 238 BC). Xunzi observed the positive psychological guidance effect of music from folk music practice, believing that music can transmit happy emotions ^[7]. Xunzi held the view that human nature is inherently evil. He believed that through the pleasant psychological experience and positive value guidance provided by music, people can overcome the evil in their nature. At the same time, Xunzi believed that the creation and performance of music also need to be guided, and that music needs to have form and quality, with correct values and ideas as the form and quality of music, to achieve the goal of harmonious and orderly music form and quality.

2.2. Natural aesthetic psychology of music

The natural aesthetic psychology of ancient Chinese music originated from Taoist thought. The Taoist philosophy of music aesthetic psychology is different from Confucianism, which believes that music is not meant to serve social education, but rather to serve individual spiritual freedom. Therefore, contrary to Confucianism, Taoism emphasizes the aesthetic value of music as the essence of art and applies it to the free evaluation of individual psychology.

Laozi's music aesthetic thought was also influenced by his philosophical concept of "Dao". Laozi (About 571 BC — 470 BC) believed that "Dao" is universally present but difficult to perceive, so when it comes to music, Laozi believed that the most perfect and aesthetically valuable music is also universally present in nature but cannot be touched by the senses ^[8]. Therefore, Laozi believed that in the process of experiencing music, individuals need to ignore the material sound and use music as a medium to observe the non-material aspects of the subject's psychology, thinking, and other aspects. Only through spiritual observation can people obtain the most perfect music aesthetic experience. Meanwhile, Laozi believed that the most aesthetically valuable music can evoke a certain psychological context in the subject, allowing the audience to enter the spiritual world after ignoring the material attributes such as rhythm and pitch of the music. In addition, Laozi believed that music can help people understand the "Dao" because in the aesthetic activities

of music, Laozi found that pleasant music can make the audience fall into a calm psychological state ^[9]. In this state, people's ability to perceive the spiritual world is greatly enhanced. Therefore, Laozi hopes that people can demonstrate and appreciate the "Dao" in music experiences with aesthetic value. Laozi's musical philosophy, based on the philosophical concept of "Dao", also influenced the evaluation criteria for the artistic quality of music in later generations. This led later literati to believe that the higher the aesthetic of music art, the more capable it is of awakening the artistic conception.

Zhuangzi (About 369 BC — 286 BC) inherited and developed Laozi's music aesthetic ideas, and made more specific definitions and classifications of music at the level of natural aesthetic psychology. Although Zhuangzi did not have the idea that sound comes from vibration, he already possessed a simple understanding of the material properties of sound, believing that the sounds of nature, including humans, are all produced through the blowing of breath ^[10]. Starting from the material source of sound, Zhuangzi made a classification of vocal music, believing that sound originating from all things in heaven and earth is the most perfect music, and defined it as "Tian lai". The music generated by the breath of nature is at an intermediate level in aesthetic value, defined by Zhuangzi as "Di lai". The music generated by human performance is at the bottom level in aesthetic value, defined by Zhuangzi as "Ren lai". Zhuangzi believed that in order to hear the "Tian lai", one must achieve the state of unity between the object and the self ^[11]. People can only appreciate the "Tian lai" that represents absolute freedom when they are in a state of complete psychological and spiritual freedom. Zhuangzi believed that people's experience of "Tian lai" can be achieved by feeling the freedom in nature, thus obtaining the highest sense of pleasure.

From the analysis of the aesthetic concepts of music by Confucianism and Taoism, it can be seen that the connection between early Chinese music aesthetics and psychological functions has already been fully discussed. The aesthetic thinking of music in the pre Qin period, whether from the perspective of Confucian educational tools or the artistic essence of Taoist music, can be related to individual psychological emotions, spiritual freedom, and other psychological aesthetic states.

3. Research methods on the psychological health effects of ancient music aesthetics

3.1. Research object and materials

In order to analyze the impact of ancient Chinese music aesthetics on mental health, this study conducted a survey of students from two classes of the same major at a university in Shaanxi. In order to ensure the statistical validity of the experiment, G * Power was used to calculate the required sample size. The effect size parameter was set to 0.25, the significance level was 0.05, and the statistical power level was 0.8. The total sample size required was calculated to be at least 54 people.

There are two classes: experimental group and control group. The experimental group consists of 37 people with an average age of 18.7 years, while the control group consists of 35 people with an average age of 18.5 years. In sample selection, in order to eliminate experimental bias caused by a single cultural background, the study ensured that the subjects had a certain understanding of traditional Chinese music. At the same time, subjects with a history of mental illness, hearing and vision perception problems were excluded during the screening process. Before the experiment, all subjects filled out a basic information statistical form and signed an informed consent form.

3.2. Research design

The experimental group of students participated in music aesthetic activities, while the control group of students did not participate in the activities. Conduct a pre-test on two groups of students before the activity

to analyze their mental health performance, and then carry out music aesthetic activities for psychological health intervention. After completing the aesthetic activity, conduct a post test on two groups of students.

The process design of aesthetic activities is as follows: Firstly, with soothing traditional music as the background, teachers introduce themselves during the process and explain in detail to students the psychological health survey nature and activity objectives of this music aesthetic activity. Secondly, teachers should briefly describe the efficacy of traditional music aesthetics in music, helping students understand the aesthetic role of ancient music. Teachers need to encourage students to participate in interaction and ask questions during the process, in order to enhance their initiative in participating in music aesthetic activities. Thirdly, play traditional music works and encourage students to express their emotional and psychological experiences through language after the play is completed. Invite students to collaborate and share their musical aesthetic emotions. During the experiment, music works were played through a network audio platform, with the music sound set to a single channel and an average loudness of 50dB.

The above music aesthetic activities are held once a week for a total of 8 weeks. In the first two weeks, the theme was emotional introduction and elimination of fatigue. Teachers explained the music theme and guided students to relax through meditation, rest, and other methods in the music. The theme of weeks 3 to 7 is to alleviate anxiety, release depressive stress, and train interpersonal relationships. In addition to relaxing training, teachers also need to guide students to express their emotions and strengthen their self suggestion during this process. In the last week, the theme of the activity is to uphold beliefs, and teachers need to guide students to apply the methods and skills they have experienced in the activity to their daily lives.

In this music appreciation activity, three types of music works were mainly selected. The first is traditional music that expresses sad emotions, such as "Ai Ying", "Autumn Thoughts on Dongting Lake", "Zhao Jun's Lament", etc. These music works mainly focus on historical events or characters, exploring the emotions of historical figures facing difficulties. Next are traditional music works that express joyful emotions, such as "Golden Snake Dance", "Happy Meeting", "Flower Festival", etc. These works are basically related to traditional Chinese festival customs, expressing the joyful emotions of the masses in folk festivals. Finally, there are music works with emotionless themes, such as "Qingjiang Yin", "Sunset Flute and Drum", "Falling Geese on the Plain Sand", etc. These works are mainly themed around natural scenery or life reflections, with beautiful melodies and ancient elegance. They can reflect the solemnity and simplicity of Taoist music, as well as the regularity and harmony of Confucianism. In this experiment, the selection of traditional music works generally focuses on works related to traditional culture. These works generally have a profound cultural heritage in China, combining the beauty of Confucianism's righteousness and peace with the ethereal and distant nature of Taoism.

3.3. Investigation tools

The study used the SCL-90 Symptom Checklist as an evaluation tool for students' mental health. This scale includes 90 items, covering various aspects such as sensation, emotion, thinking, behavior, interpersonal relationships, lifestyle habits, diet, sleep, etc. It is mainly used to evaluate an individual's mental health status and its performance in multiple dimensions of psychological symptoms. The scale adopts a five point scoring system, with 0-4 scores indicating "none", "very mild", "moderate", "quite severe", and "severe" respectively.

At the same time, the study used the College Student Psychological Quality Questionnaire to measure the psychological quality of the subjects. This scale consists of 10 items and is composed of three dimensions: cognitive characteristics, personality, and adaptability. Cognitive characteristics include four items: reactivity, creativity, practicality, and metacognition, while personality dimensions include four items:

motivational characteristics, emotional characteristics, volitional characteristics, and self characteristics. Finally, adaptability includes two items: self adaptability and social adaptability. The consistency coefficient of the scale is higher than 0.61, and the stability coefficient is higher than 0.70, indicating that the questionnaire has good reliability. The specific items of the scale are shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1. College student psychological quality questionnaire.

First level dimension	Secondary dimension	Question items	Item number
Cognitive characteristics	Reactiveness	I think I have a clear thinking process when it comes to problem-solving	A1
	Creativity	I think I have an active imagination	A2
	Practicality	I think I am used to solving problems through practice	A3
	Metacognition	I think my problem-solving approach changes with the problem	A4
Personality	Power characteristics	I have curiosity and competitiveness	B1
	Emotional characteristics	I always feel relaxed and happy	B2
	Emotion characteristic	Facing difficulties allows me to maintain optimism	B3
	Self characteristics	I am aware of my daily learning content	B4
Adaptability	Self adaptability	I often think that I am worthless	C1
	Social adaptiveness	I often have hostile emotions towards society	C2

All items in **Table 1** are quantified using a five point rating system, with scores ranging from 1-5 indicating strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, uncertain, somewhat agree, and strongly agree, respectively. After collecting the results of the SCL-90 Symptom Checklist and the College Student Psychological Quality Questionnaire, the data was analyzed and organized using SPSS 26.0 software. Independent t-test was used to analyze the differences between data, with $p < 0.05$ indicating statistical significance.

4. Empirical analysis of the psychological health effects of ancient music aesthetics

4.1. SCL-90 symptom self assessment results

Before investigating the mechanism of the impact of traditional music on the mental health of participants, the study first investigated the music preferences, main ways of exposure to music, and level of understanding of traditional music of 72 subjects. The specific results are shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2. The music preferences of college students and their level of understanding of traditional Chinese music.

Investigation project	Specific division	Number of people	Account for
Music preference	Pop music	54	75.00%
	Traditional Ethnic Music	14	19.44%
	Western classical music	2	2.78%
	Other	2	2.78%
Main exposure to music	Network medium	68	94.44%
	Concert	1	1.39%
	Social music activities	2	2.78%
	Other	1	1.39%

Investigation project	Specific division	Number of people	Account for
The level of understanding of traditional music	Listen often	13	18.06%
	Occasionally listen	26	36.11%
	I rarely listen	33	45.83%
	Never heard of it	0	0.00%

Table 2. (Continued)

From **Table 2**, it can be seen that among the college students represented by the subjects, 75% of them prefer pop music, 19.4% prefer traditional Chinese music, and 2.8% prefer Western classical music. 2.8% of students prefer other types. At the same time, in terms of understanding of traditional Chinese music, 18.1% of students often listen and appreciate it, 36.1% of students occasionally listen, and 45.9% of students rarely participate in activities related to understanding and appreciating traditional music. It can be seen that among the current group of Chinese college students, although pop music is the mainstream preference, there are varying degrees of understanding of traditional Chinese music among college students. This indicates that there is an accepted foundation for studying appreciation practices centered around traditional music. The study collected self-assessment results of SCL-90 symptoms from the control group and experimental group students in the pre-test and post test, as shown in **Figure 1**.

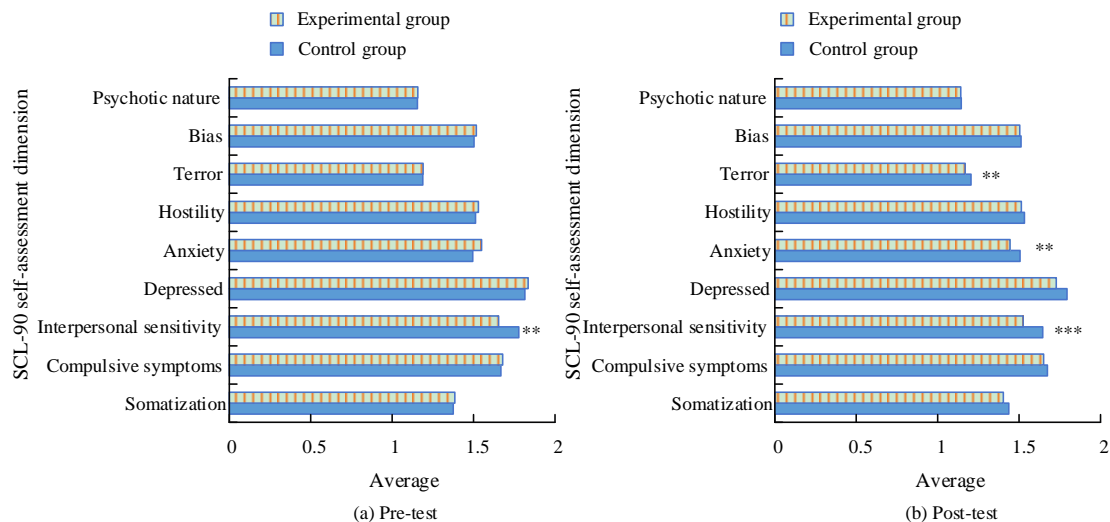


Figure 1. SCL-90 self-assessment results of two groups of students.

In **Figure 1**, * * indicates a significant difference of $p < 0.01$ between the experimental group and the control group, while * * * indicates a significant difference of $p < 0.001$ between the experimental group and the control group. From **Figure 1** (a), it can be seen that in the pre-test, there was only a significant difference ($p < 0.01$) between the experimental group and the control group in the interpersonal sensitivity dimension. From **Figure 1** (b), it can be seen that after traditional music aesthetic activities, there are significant differences between the experimental group and the control group students in the dimensions of terror, anxiety, and interpersonal sensitivity, with significance levels of $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.01$, and $p < 0.001$, respectively. Research has shown that the aesthetic activities of ancient Chinese music can effectively reduce students' fear and anxiety, while also alleviating their tension in interpersonal communication. Experiments have shown that college students may develop some obsessive-compulsive symptoms under academic pressure. During the process of receiving music aesthetic appreciation activities, students alleviate stress and

thus eliminate obsessive-compulsive symptoms. At the same time, music stimulates students' emotions and guides them to express their feelings of depression, anxiety, and unease through music, which has the effect of venting emotions, relieving tension, and reducing fear.

4.2. Results of college students' psychological quality questionnaire

Secondly, the study analyzed the psychological quality questionnaire results of the experimental group and control group students in the two tests before and after. The specific results are shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3. The results of a questionnaire survey on the psychological qualities of two groups of students.

Question items	Pre-test			Post-test		
	Control group	Experimental group	<i>t</i>	Control group	Experimental group	<i>t</i>
A1	3.45±0.88	3.34±0.72	0.62	3.54±0.65	3.63±0.77	-0.61
A2	3.01±0.67	3.12±0.77	-0.39	3.20±0.48	3.36±0.36	-1.68
A3	4.20±0.76	4.46±0.65	-1.58	4.06±0.69	4.40±0.67	-2.27*
A4	4.34±0.73	4.45±0.57	-0.65	4.27±0.53	4.19±0.61	0.54
B1	3.71±0.68	3.69±0.48	0.14	3.88±0.59	4.00±0.61	-0.91
B2	3.29±0.64	2.99±0.62	2.20*	3.27±0.51	3.50±0.49	-2.21*
B3	2.83±0.31	2.81±0.29	0.33	2.83±0.30	2.91±0.42	-1.04
B4	3.36±0.51	3.35±0.42	1.14	3.34±0.49	3.48±0.45	-1.39
C1	2.52±0.29	2.58±0.36	1.03	2.61±0.34	2.65±0.31	-0.68
C2	3.64±0.43	3.57±0.51	0.36	3.23±0.39	3.25±0.36	-0.25
Total score	34.35±5.90	34.36±5.39	-1.62	34.23±4.97	35.37±5.05	-3.16**

In **Table 3**, * indicates that the significance of the difference between the experimental group and the control group is $p<0.05$, and * * indicates that the significance of the difference between the experimental group and the control group is $p<0.01$. It can be seen that in the pre-test, there was only a significant difference in emotional characteristics between the experimental group and the control group, with a significance level of $p<0.05$. However, in the post test, there were significant differences between the experimental group and the control group in terms of practicality, emotional characteristics, and overall score comparison. The levels of significant differences were $p<0.05$, $p<0.05$ and $p<0.01$. The data results indicate that ancient music aesthetic activities have a positive impact on the psychological qualities of college students, helping them improve their emotional characteristics and enhance their practical literacy. There was a significant difference in practical factors between the experimental group and the control group. Therefore, the study suggests that the improvement in practicality of the experimental group is mainly reflected in expressive ability. This is because the relaxed classroom environment for music implementation encourages students to explore independently, and there are more opportunities for participation in the classroom. Teachers do not value students' opinions and instead respect and encourage them. Students can gain a sense of achievement and control in the process of participation. Students can freely express their own ideas and fully demonstrate their love and interest in music. Finally, the study evaluated the group learning status of the experimental group students before and after the activity, and the specific results are shown in **Figure 2**.

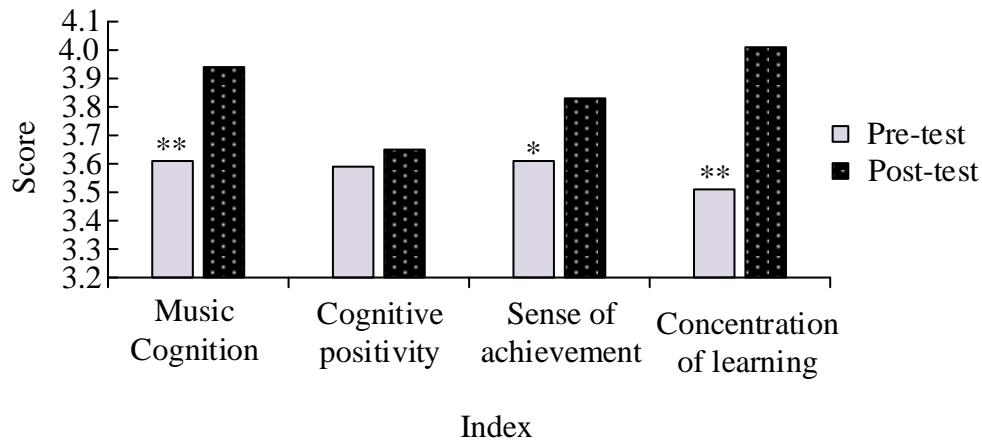


Figure 2. The group learning status of experimental group students before and after the activity.

In **Figure 2**, * represents $p < 0.05$, * * represents $p < 0.01$. From **Figure 2**, it can be seen that the average score of students' understanding of traditional music before the music aesthetic activity was 3.61, which increased to 3.94 after the activity, with a significant difference before and after ($p < 0.01$). The enthusiasm of the experimental group students for learning and cognition before the activity was 3.59, which increased to 3.65 after the activity, and the difference before and after was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). The average score of students' sense of achievement in learning before the music aesthetic activity was 3.60, which improved to 3.83 after the activity, with a significant difference before and after ($p < 0.05$). The learning concentration evaluations of the experimental group students before and after the activity were 3.51 and 4.01, respectively, with a significant difference ($p < 0.01$). From the experiment, it can be seen that music can satisfy the aesthetic psychological needs of the group through harmonious rhythm and pleasant sound, thereby improving the quality of group education and promoting the completion of teaching.

Overall, the aesthetic activities of ancient Chinese music have a positive impact on mental health. This impact is manifested in the fact that aesthetic activities alleviate the psychological problems of fear, anxiety, and interpersonal sensitivity of experimental subjects, and improve students' practical and emotional characteristics and psychological literacy.

5. The social dissemination role of ancient Chinese music

5.1. Individual level life inspiration

After concluding that the aesthetic activities of ancient Chinese music can promote the development of mental health, the study will analyze the influence mechanism of music based on the social dissemination of ancient Chinese music. Based on the views of ancient Confucianism and Taoism on the aesthetic psychology of music, it can be inferred that the social dissemination of music is first and foremost the interaction between people and themselves. Confucianism believes that the dissemination of music is to regulate people's psychological emotions, while Taoism believes that the dissemination of music is to guide people into the spiritual world ^[12]. Therefore, the commonality between the two viewpoints can be summarized as the role of music in the communication between people and oneself, manifested as inspiration for one's own life.

The inspiration of music dissemination for individual life is first and foremost the inspiration for individual moral order and emotional levels. In ancient Chinese music aesthetic thought, it was believed that music was a form of psychological and emotional release for people, and it was easy to observe an individual's moral character and cultivation status through music. Especially under the influence of

Confucian ritual and music thought, the moral norms represented by music are constantly repeated in people's political life rituals, leading to the interweaving of music dissemination and moral dissemination in ancient gentleman's thought. Due to the fact that music dissemination activities themselves can bring aesthetic experiences to individuals, music dissemination at the level of cultivation is internalized as a life requirement for gentlemen's self-awareness and cultivation progress ^[13]. The Confucianism inherited the Zhou Dynasty music system and provided life inspiration at the level of cultivation, but at the same time, it was accompanied by the rise of ancient Chinese folk music, which was widely accepted and closely linked to the life inspiration of music and psychological emotions. Folk music has entertainment value, focusing on the emotional expression and resonance attributes of music. Therefore, it has long been active in folk activities in ancient China and has been passed down along with folk customs and rituals. In addition, the Zhou Dynasty's elegant music adhered to the pursuit of order and accuracy in performance arrangement, but folk music was different. Ancient Chinese folk music valued the infectiousness of music dissemination, adopting richer modes and more delicate musical structures to present various styles of musical expression. These folk music, accompanied by magnificent and highly skilled dances, quickly became an important form of music during the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period.

Secondly, the inspiration of music dissemination on individual life is manifested in the call for life consciousness. Overall, the pursuit of pleasure in music creation and dissemination, thereby elevating happiness and aesthetic experience from life consciousness to music experience, is the inspiration and call of music dissemination to life consciousness. The dissemination of music creates a pleasant environment, and different audiences have different aesthetic experiences in it. To ensure that people receive correct guidance and emotional experience in the context of music dissemination, Confucianism believes that gentlemen should achieve harmony between emotional expression and benevolence, righteousness, and aspiration in music experience. At the same time, in the call of life consciousness, music dissemination has also triggered people's demand for self-improvement. Confucianism believes that music can enhance the moral character of a gentleman, Taoism believes that perceiving nature through music can enhance individual spiritual freedom, and Buddhism believes that achieving the state of six roundnesses through sound can achieve spiritual cultivation and mind building. In the social dissemination of ancient Chinese music, the first level of dissemination was the inward dissemination of individuals, which played a role in inspiring emotions, morality, and calling for life consciousness. In traditional Chinese education, music is mainly divided into two types: court music education and folk music education. There are specialized music education institutions in the palace, such as the Imperial Music Office, the Propaganda Office, and the Qing Commercial Office, responsible for training court musicians and dancers, teaching music theory knowledge, instrument performance, vocal singing, dance, and other aspects of training. In folk music education, it is carried out through mentorship and family inheritance, emphasizing the accumulation of practice and experience. The teaching content includes the performance of folk instruments and the singing of local operas.

5.2. Information recording and exchange at the political level

In the social dissemination of ancient Chinese music, the second level of music dissemination was people to people and country to society. Music played a role as a tool in promoting communication, recording, and transmitting information. The role of music in ancient Chinese political exchanges requires a rational transformation of music. This rationalized transformation was completed during the Zhou Dynasty, making music a medium for promoting official political ideology and moral guidance ^[14]. In the Zhou Dynasty, the first function of political dissemination of music was to record significant historical events or reminisce about important historical figures. These historical figures generally possess achievements and

significant moral standards, so using music as a carrier to record events and commemorate figures is not only to demonstrate the legitimacy of the political power of the Zhou Dynasty, but also to integrate moral ideas into the cultural cognition of music. In the political dissemination of music, the second function is to educate the people. The elegant music of the Zhou Dynasty, combined with a sense of standardization, had the function of commanding the expression of musical emotions and consolidating moral atmosphere. Therefore, in the dissemination of music, it is possible to shift from influencing individual development to influencing society, achieving the goal of conveying moral values. The third function of the political dissemination of music is to establish hierarchy and demonstrate norms. The Zhou Dynasty established strict limits on the types of ceremonial instruments and the number of bands for subjects of different identity levels in the performance ceremony of elegant music, in order to divide the levels of music audience subjects. Therefore, music also plays a role in highlighting social hierarchy and solidifying hierarchical order in political communication.

Secondly, the dissemination of music at the political level was internalized as an important political system in ancient China after rational transformation. In order to facilitate the political dissemination of music, the Zhou Dynasty established a series of official systems to regulate music ceremonies and collect musical works. Among them, the relevant systems of transmitting religious ideology through music and the system of collecting music have had the most profound impact on later generations. In the political dissemination of music during the Zhou Dynasty, a significant function was to promote the social hierarchy system ^[15]. Therefore, evaluating the social identity of an object through various norms and standards of music performance is also an important idea in the political music dissemination of the Zhou Dynasty. In the political dissemination of music, people were not only classified, but also required to strictly abide by the moral order of the Zhou Dynasty. The moral order includes the relationship between ruler and minister, father and son, as well as the principles of seniority and inferiority. Therefore, maintaining social stability and conveying moral order through the political dissemination of music was a significant influence of Zhou Dynasty music on the aesthetic thinking of music in later generations. In addition, the Zhou Dynasty also had a system of "collecting folk musics" to regulate and collect folk music and poetry. The earliest function of the system established by the Zhou Dynasty was to investigate social trends and analyze the political public opinion conveyed by social music. However, after the Zhou Dynasty, the feudal system also retained the system of collecting customs for a long time, but its function gradually shifted from political supervision to art collection and recording. The main reason for the transformation of the functions of the music system is that after the Zhou Dynasty, folk music became a highly regarded musical composition, which also promoted the development of music. In political activities, Chinese elegant music is widely used in important ceremonial activities such as court worship, court meetings, and banquets. These works generally emphasize regularity and ceremony, emphasizing the combination of music and etiquette to reflect social order and hierarchy.

5.3. Communication media between humans and gods at the level of faith

In the social dissemination of ancient Chinese music, the third level of music dissemination was between people and gods, and between people and heaven. Music played a role in communicating with gods and understanding as a medium. At the level of human and god dissemination in music, the spiritual medium of music has been continuously enhanced, becoming a trend in the early development of music. The social dissemination of Chinese music was first used for sacrificial activities. During the Shang and Zhou dynasties and even earlier in the Neolithic period, people's spoken language far exceeded their use of writing, leading to a strong belief in the transmission ability of sound. Therefore, the transmission of sound has become the core of sacrificial activities, serving as a medium for communication between heaven and gods. Music is also

endowed with a mysterious color in sacrificial activities ^[16]. With the improvement of production capacity, people have gradually discovered the ability to expand their voice, that is, by making tools and instruments to produce sounds with more medium transmission ability (infectious power). Through the use of instruments, dance, and hymns, music creates an experiential and shared dissemination space for the audience in sacrificial activities and celebrations, allowing them to immerse themselves in the participation and co creation of foreshadowing activities. Therefore, music has also become a medium for audience emotional expression and perception in sacrificial activities. The implicit function of music is to provide the driving force for the development of sacrificial ceremonies by immersing oneself in the joy, excitement, and psychological stimulation of the ceremony.

Secondly, at the level of human and god dissemination, music plays a role in interpreting mysterious revelations. In the political system of the Zhou Dynasty, the position of blind teacher was once established. This position is mainly undertaken by blind musicians, whose main responsibility is to obtain the revelation information in natural phenomena through the medium of music. Essentially, the duty of a blind teacher is to use music for divination, which can reflect the divination function of early ancient Chinese music. The main object of music divination is the wind in nature, as ancient people believed that the propagation of sound relied on wind as a medium ^[17]. In the ancient perception, wind had the mysterious ability to convey good and bad news, and was regarded as a messenger of the gods. Therefore, ancient people used music to decipher the heavenly revelation information in the wind, and established unique rituals and systems for music divination activities. During the Warring States and Qin Han periods, with the development of agricultural production, the practice of divination through music gradually became popular among the people. The behavior of obtaining mysterious information from the wind through music has expanded to obtaining natural information such as climate and seasons through divination, thereby assisting in the development of agricultural activities. At the same time, music divination activities expanded from the official establishment of the Zhou Dynasty to folk agricultural activities, indicating that in ancient China, mysterious knowledge and rituals obtained through music were transferred from the power class to the masses. Through the development of the media function of musicians and gods among the masses, the entire ancient Chinese society naturally accepted knowledge and systems such as the connection of music beliefs and the conduct of music rituals. In religious activities, some solemn and solemn music works are used for praying for rain, praying for good harvest, and other occasions. Religious music is mostly diverse in form and accompanied by singing and dancing to pay tribute to the gods and pray for blessings. Music is closely integrated with ritual ceremonies, creating a ceremonial atmosphere through specific melodies and rhythms.

6. Conclusion

By analyzing the aesthetic psychology of ancient Chinese music, this study examined the self dissemination, political dissemination, and belief dissemination effects of music in ancient Chinese society. On the level of self dissemination, music has the function of inspiring moral emotions and calling for life consciousness. Reflected in modern music creation, it is necessary to link the aesthetic experience of modern music with the experience of life. At the level of political dissemination, music plays a role in exchanging and transmitting information, as well as carrying political systems. Therefore, modern music practice needs to undertake the mission of the times and carry out educational propaganda. On the level of belief dissemination, music has a mysterious color and the function of interpreting heavenly revelation information. In empirical research, it has been found that ancient music aesthetic activities can effectively promote the development of mental health. In two controlled experiments, ancient music aesthetics alleviated students' anxiety, fear, and interpersonal sensitivity, while enhancing their practical and emotional literacy. The

limitation of the study is that it did not delve into the impact of traditional music modes and rhythms on students' emotional perception or psychological regulation in the experiment. In future research, consider comparing the modal differences and psychological impact mechanisms of classical music between China and the West in terms of musical composition.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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