

A Study on the Innovative Development Path of Higher Aesthetic Education in Greater Bay Area from the Perspective of Cultural Confidence

JIEQIONG LI

Abstract To build the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area into an international education demonstration plot is inseparable from the innovative development of higher aesthetic education. From the perspective of cultural confidence, we can find that the Greater Bay Area has unique advantages in aesthetic education due to its rich cultural and artistic resources, original artistic atmosphere, prosperous creative industries and art markets, abundant art academies, and active international exchanges. At present, colleges and universities in the Greater Bay Area have made some progress in the establishment of aesthetic education courses, the construction of aesthetic education practice platforms, the international exchange of aesthetic education, and the interdisciplinary integration of aesthetic education. But meanwhile, the deficiencies in the distribution of aesthetic education resources, the improvement of the aesthetic education evaluation system, and the satisfaction of aesthetic education with social needs cannot be neglected. Thus, aesthetic education in colleges and universities in the Greater Bay Area can be innovated through the following paths: integrating traditional Chinese culture as well as regional culture of the Greater Bay Area, introducing advanced teaching methods and technologies of aesthetic education, strengthening the interdisciplinary integration of aesthetic education, establishing a scientific evaluation mechanism for aesthetic education, deepening international exchanges and cooperation in higher aesthetic education, supporting the construction of art laboratories in colleges and universities, increasing social attention and involvement in higher aesthetic education, and building an omni-media communication system for higher aesthetic education.

ADDRESS: Jieqiong Li, Ph.D. Candidate, Guangzhou Sport University, Guangzhou Guangdong, 510500, China, email: Ellen0035@163.com.

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P. Kettunen, A. Orankiewicz, L. Oulasvirta, & M. Turała: Measuring and Comparing the Financial Autonomy of Local Governments in Finland and Poland

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1 Introduction

Cultural confidence refers to a nation or region's recognition of, confidence in, and pride in its own historical traditions, values, and moral standards. Aesthetic education, also known as education in sensibility or emotional cultivation, enhances individuals' overall qualities and contributes fundamentally to the advancement of social civilization. It serves as an essential path toward achieving cultural confidence and cultural prosperity. University-based aesthetic education aims to help students develop unique perceptual abilities and aesthetic orientations at the psychological and spiritual levels. It plays a crucial role in shaping their outlook on life, the world, and values, and is an indispensable part of their holistic physical and mental development. Gaining familiarity with, understanding of, and identification with one's own national culture—and thereby establishing cultural confidence—is a vital component of value formation for contemporary university students and one of the key goals of aesthetic education in higher education institutions today.

In 2019, the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area was released, elevating the construction of the GBA into a vibrant and internationally competitive world-class bay area and city cluster—and a model for high-quality development—to the level of a national strategic priority. Education is the foundation of national prosperity and strength, and higher education reflects a region's development level and potential. To fulfill its five strategic roles—being a "dynamic world-class city cluster," a "globally influential international innovation and technology hub," a "key support for the Belt and Road Initiative," a "model zone for deepened cooperation between the mainland and Hong Kong/Macao," and a "livable, business-friendly, and tourist-attractive quality living circle" [1]—the GBA must promote innovation in education and build a global center for international education.

China has a long-standing tradition and rich heritage of aesthetic education, and the Party and government have always attached great importance to it, especially in the context of higher education. In recent years, a series of policies and documents have been introduced to strengthen aesthetic education in universities. In 2015, the General Office of the State Council issued the Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving School Aesthetic Education, the first document to explicitly define the role of aesthetic education within the national education system, and outline its guiding ideology, basic principles, overall goals, and policy measures [2]. In 2019, the Ministry of Education released the Opinions on Effectively Strengthening Aesthetic Education in Higher Education Institutions in the New Era, emphasizing alignment with educational reform, student development, and resource allocation [3]. In 2020, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council jointly issued the Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving Aesthetic Education in Schools in the New Era, proposing phased and progressive improvements in teaching reform, faculty development, and resource support,

aiming to establish a high-quality, Chinese-characteristic, and systematic aesthetic education framework [4]. In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to the philosophy, policies, outcomes, trends, and reform pathways of China's aesthetic education, especially in higher education [5-17].

In summary, aesthetic education is now a central focus across all levels of China's education system and a topic of widespread societal interest. University-based aesthetic education constitutes a crucial component within it. Cultural confidence not only provides direction and purpose for this endeavor but also serves as a guiding vision. Promoting the innovative development of aesthetic education in universities through the lens of cultural confidence is a necessary step toward building the Greater Bay Area into a hub of international education and a model for educational excellence.

2 The advantages of aesthetic education in the Greater Bay Area

As one of the most important urban clusters in southern China, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) possesses unique advantages in aesthetic education resources, which serve as both the foundation and the guarantee for the innovative development of aesthetic education in its universities. These advantages are primarily reflected in five key areas: abundant cultural and artistic resources, a strong atmosphere for artistic innovation, a flourishing creative industry and art market, active international cultural exchange, and a high concentration of specialized art institutions.

Advantage 1: Abundant Cultural and Artistic Resources. Located in the cultural and artistic heart of southern China, the GBA boasts a wealth of artistic assets and cultural heritage. The region is home to numerous high-quality museums, art galleries, opera houses, and hosts a wide variety of art festivals and cultural events.

As of May 2022, Guangdong Province had 4 items on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, 165 national-level and 816 provincial-level intangible cultural heritage items, ranking among the top in China in terms of quantity [5]. In terms of infrastructure, the GBA also enjoys significant advantages. By the end of 2021, Guangdong Province had established 10 national first-grade museums, including the Guangdong Museum, the Western Han Nanyue King Museum, Shenzhen Museum, Guangdong Museum of Folk Art, Hakka Museum of China, and the Maritime Silk Road Museum of Guangdong [6]. In addition, the region houses a large number of high-quality museums of various sizes.

Hong Kong alone is home to dozens of renowned museums, such as the Hong Kong Museum of Art and Hong Kong Museum of History (established in the 1970s), as well as themed institutions like the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence, Hong Kong Maritime Museum, Hong Kong Railway Museum, and Hong Kong Film Archive. There are also museums

rich in historical and humanistic atmosphere, such as the Law Uk Folk Museum and the Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb Museum, and modern science-focused venues like the Hong Kong Science Museum and the Hong Kong Space Museum. A notable recent addition is the Hong Kong Palace Museum, completed in 2022.

Moreover, the GBA is home to a wealth of art galleries and opera houses. Notable examples include the Guangdong Museum of Art, Shenzhen Art Museum, Dafen Art Museum, Guyuan Museum of Art, and specialized institutions like the OCT Art & Design Gallery and the Times Museum, which focuses on contemporary art. The region also features iconic opera houses that regularly host high-quality performances, such as the Zhuhai Grand Theatre, Hong Kong Opera House, and Guangzhou Opera House, all of which also serve as architectural landmarks in their respective cities.

In addition to its cultural heritage and physical venues, the richness of artistic resources in the Greater Bay Area (GBA) also lies in the diversity, regularity, and high-quality development of its cultural and artistic activities. Cities such as Hong Kong, Macao, Shenzhen, and Guangzhou host a wide variety of art exhibitions and festivals throughout the year. Notable events include the internationally renowned Art Basel Hong Kong (held annually since 2013), the “Art Macao – Macao International Art Biennale” (biennial, three editions held as of 2023); the Guangzhou Triennial, known for its strong regional characteristics and avant-garde spirit (held every three years, with seven editions by 2023); the Shenzhen Contemporary Art Biennale, which focuses on contemporary art in China and the Pearl River Delta (biennial, five editions held by 2023); the Guangdong Arts Festival, dedicated to high-level professional performances (triennial, with fifteen editions held from 1984 to 2023); the Guangzhou Chinese Cultural and Arts Festival, co-organized by the Guangdong Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese and the Guangzhou Federation (nine editions held as of 2023); and the Guangdong Nanhai Land Art Festival, launched for the first time in 2023. These exhibitions and events are multi-layered and diverse in form, combining local characteristics with international perspectives. They not only promote the flourishing of arts and culture in the GBA but also reflect the latest developments and trends in both domestic and international art scenes.

Advantage 2: A Strong Atmosphere of Artistic Innovation. The Greater Bay Area has long been a champion of innovation, and this spirit is especially prominent in the cultural and artistic sectors. The region stands out for its forward-thinking concepts and experimental practices in the arts. This vibrant atmosphere of artistic innovation injects continuous vitality into the development of aesthetic education across the GBA.

Since the launch of China’s Reform and Opening-up policy, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao region has been a pioneer of innovation-driven development, upholding a spirit of bold experimentation, creative thinking, pragmatism, and openness. The region has achieved numerous national firsts in various fields. Both

the central government and local governments in the GBA have provided strong support for innovation in the arts, striving to create a collaborative ecosystem where culture, the arts, industry, and the market develop in synergy. Moreover, the GBA's leading position in technological and economic development provides a solid foundation for artistic innovation, enabling greater possibilities and broader space for creative exploration. In addition, the region hosts frequent cross-border and interdisciplinary activities, making it a hub where new ideas and artistic concepts converge and interact. Together, these factors cultivate a rich atmosphere of artistic innovation, continuously injecting fresh energy and momentum into the development of aesthetic education in the Greater Bay Area.

Advantage 3: A Flourishing Creative Industry and Art Market. The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area is one of the most dynamic and promising economic regions in China. Its strong atmosphere of artistic innovation is closely integrated with the market economy, resulting in a prosperous creative industry and vibrant art market. This synergy provides fertile ground for the growth of aesthetic education and creates abundant opportunities for its innovative development.

The Greater Bay Area is dotted with cultural-creative parks that supply space and resources for the creative sector, drawing large numbers of artists, designers, entrepreneurs, and innovative enterprises. For example, TIT Creative Park, located along Guangzhou's central axis next to the Canton Tower, takes cultural creativity as its core industry and operates on an interactive framework of "humanity, innovation, technology, and ecology." WeChat's headquarters is based there, alongside many well-known domestic fashion, apparel, and cultural-creative brands. Established in 2007 by the Yangcheng Evening News Group, the large-scale Yangcheng Creative Industry Park has attracted more than a hundred companies in cultural media, information technology, and art design, with the overall output value of its resident firms rising rapidly. In Hong Kong, PMQ (Former Police Married Quarters) gathers numerous designer studios and fashion boutiques, serving as a focal point for creative products, art derivatives, and mass-market fashion consumption. OCT Creative Park in Shenzhen brings together diverse creative industries such as design, photography, and animation; the OCT Contemporary Art Terminal (OCAT) is located within the park and regularly hosts art festivals, creative markets, international music festivals, and other cultural events.

By 2023, the Guangzhou International Art Fair had been held for 28 consecutive editions, with its scale and quality improving year by year. Leveraging the global platform of the Canton Fair, it has facilitated extensive international trade in cultural and artistic industries. Hong Kong once experienced a thriving era of comic art, while Guangdong has built a solid foundation in animation and gaming industries, supported by related manufacturing and information technology sectors, forming a distinctive creative industry chain. In recent years, the creative industries in the Greater Bay Area have witnessed rapid development, with the art market

becoming increasingly vibrant. Compared with many regions both in China and abroad, the GBA stands out as a leader in the prosperity and dynamism of its cultural and artistic markets.

Advantage 4: Active International Exchange in Culture and the Arts. The Greater Bay Area enjoys inherent geographical advantages, encompassing the highly internationalized cities of Hong Kong and Macao, and has long served as a historical meeting point of Eastern and Western cultures. Its frequent international exchanges across various sectors—particularly in the field of arts and culture—have significantly accelerated the internationalization and modernization of aesthetic education in the region.

In addition to the aforementioned international art festivals, the GBA has established extensive and in-depth partnerships with cultural institutions, art organizations, and universities around the world. These collaborations span creative industries, arts education, cultural heritage preservation, media, and publishing, among others.

At the same time, the region actively creates platforms for international artists to exhibit and create, while also encouraging local artists to showcase their talent on the global stage. This two-way exchange, grounded in international perspectives, enhances artistic innovation and helps align aesthetic education in the GBA with global standards. Moreover, as a key region in China's Belt and Road Initiative, the GBA frequently promotes cooperation with partner countries through cultural exchange, providing a convenient and strategic foundation for international collaboration in aesthetic education.

Advantage 5: Numerous professional art colleges and universities. The Greater Bay Area boasts numerous professional art colleges and universities, including Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, Hong Kong Art School, Macao Art Institute, Xinghai Conservatory of Music, Zhuhai Art Vocational College, Guangdong College of Literature and Art, and Guangdong Vocational College of Dance and Drama. In addition, many comprehensive universities in the Greater Bay Area have secondary colleges for art and offer art-related courses, enrolling students in various art fields. For example, Sun Yat-sen University offers music-related majors; South China University of Technology offers majors in music, dance, performance, broadcasting, art and design; Jinan University offers majors in drama and film and television literature, broadcasting and hosting art, recording art, animation, and calligraphy; South China Normal University offers majors in art, music, dance, and design; and South China Agricultural University offers majors in art design, music performance, fashion performance, and radio and television directing. These art colleges and universities, as well as institutions offering art-related courses, provide high-quality art education for students and have contributed a large number of talents with excellent cultural and artistic qualities to society, further promoting the prosperity of the cultural and artistic market in the Greater Bay Area.

3 The current situation of aesthetic education in universities in the Greater Bay Area

While the Greater Bay Area possesses exceptional advantages in aesthetic education, local governments at all levels have also placed great emphasis on this field, fully implementing the central government's aesthetic education policies. Following the release of the Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving School Aesthetic Education by the General Office of the State Council in 2015, the Guangdong Provincial Government issued its own implementation document in 2016 titled the Implementation Opinions of the General Office of the Guangdong Provincial People's Government on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving School Aesthetic Education [7]. Later, in response to the 2020 policy jointly issued by the General Offices of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council, the Guangdong Provincial Party Committee and Provincial Government released the Action Plan for Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving School Aesthetic Education in the New Era in 2022 [8]. These regional policies, aligned with national strategies and educational directives, have significantly promoted the development of aesthetic education in universities throughout the Greater Bay Area. Over the course of this development, colleges and universities in Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao have made notable progress and accumulated valuable experience in aesthetic education. However, several challenges and shortcomings have also emerged, highlighting the need for further improvement and reform.

3.1 Progress and accumulation

The progress and accumulation of aesthetic education in universities in the Greater Bay Area are primarily reflected in several aspects: the establishment of aesthetic education curricula, the construction of aesthetic education practice platforms, international exchanges in aesthetic education, and the interdisciplinary integration of aesthetic education.

From the perspective of the basic curriculum setup of aesthetic education, the aesthetic education curriculum in universities at all levels in Guangdong Province is relatively complete. Some scholars have pointed out in recent studies that Chinese universities face issues of insufficient aesthetic education courses and an imperfect aesthetic education system [9], but the aesthetic education courses in universities in the Greater Bay Area are generally more diverse, with a certain degree of systematicness and integrity. In addition to professional art colleges and universities, ordinary universities in Guangdong Province generally offer courses related to aesthetic education, including art practice or art skill operation courses in different categories such as painting, design, music, dance, literature, film and television, etc. Some universities also offer art theory courses such as art history, introduction to art, and art criticism for students of certain majors. At the same time, many universities in the Greater Bay Area have incorporated aesthetic

education into general education, providing basic humanities knowledge and art literacy education for non-art majors.

From the perspective of aesthetic education practice, universities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area boast rich and diverse aesthetic education practice platforms. While many universities in the Greater Bay Area provide students with art practice venues on campus, they also have corresponding professional cooperation platforms off campus. Students can engage in artistic creation and exhibition in modern art laboratories, workshops, theaters, museums, art galleries, and other venues, as well as online virtual platforms. These platforms, on the one hand, ensure the implementation of aesthetic education practice at the university level, and on the other hand, promote the transformation and external dissemination of aesthetic education achievements in universities, as well as cooperation and interaction between schools and society in the field of aesthetic education.

From the perspective of international exchange in aesthetic education, one of the characteristics of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area is the frequent international exchanges in various fields, including the field of aesthetic education in universities. The Greater Bay Area encompasses Hong Kong and Macao, two cities that entered internationalization earlier, and it is also a region where modern Chinese and Western cultures converge. The international cultural exchanges between universities are convenient and frequent, which has effectively driven the international exchanges in aesthetic education at the university level. According to the Ministry of Education's statistics over the years: in 2018, the number of international students coming to China was 492,185, of which 22,034 were from Guangdong Province;^[10] in 2015, the number was 397,635, with 23,015 from Guangdong Province;^[11] in 2014, the number was 377,054, with 21,298 from Guangdong Province;^[12] in 2012, the number was 328,330, with 20,940 from Guangdong Province.^[13] The number of international students coming to Guangdong Province ranks among the top in the country's provinces and cities. In addition, the proportion of graduates from universities in the Greater Bay Area who choose to study abroad over the years has been high. The Greater Bay Area is also a hub for returned overseas personnel, with a large number of overseas Chinese and returned overseas students choosing to work and live in this highly internationalized cluster of cities. For a long time, cultural exchanges between universities in the Greater Bay Area and overseas universities have been close, and the internationalization level of aesthetic education in universities is generally higher compared to most domestic universities.

From the perspective of interdisciplinary integration, universities in the Greater Bay Area encourage students to engage in interdisciplinary artistic creation and research, combining art with disciplines such as science, engineering, and humanities to explore new forms of artistic expression and innovative applications. For example, by integrating art with cutting-edge fields such as artificial intelligence and biotechnology, cross-disciplinary research on art and technology

is being conducted. Several universities in Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao, including the South University of Science and Technology of China, Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, and Tsinghua University Shenzhen International Graduate School, have taken the lead in practicing and exploring these interdisciplinary fields. These explorations and attempts at integration have positioned the aesthetic education construction in universities in the Greater Bay Area at the forefront of domestic aesthetic education development, aligning with international aesthetic education trends and serving as a model for innovation in university aesthetic education.

3.2 Problems and deficiencies

The construction of aesthetic education in universities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area has been thriving in recent years, but some problems and deficiencies that have emerged during the development process cannot be ignored or underestimated. Through investigation and analysis, it is not difficult to find that the aesthetic education in universities in the Greater Bay Area mainly faces issues such as uneven distribution of resources, an imperfect evaluation system, and a loose connection between social needs and university education.

Firstly, the distribution of aesthetic education resources is uneven. Although the Greater Bay Area is blessed with exceptional aesthetic education resources, and universities place a high emphasis on aesthetic education, there exists a certain degree of disparity in aesthetic education resources among different regions and universities. Some universities possess richer artistic facilities, teaching staff, and financial support, while others frequently face resource shortages and funding deficits. This disparity between schools limits the aesthetic education development opportunities for some students. Furthermore, there are often differences in aesthetic education resources among secondary colleges within the same university, and a model for sharing aesthetic education resources among these colleges has not been established. This leads to unequal aesthetic education development opportunities and access to aesthetic education resources for students from different colleges and majors within the same university, while also resulting in considerable waste of existing resources.

Secondly, the evaluation system for aesthetic education is not sound. The lack of a comprehensive evaluation system for aesthetic education outcomes is a common problem in most universities across the country. Currently, the education evaluation system places more emphasis on teachers' academic achievements and students' exam scores, and the evaluation and recognition of aesthetic education are relatively singular. There are even instances where evaluation systems from other fields are used to improperly assess and misjudge the outcomes of aesthetic education teaching. This problem is also prevalent in universities in the Greater Bay Area. Aesthetic education should be carried out in a subtle and unobtrusive manner, and it is by no means something that can be achieved overnight. However,

some universities pursue a short-board effect and use quantification as the sole evaluation criterion, which runs counter to the purpose of aesthetic education.

Once again, the connection between aesthetic education and social needs needs to be strengthened. Aesthetic education in universities is directly related to the cultivation of students' comprehensive qualities, and the comprehensive qualities of college students directly affect future employment and social competition. Currently, there is still a significant gap between aesthetic education and social needs in universities in the Greater Bay Area. Contemporary society needs talents who dare to innovate, and innovation requires both innovative thinking and innovative capabilities. Innovative thinking and innovative capabilities are the concentrated reflection of one's comprehensive qualities. Although the fundamental purpose and task of aesthetic education is to enable people to achieve comprehensive physical and mental development and improve their comprehensive qualities, at the practical level, "art education and its practical activities are the main content of aesthetic education in Chinese schools" [14]. Content beyond art theory and artistic skills, which is broader in scope, is often neglected. Overall, aesthetic education in most universities in the Bay Area still has significant limitations. Many universities limit aesthetic education to training in individual artistic skills or education in moral character, deviating from the purpose of aesthetic education to cultivate students' aesthetic creativity and improve their comprehensive qualities.

In summary, based on the existing resource advantages, the aesthetic education in universities in the Greater Bay Area has made significant progress, but there are also some problems. The progress achieved mainly includes: a relatively complete curriculum for aesthetic education, a rich and diverse platform for aesthetic education practice, active international exchanges in aesthetic education, and a high degree of interdisciplinary integration in aesthetic education. The existing problems are mainly reflected in the uneven distribution of aesthetic education resources, the imperfect evaluation system of aesthetic education, and the need to strengthen the connection between aesthetic education and social needs. In view of this, the future construction of aesthetic education in universities in the Greater Bay Area should be based on consolidating and strengthening the existing progress, focusing on solving and improving existing problems and deficiencies, and then exploring new paths for innovative development of aesthetic education in universities in the Bay Area, creating a new situation of Chinese path to modernization of aesthetic education with Bay Area characteristics.

4 Innovative development path of aesthetic education in universities in the Greater Bay Area from the perspective of cultural self-confidence

Excellent traditional culture is the crystallization of the collective wisdom of a nation, the essence of long-term historical accumulation, and the core pillar of a nation's culture, identity, and value recognition. The stage of higher education is a crucial period for the formation of individual cultural values, and universities bear

the important responsibility of providing cultural education and cultivating young people's cultural literacy. In recent years, scholars have continuously proposed the effective integration of aesthetic education in universities with excellent traditional Chinese culture, drawing on the ideological essence and moral quintessence of excellent traditional Chinese culture to promote the innovative development of aesthetic education in universities, [15], [16] and have explicitly pointed out that integrating aesthetic education with cultural self-confidence education is a requirement for the development of an innovative country in the new era and the current requirements for aesthetic education in universities in China, as well as the aesthetic needs of students on their educational journey and the requirement for achieving physical and mental integration through learning Chinese culture. [17] Combining the current development status of aesthetic education in universities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the existing advantages of aesthetic education resources, from the perspective of cultural self-confidence, aesthetic education in universities in the Greater Bay Area can innovate and reform through the following paths, thereby opening up a new situation for aesthetic education in universities in the Bay Area to develop towards high quality and modernization.

Path 1: Integrating Chinese traditional culture and the regional distinctive culture of the Greater Bay Area. The culture of the Greater Bay Area integrates the local regional culture of Hong Kong, Macao, and the Pearl River Delta region with diverse cultures from both domestic and international sources, forming a unique cultural landscape that provides rich and colorful content for aesthetic education. By integrating traditional culture and the regional distinctive culture of the Greater Bay Area into aesthetic education in universities, students can deepen their understanding and appreciation of traditional culture, stimulate their interest and love for local culture, and further promote the effective inheritance, innovative development, and creative transformation of Chinese excellent traditional culture and the local excellent culture of the Greater Bay Area, effectively advancing the pace of building national cultural confidence. At the same time, the integration of traditional culture and Bay Area culture can enrich the content and improve the structure of aesthetic education courses in universities, thereby alleviating the uneven distribution of aesthetic education resources in the Bay Area to a certain extent. Universities can develop and design courses that are suitable for students' hobbies, interests, and ability development, with traditional culture and regional culture as the core, and incorporate them into the aesthetic education curriculum system of universities according to specific situations. From a practical perspective, such courses are highly integrated with local culture and regional characteristics, have rich content resources, and provide a platform for practicing and verifying the effectiveness of the courses; from the perspective of personal development of university students, understanding and reasonably applying traditional and regional culture reflects their comprehensive abilities. Traditional culture and regional culture are inexhaustible treasures for university students to engage in creative and innovative work upon entering society.

Path 2: Introducing Advanced Aesthetic Education Teaching Methods and Technologies. The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposed to accelerate the construction of a "digital China" in the new era and new journey, and for the first time included "promoting the digitization of education" in the report. In today's rapidly developing information technology society, traditional aesthetic education teaching methods in universities are difficult to fully meet the physical and psychological needs of students and cannot adapt to the new developments and changes of the times. Utilizing modern technologies and innovative teaching methods to enhance the quality of aesthetic education is an effective path for the innovative development of aesthetic education in universities in the Greater Bay Area. Technologies such as digital libraries, immersive holographic imaging, AI-based teaching, online learning platforms, and converged and streaming media communication technologies can be effectively applied to the teaching practice of aesthetic education in universities. Especially for universities that have established relevant databases and possess relevant facilities and equipment, introducing these technological methods into aesthetic education teaching is quick and convenient. Universities in the Greater Bay Area should apply the most cutting-edge and top-notch science and technology to the teaching and practice of aesthetic education as much as possible, allowing aesthetic education in universities to fully and deeply integrate with science and technology. Aesthetic education teaching methods based on modern technology can more efficiently and flexibly mobilize the existing abundant art resources, information industry resources, and creative industry resources in the Greater Bay Area, upgrade the form and content of aesthetic education teaching, further promote the interdisciplinary integration of aesthetic education, create more diversified aesthetic education practice platforms, strengthen the connection between social needs and aesthetic education in universities, and thereby build a modern and leading aesthetic education characteristic of universities in the Greater Bay Area.

Path 3: Strengthen the integration of interdisciplinary aesthetic education. Universities have formed the penetration and integration of natural, humanities, and social disciplines under the background of comprehensive aesthetic education, which can promote the breadth, depth, and persistence of aesthetic education in university education, fully leveraging the role of aesthetic education in universities. Universities in the Greater Bay Area have always encouraged students to engage in interdisciplinary artistic creation and research, and many have already taken steps towards the integration of interdisciplinary aesthetic education. This integration can introduce a more comprehensive perspective into the education system, stimulate students' creativity, critical thinking, and comprehensive abilities, and help cultivate high-quality talents who can meet the needs of social development and keep pace with the times. At the same time, interdisciplinary integration is an effective means to break down disciplinary barriers, adjust the uneven distribution of aesthetic education resources, and mobilize multiple support forces for aesthetic education. The Greater Bay Area should deepen and strengthen the integration of interdisciplinary aesthetic education, combining art

with the strengths of science, engineering, information technology, manufacturing, commerce, and trade in the Greater Bay Area through interdisciplinary cooperation and innovation, exploring various aesthetic education resources in the Greater Bay Area under the concept of "comprehensive aesthetic education", and forming a new cross-field and interdisciplinary model of university aesthetic education with Bay Area characteristics.

Path 4: Establish a scientific evaluation mechanism for aesthetic education teaching. Aesthetic education in universities is a systematic education that undertakes the functions of cultivating sentiment, educating people, transforming people, and nurturing people. The teaching achievements of aesthetic education cannot be assessed from a single level, nor can short-term effects be used as the evaluation criteria. Given that many universities in China currently have problems of pursuing short-board effects and using quantification as the sole assessment criterion for aesthetic education, the Greater Bay Area can take the lead in establishing a long-term and systematic evaluation mechanism for aesthetic education in universities that is suitable for continuously promoting cultural confidence. This will change the current phenomenon of excessive emphasis on form and skills, pursuit of short-term one-sided effects, and blind quantification of assessment criteria in aesthetic education teaching evaluation in universities. Specifically, the Greater Bay Area can attempt to establish an aesthetic education teaching evaluation mechanism that aims to cultivate students' comprehensive humanistic literacy and aesthetic ability, with the goal of promoting students' overall and coordinated physical and mental development, and guided by enhancing students' imagination, creativity, and self-reflection ability. This means that firstly, aesthetic education teaching evaluation should focus on process and variability, rather than emphasizing only the final static quantitative results. Secondly, the evaluation of aesthetic education teaching should consider multiple factors of students, including but not limited to cultural accomplishment, artistic skill application ability, physical and mental development status, daily behavior performance, and moral quality level. Because the value of aesthetic education can be reflected not only from the specific ability levels required for aesthetic creation and appreciation, but also from the positive impact of aesthetic education on the spiritual level of individuals. Furthermore, the evaluation methods should include multiple methods such as self-evaluation, other-evaluation, and mutual evaluation, and adopt a three-dimensional evaluation index that is phased, gradual, comprehensive, and holistic, rather than isolated, one-sided, and unidirectional indicators and methods.

Path 5: Deepening international exchange and cooperation in aesthetic education in universities. In the contemporary era, globalization is sweeping across the world, and China's aesthetic education is facing impacts from diverse aspects such as heterogeneous cultures, economies, politics, and ideologies. [18] However, international cultural exchange and cooperation are indispensable for the modernization of aesthetic education in universities. In 2021, when General Secretary Xi Jinping visited Tsinghua University, he pointed out, "We must

enhance cultural self-confidence and strengthen international cultural exchanges through the medium of beauty." The active international cultural and artistic exchanges are one of the unique aesthetic education advantages of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. Based on this, universities in the Greater Bay Area can deeply cooperate in aesthetic education during international cultural exchanges, creating a bay area aesthetic education model with international characteristics. These collaborations can be carried out from multiple levels and in a layered manner. Firstly, formulate an overall strategy for deepening international exchange and cooperation in aesthetic education among universities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, clarifying the direction, content, and goals of cooperation. Universities can adopt different specific implementation plans based on their own situations. Secondly, seek partners that match universities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and have similar interests and strengths in the field of aesthetic education, and explore cooperation models to form long-term and stable aesthetic education partnerships. In addition, actively carry out student international exchange programs and conduct teacher training for international cooperation projects, cultivating cross-cultural communication skills and awareness of university teachers and students in the field of aesthetic education. Furthermore, strive to establish a two-way international exchange mechanism for aesthetic education, rather than one-way import or export. While absorbing excellent foreign aesthetic education resources and nutrition, cultivate students' national cultural identity and self-confidence through international aesthetic education exchanges in universities, guiding students to disseminate excellent traditional Chinese culture in the process of international exchanges.

Path 6: Support the construction of university art laboratories. University art laboratories are not only another classroom for teachers to carry out aesthetic education teaching practice, providing students with a place for hands-on experience and practical creation, but also an important support for promoting interdisciplinary and artistic innovation research. At the same time, university art laboratories also serve as a bridge connecting university aesthetic education with social needs. University resources and social resources are more likely to integrate and interact in art laboratories, thereby forming an integrated model of learning, research, and production. This effectively achieves the goal and task of promoting the construction of national cultural confidence through aesthetic education and fosters the creation of new-quality productive forces in the new era. Given the strong atmosphere of artistic innovation, the prosperity of the art creative industry, and the art market in the Greater Bay Area, university art laboratories have a natural growth environment and vast development space. Supporting the construction of university art laboratories will undoubtedly inject strong vitality into the innovative development of aesthetic education in Bay Area universities, and it holds significant pioneering and exemplary significance both nationally and internationally.

Path 7: Enhancing social attention and participation in aesthetic education in universities. Enhancing social attention and participation in aesthetic education in universities is conducive to enhancing the social value of aesthetic education, improving public awareness of aesthetic education, enriching students' aesthetic education experience and growth opportunities, promoting cooperation and exchange between schools and society, and facilitating the development of the art economy and creative industries. It is crucial for the innovative development of aesthetic education in universities in the Greater Bay Area and the construction of cultural confidence. Generally speaking, society currently pays high attention to the scientific research output and transformation of universities, and cooperation between universities, enterprises, and the government at the scientific research and economic levels is common. However, aesthetic education lacks the attention and participation it deserves. Only when society fully pays attention to and participates in aesthetic education in universities can the imbalance between the supply and social demand of aesthetic education in universities in the Bay Area be effectively resolved, allowing aesthetic education in universities to cultivate talents that society truly needs. At the same time, social attention and participation are also the foundation for achieving the integration of learning, research, and production in aesthetic education in universities in the Greater Bay Area, as well as the guarantee for the interdisciplinary integration of aesthetic education in universities.

Path 8: Build a comprehensive media dissemination system for aesthetic education in universities. The popularization of the Internet and mobile Internet, the rise of social media, the prevalence of video sharing platforms, the continuous upgrading of mobile applications, and the development and application of artificial intelligence have all contributed to the advent of the comprehensive media era. In this era, traditional dissemination methods can no longer meet people's diverse information acquisition needs. Comprehensive media dissemination encompasses various media forms, including text, images, audio, and video, enabling a more comprehensive, vivid, and real-time presentation of the achievements and activities of aesthetic education in universities. Building a comprehensive media dissemination system for aesthetic education in universities can enhance the image of universities, increase social attention to aesthetic education in universities, promote reform and innovation in aesthetic education, and more effectively promote excellent ethnic culture and positive social values. Universities in the Greater Bay Area should fully utilize comprehensive media technology to build a comprehensive media dissemination system for aesthetic education in universities that is contemporary and forward-looking, thereby comprehensively strengthening the construction of our national cultural identity and cultural confidence, and promoting the enhancement of our country's cultural soft power.

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