

# THEORETICAL EVALUATION OF ART EDUCATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

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**Abstract:** Traditional Chinese philosophy is the cornerstone of Chinese civilization, while the theory of art education is its cornerstone. In traditional Chinese philosophy, the core of art education is to improve students' humanistic qualities and make them talented individuals who can be applied to the country and society. China's traditional philosophy can provide useful guidance for modern art education, and also reflect the Chinese society's core values. Chinese traditional philosophy has guiding significance and concrete guiding function to art education theory. This paper made a comprehensive analysis of the influence of China's traditional philosophy on art education theory. The goal of this study is to explore how China's traditional philosophy guides and influences the theory of art education and its adaptability to China society. However, the theory of art education from the perspective of traditional Chinese philosophy has both historical factors and the requirements of modern social development, and the two are, to some extent, separate. Traditional Chinese philosophy and culture have a great impact on contemporary art education theory. Contemporary art education in China should organically combine tradition and modernity, and attach importance to using traditional philosophical ideas to inspire contemporary art education to achieve comprehensive development of contemporary art education. In this context, this article utilized traditional Chinese philosophy to organically link its connotation with the characteristics of art education, attempting to guide the development of art education theory from the perspective of traditional Chinese philosophy.

**Keywords:** Art Education Theory. Traditional Chinese Philosophy. Theoretical Research. Specific Guidance.

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**Resumen:** La filosofía tradicional china es la piedra angular de la civilización china, mientras que la teoría de la educación artística es la piedra angular de la civilización china. En la filosofía tradicional china, el núcleo de la educación artística es mejorar las cualidades humanísticas de los estudiantes y convertirlos en individuos con talento que puedan aplicarse al país y a la sociedad. La filosofía tradicional china puede proporcionar una guía útil para la educación artística moderna, y también reflejar los valores fundamentales de la sociedad china. La filosofía tradicional china tiene un significado orientador y una función de guía concreta para la teoría de la educación artística. En este trabajo se realiza un análisis exhaustivo de la influencia de la filosofía tradicional china en la teoría de la educación artística. El objetivo de este estudio es explorar cómo la filosofía tradicional china guía e influye en la teoría de la educación artística y su adaptabilidad a la sociedad china. Sin embargo, la teoría de la educación artística desde la perspectiva de la filosofía tradicional china tiene tanto factores históricos como los requisitos del desarrollo social moderno, y ambos están hasta cierto punto separados. La filosofía y la cultura tradicionales chinas tienen un gran impacto en la teoría de la educación artística contemporánea. La educación artística contemporánea en China debería combinar orgánicamente tradición y modernidad, y conceder importancia al uso de ideas filosóficas tradicionales para inspirar la educación artística contemporánea con el fin de lograr un desarrollo integral de la educación artística contemporánea. En este contexto, este artículo utiliza la filosofía tradicional china para vincular orgánicamente su connotación con las características de la educación artística, intentando guiar el desarrollo de la teoría de la educación artística desde la perspectiva de la filosofía tradicional china.

**Palabras clave:** Teoría de la educación artística. Filosofía tradicional china. Investigación teórica. Orientación específica.

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## THEORETICAL EVALUATION OF ART EDUCATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

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**Abstract:** Traditional Chinese philosophy is the cornerstone of Chinese civilization, while the theory of art education is its cornerstone. In traditional Chinese philosophy, the core of art education is to improve students' humanistic qualities and make them talented individuals who can be applied to the country and society. China's traditional philosophy can provide useful guidance for modern art education, and also reflect the Chinese society's core values. Chinese traditional philosophy has guiding significance and concrete guiding function to art education theory. This paper made a comprehensive analysis of the influence of China's traditional philosophy on art education theory. The goal of this study is to explore how China's traditional philosophy guides and influences the theory of art education and its adaptability to China society. However, the theory of art education from the perspective of traditional Chinese philosophy has both historical factors and the requirements of modern social development, and the two are, to some extent, separate. Traditional Chinese philosophy and culture have a great impact on contemporary art education theory. Contemporary art education in China should organically combine tradition and modernity, and attach importance to using traditional philosophical ideas to inspire contemporary art education to achieve comprehensive development of contemporary art education. In this context, this article utilized traditional Chinese philosophy to organically link its connotation with the characteristics of art education, attempting to guide the development of art education theory from the perspective of traditional Chinese philosophy.

**Keywords:** Art Education Theory. Traditional Chinese Philosophy. Theoretical Research. Specific Guidance.

### INTRODUCTION

The application of traditional Chinese philosophy is an important prerequisite for the further development of art education theory. Therefore, in the practice of art education, it is necessary to pay attention to the connection between traditional Chinese philosophy and art education theory, and conduct in-depth analysis based on the impact of traditional Chinese philosophy on art education, in order to provide a new perspective for art education. It further explores the exploration of contemporary art education views, as well as the absorption and reference of art education theories, which have certain guiding significance. Under the influence of China's traditional philosophy, art education will be guided and shaped, and this guidance will have an impact on students of different ages.

With the society's continuous development, research on art education theory is gradually increasing. Some people believed that multiculturalism has been thoroughly

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studied and implemented throughout the entire art curriculum. Neo-Marxism is an extension and revision of traditional Marxism, covering a series of ideological schools and academic viewpoints in the late 20th century and early 21st one. Cultural Marxism is a theory and social viewpoint developed in the 20th century, which emphasizes the importance of culture and ideology, and applies Marxist analysis to the cultural field. Critical theory is a broad tradition of philosophy and social theory, which originated from Frankfurt School in the 20th century. The representatives of this school include Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, Sigmund Fromm and so on. After searching for “multicultural art courses”, a study found hundreds of courses and analyzed the first 100 free visual art courses (Buffington; Amanda, 2019, p. 20).

The art education in the United States has made great progress in improving inclusiveness. On the whole, it was a force against revived fascism. Nevertheless, the theory of higher art education was still dominated by the legacy of Europe Western philosophy, hindered by dualism, and it hindered the liberation and democratization potential of art education (Gall, 2019, p. 840). After examining the teachers’ views and discussions on visual culture theory and material culture in art education, a comparison and evaluation were conducted, based on their content and foundation. Specifically, visual culture and art education in art education are criticized as having a “Neo-Marxism” or “Cultural Marxism” agenda derived from “critical theory”. However, it was also regarded as another recent postmodernism method (Basak, 2021, p. 186). The urgent need for the reform of the art curriculum for certificates of departure, in Ireland, provided a background for research.

This article tracked the social and political factors that led to the rise of art education in Ireland before and after the establishment of a free state. This historical framework created a background for the training of the three paradigms of art teacher education: profession, expression and context (Jordan; Helen, 2018, p. 574). Like many previous questions, “Research in Art Education” reflects a wide range of interests, theories, methods and goals in the field at this specific historical moment, which are representative but not exhaustive (Carpenter, 2019, p. 271). Project based learning methods involve dynamic classroom methods, emphasizing long-term learning, interdisciplinary and student-centered artistic activities. This implementation would be beneficial for the teaching strategy of art projects, help students understand the course, improve communication and soft skills, and enhance leadership skills and creativity. However, some challenges were also identified, and suggestions were made to help address them (Hawari; Azlin, 2020, p. 102).

The research on the integration and development of traditional and new media is recent and has focused on educational backgrounds worldwide. The most specific focus is on art education. Based on the analysis of innovative teaching methods in art education, in the era of integrated media, a design framework for high-quality teaching resource sharing and

the design of a shared teaching platform were proposed (Ma; Guan; Li, 2021, p. 272). One of the goals of art education is to cultivate creativity and aesthetic ability. But, in the process of pursuing artistic skills and expressive force, the cultivation of moral ethics is sometimes ignored (Li, 2020, p. 51). Although these studies have a promoting effect on the theory of art education, to a certain extent, they have not been combined with actual situations for research. Modern higher education theory is dominated by European and Western philosophical heritage, and it is limited by dualism, which hinders the development of art education. China's traditional philosophy is regarded as helpful to solve the challenge of art education theory and adapt to Chinese society.

China's philosophy of "harmony but difference" emphasizes harmonious coexistence and respect for differences. This idea has influenced the theory of art education, encouraging students to pursue harmony in their creation, while respecting individual independence and diversity. Art education not only pays attention to technology and creativity, but also pays attention to the harmonious relationship among students and between students and educators.

This article analyzed traditional Chinese philosophy and art education theory, and conducted research from three aspects: traditional Chinese philosophy, art education theory and modern application. In addition, this article also provided a detailed analysis of the guiding significance and specific guidance of traditional Chinese philosophy on art education theory. Interviewing with teachers, in the field of art education, is an important way to gain practical experience and insights. By communicating with educators, researchers can understand the methods they use in teaching, the challenges they face and their views on moral and ethical education. These interviews can provide profound insights into teaching practice.

This study has carried out a large number of practical investigations, aiming at deeply understanding the present situation and challenges of contemporary art education. These practical investigations include interviews with art education institutions, educators and students, as well as analysis of art education courses and practices. Through these practical investigations, we can fully understand the needs and problems in the field of contemporary art education.

## **1 TRADITIONAL CHINESE PHILOSOPHY AND ART EDUCATION THEORY**

The art education discussed in this article focuses on modern art. Under the nourishment of modern culture, taking modern art as the main body does not mean that traditional philosophical ideas cannot play their due role in the teaching of modern art. Martin Heidegger is the founder of modern existentialism philosophy. He first defined that

“modern” is more superior than “past” and “future”, and “is present”, and denied it. Heidegger advocated that history and reality are one without a clear boundary, and the “present” cannot exist independently from the “past” and “future”. His disciple, Hans-Georg Gadamer, took this idea to a new level. Gadamer pointed out, through his discourse on “temporal correlation”, that “modern perspective” and “traditional perspective” are intertwined. Without “traditional perspective”, “modern perspective” is not a complete concept. Therefore, after conducting a large number of practical investigations, this article believes that the study of contemporary art education theory must obtain profound and rich insights from traditional Chinese philosophical culture.

Kierkegaard’s thought emphasizes individual existence, belief, choice, anxiety and exploration of existence. His profound reflection on human existence had a great influence on later existentialist philosophers. Kierkegaard’s thought contains many core concepts of existentialism, such as freedom, responsibility, loneliness and deep concern for life. Heidegger did play an important role in the philosophy of the 20th century, but his work focused more on hermeneutics, phenomenology and existentialism, emphasizing the way of understanding and explaining existence, and the influence of words, language and history on human existence.

One of Martin Heidegger’s most important works is *Being and Time*, in which he put forward his existential viewpoint. In this book, he emphasized the problem of “being” and tried to understand the essence of human existence. He put forward the concept of “existence presupposes” and thought that people often have preconceived ideas when exploring existing problems. This concept is crucial for understanding individual existence and human’s “way of existence”. Gadamer’s thought emphasizes the contextual dependence of understanding, which is always embedded in culture, history and social traditions, so understanding is relative, not absolute. His thoughts are very important for cultural relativism and cross-cultural understanding.

## 1.1 TRADITIONAL CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

### (1) Harmony but difference

“Harmony” has a very important significance in traditional Chinese philosophy. It explains the basic characteristics of traditional Chinese philosophy and reflects the vastness and profundity of Chinese culture, which embraces all rivers and is truly magnificent. The idea of “harmony” originated in the late Western Zhou Dynasty and gradually formed his philosophical thinking system under the Chinese sage’s influence: Confucius. The “harmony”, advocated by Confucius, is harmonious unity, which means recognizing the differences

among things and using positive communication as a prerequisite to make “harmony” a “different” harmony. Harmony is a principled balance that cannot blindly drift with the flow.

Confucius believed that a person’s nobility lies in their ability to adhere to their own correct ideas and use them as a basis to absorb and reject different ideas from others, rather than just pursuing identity, unity, addition and agreement. Therefore, the essence of “harmony” is criticism and innovation. People cannot judge things based on assumptions, impose opinions on things, act blindly, and refuse to give in for opinions. Confucius advocated viewing and judging from his own perspective. He insisted that his viewpoint is incorrect, but he cannot blindly conceal himself and make concessions at will.

“Harmony but difference” is to approach things with a tolerant, objective and pragmatic attitude. Confucius treated his students equally, which is a good example. He liked Zi Xia very much. Zi Xia can draw inferences from one example and actively think. However, he was dissatisfied with Yan Hui, an obedient student. From this, it can be seen that the “harmony”, pursued by Confucius, should be “harmony without flow”. While adhering to one’s basic principles, one should also actively absorb other ideas and learn from each other’s strengths and weaknesses. This kind of advanced philosophy was the main factor that allowed Confucius to thrive at that time and spread among future generations. In this process, traditional Chinese philosophical thinking has also been further developed and prospered.

Confucius mentioned in the *Analects*: “Gentlemen are harmonious but different, while villains are identical but not harmonious”. This sentence emphasizes that noble people should be able to achieve harmony in differences, rather than simply pursuing identity. Art education should not try to standardize all students’ creativity, but encourage them to maintain uniqueness and diversity in their creation. Educators can guide students to explore different artistic traditions and cultures to broaden their horizons. This can also cultivate students’ critical thinking and enable them to appreciate and understand different artistic viewpoints.

## (2) Consistent and consistent

The word “consistent” is another Confucius’ important philosophical thought. The term “consistent” refers to the understanding and comprehension of things through induction. Zi Gong is a very talented and promising person. Confucius asked him not to stay on the surface for too long, but to explore and discover the true essence of it. Confucius regarded “one” as a thing or phenomenon with general laws, and “one” was obtained through the accumulation and practice of time. Without the absolute abstraction of all things, “one” cannot become a reality. Therefore, “consistency” is a constantly evolving process that requires perseverance and profound insight. At the same time, another schooler of traditional Chinese philosophy, Lao Zi, also gave his own interpretation. His advocacy of “knowing constant”,

which is to explore the nature's essential laws, is extremely important for the development of all things and has its inherent inevitability.

Educators encourage students to pursue depth in their creation and constantly improve their skills and expressiveness. Consistency can also teach students to establish their own style and voice in their artistic practice and make their works coherent.

Confucius' principle of consistency encourages consistency through in-depth thinking and exploration of the essence of things. In modern art education, this can be interpreted as encouraging students to try to understand the work of art, the process of artistic creation and the artist's intention, rather than just stopping at the surface of the art. This ability of deep thinking and exploration is very important for cultivating students' creativity and critical thinking, which are all skills needed in the field of modern art. The principle of consistency emphasizes the understanding and comprehension of things through induction. In art education, this can be interpreted as encouraging students to compare and relate different art forms, styles and cultural backgrounds. This helps to cultivate interdisciplinary and cross-cultural understanding ability, and enables students to fully understand the evolution and influence of art in different social and cultural backgrounds.

Confucius' philosophy is considered as an important part of China's traditional culture. In modern Chinese society, bringing the principle of consistency into art education can help to inherit and carry forward China's traditional cultural values, such as harmony, respect and moderation. This will help to shape an art education system with China's characteristics and reflect the Chinese society's core values.

#### Holding the two and using the middle

Confucius' idea of "holding the two and using the middle" has two meanings. The first is to grasp the core of both ends and understand the two extremes. The second is to abandon the two extremes of opposition and replace them with the "middle" as the "a middle course". It means the best choice, rather than taking its "middle" as a compromise. The term "using the middle" reflects Confucius' dialectical view and his "material oriented" ideology. It is a holistic approach to seeking balance, nature and harmony, and can, to some extent, control contradictions. The movement of the opposite way is an important content in Lao Zi's philosophy. The meaning is that the opposition of things is not completely opposite. It is in a state of development. When it reaches a critical point, it would naturally transform towards the other end. This is the so-called "extreme things would turn back". Educators can teach students to learn from traditional artistic techniques and ideas while adding personal innovation and uniqueness to their work. This balance can enable students to benefit from traditional education and have the opportunity to express their creativity.

China is an ancient country with a civilization of over 5000 years and, in the long process of history, it has accumulated many precious artistic treasures. The inheritance of traditional Chinese art is carried out through a set of educational methods and approaches that are different from modern times. The art teaching ideas and methods, which they have formed, not only have a profound impact on Chinese culture, but also have a significant impact on today's art education ideas. In today's society, with the continuous development of social economy and culture, while inheriting Chinese art culture, absorbing the essence of art and carrying out the modernization and the innovation of it are an important issue that the current art education community needs to explore and practice.

The formation and development of modern art education is closely related to modern philosophy. For example, philosophers in the Enlightenment, such as Descartes, Kant and Hume, emphasized the importance of rational thinking, independent thinking and critical thinking. These thinkers' views have had a far-reaching impact on modern art education, prompting students to think and evaluate works of art, creative process and aesthetic value. The field of modern art emphasizes innovation and originality, which requires students to have critical thinking and analytical ability. Artists need to constantly question tradition and challenge convention to promote the development of art. Critical thinking helps students discover new ways of expression, aesthetic views and creative solutions.

Modern art audiences usually expect to participate in and think more about works of art. Critical thinking helps students and audiences better understand and evaluate art, ask profound questions, and explore the social and cultural background of the works and the artist's intentions. This critical aesthetic view is helpful to improve the meaning and value of works of art. Modern society and culture are diverse, covering all kinds of cultures, backgrounds and viewpoints. Critical thinking includes the ability to question one's own views and to respect and understand different cultures and diversity. Modern art education needs to cultivate students with cross-cultural critical thinking to adapt to the global artistic environment.

## **1.2 ART EDUCATION THEORY**

As a traditional agricultural country, China has been steadily advancing its industrialization process since the implementation of reform and opening up. Due to the traditional agricultural society's influence, art education in China is also more traditional in terms of educational methods (Westraadt, 2018, p. 1). This article briefly summarizes and analyzes the theories and methods of traditional Chinese art education, mainly including:

- (1) Secret education

Secret education refers to art educators imparting their own artistic skills and practical experience through the form of “one-on-one” or “one-to-many” (Simamora, 2020, p. 86). This cultivation method was widely used in the late Spring and Autumn period. Due to the cultivation of secrets, a relatively solid barrier of painting style was established, during which many painting schools were formed. Secret education has the advantages of vividness, image and personalization, and its inheritance methods have been used in some countries’ art for thousands of years. However, because there are too few inheritors, many art and painting schools have disappeared. Although secret education cannot effectively inherit tradition, it has important reference value for personality cultivation.

In the current digital age, modern digital tools have become an important part of artistic creation. Students and artists can use all kinds of software and equipment to explore innovative ways to express their ideas and opinions. These tools not only provide more creative possibilities, but also accelerate the process of artistic creation, enabling artists to transform ideas into works more quickly. Digital tools also make up for the reduction of traditional art schools to some extent. Although it is true that many traditional art schools have disappeared due to the lack of inheritors, digital tools provide students with opportunities for online learning and remote guidance. Students can get art education through online courses and tutorials without relying on traditional schools with close geographical location. This provides more people with opportunities to learn art and express their creativity.

## (2) Moral education tradition

China is an ancient country with a civilization history of 5000 years, and its influence on morality is very important in traditional Chinese education. In art education, the first thing teachers need to do is to cultivate their own character (Machin; Williams; Frith, 2020, p. 1). Traditional Chinese art education takes “promoting the Tao” as its own responsibility, and “Dao” is the result of moral education (Bertling; Tara, 2020, p. 382). In ancient times, painters valued the morality and character of their disciples more than their skills and talents. Therefore, ancient art education attached great importance to moral education, incorporating the concept of “painting as a character” into technical teaching, and using “Dao” as the soul of artistic creation throughout its works. The educational concept of “putting morality first” is a valuable asset in the Chinese art education concept and a missing part in modern art education. Therefore, this concept has an important guiding role for contemporary art education.

## (3) Quality education

Many ancient Chinese painters started from copying. This kind of imitation is fundamentally different from plagiarism. The reason is that when painters imitate, they must inevitably integrate their own “Dao” into it, use it as a basis for secondary creation of the work and draw its essence from it. The ancient people’s advocacy of “copying” was actually

a practice guided by the concept of “high-quality education”. Ancient artists highly valued good works of art and good ancestors. They believed that they could learn from and imitate in art, thereby achieving breakthroughs and improvements in their own art. The concept of “learning from famous masters and painting” is not only an inheritance of traditional culture, but also a positive guide to traditional culture. This educational concept has strong warning significance for today’s society of “nonsense” and “meaningless painting”.

#### (4) Probation education

In ancient art education, whether teachers can better play their “influence” role is an important indicator to measure a teacher’s moral level and teaching ability. The ancient “influence” teaching was mainly aimed at providing students with a good living environment, enabling them to view their works with a positive attitude. This traditional concept of “the rule of virtue” still has an important guiding role for today’s art teaching. Contemporary art teachers should also have full respect and care for students when educating them, so that they can learn art in a harmonious teacher-student relationship. Teachers should also create a good teaching environment to improve the effectiveness and quality of art education.

From the perspective of the connotation of traditional Chinese philosophy, it has brought great opportunities to the development of Chinese art education and can play a significant role in promoting the construction of Chinese art education (Sunday; Kathleen, 2020, p. 8). Traditional Chinese philosophy has extremely rich connotations, and in the thousands of years of development in China, it has not only not been abandoned, but also continuously enriched. From the perspective of traditional Chinese philosophy, “the unity of heaven and man” is a major connotation of philosophy, closely related to the relationship between contemporary humans and nature. It plays a very positive role in improving the college students’ aesthetic concepts and artistic cultivation. Therefore, China’s art education theory should be based on the principle of “unity of heaven and man”. Taking it as the direction and purpose of development and guided by the ideological connotation of “unity of heaven and man”, it cultivates students’ aesthetic concepts and artistic cultivation (Sanders-Bustle, 2019, p. 236).

Traditional Chinese philosophy is an indispensable part of traditional Chinese culture and plays an indispensable role in the research and development of art education theory (Attias, 2020, p. 78). On the one hand, the theory of art education is the inheritance and development of traditional Chinese culture and philosophy. It is manifested in the appreciation and teaching of art, and has important guidance and practicality in real life. On the other hand, from a philosophical perspective, there is a certain similarity among the traditional Chinese concepts of “unity between heaven and man”, “the doctrine of the mean”, “justice in the middle” in philosophy, and the concepts of “harmony” and “nature” in art education.

China has long been a country with agriculture as its main economic pillar. This tradition means that social structure, values and educational methods have been influenced by agricultural society. In this context, the education system is usually more conservative and traditional. With China's modernization and internationalization, art education is developing gradually. Schools and universities have gradually introduced more modern artistic concepts and practices to meet the students' needs and to better adapt to the modern society's diversity. China's agricultural tradition and the industrialization process, since the reform and opening up, have influenced the art education mode to some extent, making it more traditional and technology-oriented. However, with the trend of modernization and internationalization in China, art education is developing in a more open and diversified direction to meet the modern society's needs. This change may have a positive impact on China's art education and promote more innovation and creativity into the education system.

In the current post-COVID-19 world, young people's lifestyles and learning styles have undergone tremendous changes. Young people mainly get information and consume content through smart phones and other digital devices. Therefore, it has become an important teaching strategy to introduce modern educational tools and technologies into art education. This method helps to establish contact with students, and the technology used in daily life is more in line with the media environment. Modern educational tools can include online learning platforms, virtual art studios, digital drawing boards and virtual reality devices. These tools provide students with more opportunities for autonomous learning and enable students to access educational resources anytime and anywhere. In addition, through the integration of technology, educators can create interactive curriculum content, so that students can participate in artistic creation and theoretical discussion more deeply.

### **1.3 MODERN APPLICATIONS**

#### (1) Carrying forward the good tradition of family education

Although the concept of secret education is not conducive to the dissemination and inheritance of art education techniques, the quality of talents cultivated through this teaching philosophy is beyond the reach of mass education (Garber, 2019, p. 7). To cultivate more artistic talents, it is necessary to learn from this idea and adopt corresponding family education methods to make them better artistic talents. Family education is the foundation of all educational methods and plays an important role in a person's entire life process. Taking the theory of imparting secrets, as a reference, and using the unique teaching method of "family learning", people can more effectively cultivate a professional talent path for a certain school, thereby promoting the rapid development of the art industry.

#### (2) Reflection on copying in art teaching of Chinese painting majors

Chinese painting has a strong stylized characteristic, emphasizing “principles and methods”. This traditional teaching method of Chinese painting, which mainly focuses on “imitation”, can better integrate teachers’ unique understanding and mastery of “principles”, thus enabling teachers to achieve more specific teaching results in the teaching process. In the teaching of traditional Chinese painting in schools, there has been a criticism of the style of imitation, emphasizing that “sketching” and “innovation” are the necessary paths for the development of art history. However, such comments are often covered by an extreme prejudice, which fails to distinguish the difference between the imitation in creation and the copying necessary in the learning process. As a result, for a long time, people have replaced the basic skills of Chinese painting with the basic skills of Western painting, taking Western sketch as the “foundation of all plastic arts”, and ignoring the unique modeling tradition and language tradition of Chinese painting. Copying (including imitating, caressing, etc.) is not a demon, but it is an effective method and way to master tradition.

In the education of Chinese painting majors, there must be, at least, a period of time with a focus on copying. Of course, in terms of what to copy, how to copy, and the relationship between copying and sketching, appropriate preparations should also be made. In this regard, both historical and contemporary scholars have rich practical experience and many insightful discussions that can be used for reference. The book *Chinese Painting: Basic Techniques* is one of the classics about the basic techniques of Chinese painting, emphasizing the stylized characteristics and principles and methods in Chinese painting. It can help to understand the importance of imitation in traditional Chinese painting teaching.

In short, art is a precious asset in human civilization and cultural heritage, and its development has a significant impact on the entire society and culture. To truly inherit and promote traditional Chinese culture, it is necessary to be adept at absorbing traditional Chinese art education concepts and improving the training mode and methods of Chinese art talents on this basis, in order to promote the healthy development of China’s art education and art industry (Todhunter-Reid, 2019, p. 112).

## **2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRADITIONAL CHINESE PHILOSOPHY AND ART EDUCATION THEORY**

### **2.1 GUIDING SIGNIFICANCE OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE PHILOSOPHY ON ART EDUCATION THEORY**

#### (1) Interpretation of traditional Chinese philosophy

Traditional Chinese philosophy values wholeness, cultivates people’s critical thinking abilities, advocates for “harmony” in people and advocates for “creation” in them. Chinese traditional philosophy pays more attention to the construction of human critical thinking

and carries out philosophical reflection through the enlightenment of human thought, thus effectively overcoming human inertia and ideological rigidity.

In traditional Chinese philosophy, Confucianism and Taoism are the main content, and more importantly, the “artistic conception” is the core, integrating the philosophical views of Confucianism and Taoism into the works. In most cases, traditional Chinese philosophy provides a reasonable analysis of contemporary art education and provides important guidance on the positioning, methods and educational objectives of art education (Hofsess, 2018, p. 49). Expanding the connotation and extension of contemporary art education not only requires practical guidance for contemporary art education, but also takes the ideas and behaviors of contemporary art education as the starting point (Putri; Warih, 2020, p. 77). At the same time, contemporary art education should also be placed in an important position, with basic aesthetic methods as an important guidance, in order to promote contemporary art education into a deeper level of thinking.

## (2) The philosophical nature of art education theory

Traditional Chinese philosophy not only promotes the development of art education, but also provides important guidance for art education. It is essentially a method and principle of art education, as well as an understanding and methodology of art education.

This article explores the fundamental ways for humans to perceive beauty from the perspective of art education. For example, the traditional Chinese philosophy of “education without discrimination” and “gradual progress” can be used to guide art education. The “people-oriented”, “be realistic” and other traditional Chinese philosophical ideas advocated by contemporary art education concepts, such as “bartering things” and “seeking truth”, are important components of contemporary art education ideas. Traditional Chinese philosophical ideas have also greatly influenced various schools of art education, profoundly revealing the connotation of art education and playing a positive role in the methods, systems and strategies of art education (Nguyen, 2019, p. 69). Effectively integrating traditional Chinese philosophical ideas into art education would play a significant role in it, which is also a necessary condition for the smooth development of contemporary art education.

## 2.2 SPECIFIC GUIDANCE OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE PHILOSOPHY ON ART EDUCATION THEORY

### (1) Combining open absorption with self-preservation

In art education, creating an open atmosphere of art education emphasizes the concept of “solid” art education and the expansion of art education methods. This is a significant impact of traditional Chinese philosophy on art education. Chinese traditional culture has a “sea embracing all rivers” aura, which can accommodate and accept all new

concepts and things, and emphasizes the continuous expansion of methodology and theory. Confucius attached great importance to the exchange of ideas among different religions, and emphasized the absorption and differentiation of different religions (Harvey, 2017, p. 133). His “absorption” and “sublation” were not only important contents of Chinese educational thought, but also provided practical guidance for contemporary art education (Heaton; Pamela; Afrodita, 2020, p. 53).

The development of modern Chinese art education theory requires learning and innovation. It requires learning and applying various art education concepts on the basis of existing art education theories. In the learning process, they should not be simply stacked, but should be drawn from one example to another, and should not be hastily concluded. While maintaining the uniqueness of art education concepts, it is also possible to achieve complementarity among various art education concepts, thereby achieving diversified educational objectives. Philosophy should be a fusion and collision of cultures, and it should be a way of managing today’s methods using ancient methods. At present, in the research of Chinese art education theory, there are the blind adherence to the Western art education concept, and the deviation and wrong understanding of Chinese art education concept. People should start from the reality of China’s art education, promote the development of Chinese art education, as the main line, and explore a set of art education theory system suitable for the characteristics of Chinese art education itself. China’s local management theory is inseparable from China’s traditional philosophy.

In order to better explain and analyze the phenomena and problems in China’s organizational situation, based on the human nature’s traditional view between China and the West, this paper tries to compare it with the social exchange paradigm, and puts forward the idea of self-cultivation based on the Confucian self-cultivation view in China’s traditional culture (Duan; Xu; Yu, 2018, p. 1890).

(2) Combining exploration of internal development laws with understanding the rich phenomena of world art education

Applying “consistent” to art education refers to art educators constantly exploring a set of art education theories that are suitable for their own national conditions based on a large number of examples of art education. The exploration of the phenomenon of “one” in art education is not only an exploration of domestic art culture, but also a reference for foreign art education and an exploration of general laws.

The theory of Chinese art education should attach importance to the in-depth study of the internal law of art education development and the phenomenon of external art education activities, and attach importance to the effective grasp and application of art education methods. They can start from the perspective of students’ art learning needs and

comprehensively use various art education methods throughout, which is the traditional Chinese educational concept.

Confucius advocated that academia should not remain superficial, but should be obtained through the pursuit of truth and the study of knowledge learned, and there should be a profound understanding of the laws and essence of things. Lao Zi also advocated exploring the laws of things and emphasized the guidance of the “constant knowledge” ideology, emphasizing the exploration of the essence of things. Nowadays, countries around the world are profoundly changing their own concepts of art education, which has brought a great impact to China’s art education (Kell, 2007, p. 125). To promote the development of Chinese art education, it is necessary to seek unity among diversity, adhere to consistent thinking and conduct universal exploration. In terms of art education, it is not only necessary to absorb foreign art cultures, but also to conduct deeper exploration of different art cultures. People need to seek the basic rules of art education from the accumulation of art culture, comprehensively reveal the essential characteristics of art education, and deeply explore art education in order to better summarize the laws and essential characteristics of it.

### (3) Combining factual narration with dialectical thinking

Art education is a course unlike any other course. It is a strong empiricism course, and the description and practice of things are indispensable. In addition, combining dialectical thinking with a dialectical perspective can give art education a true connotation. The proposal of the concept of “holding the two and using the middle” has a certain guiding effect on the exploration of contemporary art education methods. Due to the relatively complete system of Western art education, it has long been the learning mode of Chinese art education and still has significant influence to this day. There are two tendencies of “rationalism” and “anti-science” in Western educational thoughts. In contemporary art education in China, many problems arise due to the inappropriate absorption of “imported goods”. Confucius’ ideology of “dual use” teaches people that, for art education, they cannot hastily affirm or easily deny it. Instead, they should examine it with a dialectical attitude and approach various theories in art education with a correct attitude, go to their extremes, choose their strengths and apply them.

Chinese art education is influenced by the Western practical painting style, emphasizing practical abilities while also lacking corresponding theoretical guidance. However, if too much emphasis is placed on one-sided development, it would have the opposite effect. Students majoring in art often find it difficult to adapt to the society’s comprehensive needs for art due to their limited understanding of theory, lack of practical skills, or lack of artistic foundation. Therefore, in any case, art educators should approach art education with a systematic and dialectical perspective. In the changing external environment, absorption and innovation are the best choices.

Modern art education is an empirical form of art education. Therefore, in art education, emphasis should be placed on combining practice with theory, emphasizing the use of highly dialectical thinking to promote students' deep understanding of art education theory and practice artistic creation. Lao Zi believed that everything in the world has a law of unity of opposites, with dialectical connections between beauty and ugliness, good and evil, difficulty, reality and strength, while traditional Chinese philosophy regards everything in the world as a necessity in time and space. Confucius, based on "persistence" and "application", advocated that education should grasp the two ends of things and inquire about the two opposing sides. When studying academia, one should not only examine the extremes of the two opposing sides, but also coordinate the two in order to achieve balance and nature.

The theory of "holding the two and using the middle" has great reference value for the theory and teaching methods of modern Chinese art education. It points out that different theories of art education cannot be completely denied, nor can they be completely copied. Instead, it is necessary to start with the construction of the art education discipline and conduct dialectical reflection. People should explore and summarize art education theories with a proactive and exemplary attitude, pay attention to students' art learning needs, rely on sufficient art teaching resources, establish correct art concepts, guide students to experience rich and colorful art and cultural phenomena, and improve their overall art quality.

## CONCLUSIONS

In traditional Chinese philosophical thought, it not only reflects one's own emotions, but also pursues one's own realm of life. On this basis, the development orientation of art education has also been influenced to varying degrees. There are rich and profound spiritual implications in traditional Chinese philosophy, which are worth studying. Traditional Chinese philosophy and thought are the guide to the methodology of art education, the discussion of the methodology of Chinese art education, the important theory and practice of art education and the guide for teachers to carry out art education. Art education, based on traditional Chinese philosophy, should adhere to the development concept of "independence and inclusiveness". The traditional Chinese philosophy and art education have different characteristics in the development process of art education theory, and there are also different fractures between them. However, this does not mean that they cannot be integrated with each other. In short, from the perspective of traditional Chinese philosophy, the theory of art education can better play its value and function, helping to improve people's humanistic literacy, aesthetic ability and moral character.

China's traditional philosophy emphasizes moral ethics and pays attention to the cultivation of virtues, such as kindness, etiquette and loyalty. This thought has important enlightenment to art education. It reminds educators to pay attention to students' technology

and creativity and cultivate students' moral quality and social responsibility. Artists should become good teachers and society's friends, and convey positive values through their creation. Confucianism emphasizes the importance of education and holds that education is the foundation of talent cultivation and social progress. Under the guidance of China's traditional philosophy, art education should pay more attention to the students' all-round development, including the cultivation of moral quality, aesthetic accomplishment and creativity. Educators should give full play to their role and guide students to explore the infinite possibilities of art.

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