

# Research on the Current Situation and Countermeasures of Chengdu Middle School Choir Construction

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## ABSTRACT

With the increasing emphasis on aesthetic education, there is an urgent need for research on the construction of middle school choirs in China. The author has used a questionnaire to investigate the overall situation of choir construction in middle schools in Chengdu, the importance schools attach to choirs, and the common difficulties encountered by choirs in the process of rehearsal, in an attempt to comprehensively summarize and analyze the results of this investigation and to make corresponding suggestions.

**Keywords:** *Chengdu, Middle school choirs, Construction.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH BASIS

### 1.1 *Research Background and Purpose*

In the current context where the Chinese government attaches great importance to school aesthetic education, choir singing plays an important role as an important artistic practice in music education in middle and primary schools. Since 2020, the central and local governments have successively issued multiple policy documents on strengthening school aesthetic education work, explicitly requiring the promotion of practical activities such as choir and ensemble performances, and incorporating students' artistic practice abilities into the academic evaluation system. For example, on October 15, 2020, the General Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued the "Opinions on Strengthening and Improving the Art Education Work in Schools in the New Era", which pointed out that "the participation of primary and secondary school students in art practice activities organized by schools should be included in academic requirements, the comprehensive evaluation of the artistic quality of primary and middle school students should be fully implemented, and the evaluation results should be

included in the comprehensive quality evaluation of primary and secondary school students." [1] All of these demonstrate the government's emphasis on art education in primary and middle schools. In response to this background, this article aims to conduct a survey and research on the middle school choirs in Chengdu, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the importance attached to choir, teacher allocation, rehearsal management and effectiveness, as well as the challenges faced by middle schools in Chengdu. By analyzing the survey results, this article will propose targeted suggestions to promote the sustainable development of middle school choirs in Chengdu, thereby providing empirical basis and practical guidance for the optimization of primary and middle school choirs.

### 1.2 *Research Questions*

The research questions are as follows:

1. The formation of middle school choirs in Chengdu.
2. The common difficulties encountered in the rehearsal process of middle school choirs in Chengdu.

## **1.3 Research Significance**

### **1.3.1 Practical Significance**

This study takes middle school choirs in Chengdu as the main research object. By investigating and studying its formation, teachers, rehearsals, effects and difficulties faced, this paper aims to put forward specific and feasible ways of implementation to cope with the problems commonly encountered by middle school choirs in the process of formation and development. At the same time, this study also provides reference opinions for schools that have not yet established choirs.

### **1.3.2 Theoretical Significance**

After reading a large amount of literature, the author has found that the development of choral art has achieved rich theoretical results in this field, but there are very few relevant studies about choirs in Chengdu. Therefore, this study will supplement and improve the research in this field, and provide new empirical cases and data support for theoretical research.

## **2. RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **2.1 Respondents**

The research mainly focuses on the guidance teachers who have already formed middle school choirs in Chengdu. Through the survey, it is aimed to understand the formation and rehearsal situation of middle school choirs. A total of 37 questionnaires and 1 interview report have been collected, with a recovery rate of 100%, of which 38 were valid responses.

This report takes the current situation of the construction of middle school choirs in Chengdu as the research object, studying the degree of importance that schools in Chengdu attach to middle school choirs, the teaching staff and rehearsal situation of choirs, as well as the difficulties encountered by choirs in their development process. And then this research provides specific opinions and suggestions regarding the common difficulties encountered in the formation and development of middle school choirs.

### **2.2 Research Time and Location**

The offline outline visit survey time and location is: November 24, 2023, Chengdu Shishi Middle School (Wenmiao Campus).

The online questionnaire star survey time is: November 30, 2023- December 5, 2023.

### **2.3 Research Content**

The first is the overall situation of middle school choir construction in Chengdu.

The second is providing specific opinions and suggestions regarding the common difficulties encountered in the formation and development of middle school choirs.

### **2.4 Research Methods**

#### **2.4.1 Literature Research Method**

The author retrieves literature on the construction of middle school choirs, organizes and analyzes the innovations and shortcomings in the literature, and provides theoretical support for research.

#### **2.4.2 Person Interview Method**

The author conducts a special interview with the guidance teachers of the Shishi Middle School Choir in Chengdu, and uses written records to obtain their relevant experience in the formation, rehearsal, and management of the middle school choirs.

#### **2.4.3 Questionnaire Survey Method**

The author designs a questionnaire targeting the school's emphasis on choir, choir faculty, rehearsal situation, etc., and distributes it to the guidance teachers of established middle school choirs in Chengdu, and then analyzes the survey results and studies the current situation of choir construction in Chengdu's middle schools.

## **3. RESEARCH ANALYSIS**

### **3.1 Questionnaire Design**

Based on the above research questions and survey content, in order to ensure the convenience of statistics, this study has adopted two methods of

questionnaire design: online questionnaire survey and offline interviews with individuals.

- Online questionnaire survey: The author has conducted an online survey using wjx.cn. The questionnaire mainly focuses on objective questions, and covers the following six aspects: the degree of importance that Chengdu schools attach to middle school choirs, the professional competence of the guidance teachers for the Chengdu middle school choirs, the formation situation of Chengdu middle school choirs, the rehearsal situation and difficulties encountered by the Chengdu middle school choir, the achievements of Chengdu middle school choirs, and the choir instructor's expectations for the choirs' future.
- Offline interviews with individuals: The author has conducted in-depth interviews with the person in charge of the Chengdu Shishi Middle School Choir and recorded the interview process in detail. Through oral inquiry, the author has acquired the following: the choir instructor's overall view of the choirs, the specific process and methods of choir rehearsal, the

considerations of choir in song selection and singing process, and specific difficulties and coping strategies encountered during the rehearsal process.

### 3.2 Analysis of Questionnaire Results

#### 3.2.1 The Level of Importance Attached by Chengdu Middle Schools to Choirs

Overall, schools in Chengdu that have established choirs hold a positive attitude towards the formation and development of choirs. Research data shows that 27 schools have established choirs within 10 years, 8 schools between 10 and 20 years, and 2 schools have a choir history of over 20 years. Among them, 25 schools are equipped with dedicated choir rehearsal rooms and conduct one to two rehearsals per week. In addition, many schools also invite guidance teachers from other similar choirs to provide guidance or conduct inter school observation and exchange, which is particularly common (see "Figure 1"). These data to a certain extent reflect the high importance that Chengdu middle schools attach to the development of choirs.

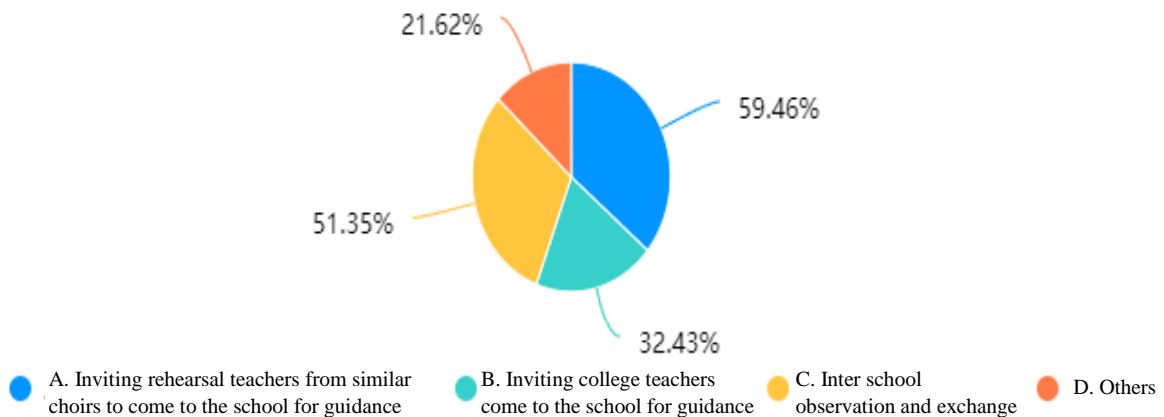


Figure 1 Ways for schools to improve choral performance.

#### 3.2.2 Basic Information of Choir Instructors

The leaders of the choir and the teachers participating in the choir rehearsal mainly come from the school's music teacher team. The professional competence of choir instructors is mainly evaluated through the following five aspects: highest education level, major studied in university, teaching experience, previous choir guidance experience, and whether specialized teaching and rehearsal plans have been developed for the choir

(see "Table 1"). These indicators indicate that these teachers possess strong comprehensive abilities.

Table 1. Professional competence of chorus instructors

Project	Highest education level (Undergraduate)	Major studied in university (Music Education)	Teaching experience (Over 10 years)	Experienced in choir guidance	There are specialized teaching and rehearsal plans
Proportion	94.59%	91.89%	91.9%	89.19%	83.78%

The survey also showed that only 35.14% of choir vocal teaching is carried out by dedicated vocal teachers (see “Figure 2”). This result indicates that there is a high demand for professional teachers in choirs. At the same time, the workload of the school choir instructors is also

enormous. They not only have to undertake teaching tasks, but also need to be responsible for the rehearsal and management of the club. Some teachers even have to deal with other administrative work.



Figure 2 Vocal teaching leaders in the choir.

### 3.2.3 Formation of Choirs

The formation of a choir is mainly counted from three aspects: "number of recruits, recruitment requirements, and team structure" (as shown in “Table 2”). It can be seen that the size of the choir in Chengdu's middle schools generally ranges from 30 to 60 members; The criteria for recruiting

members include 91.89% having good pitch accuracy and a passion for choir singing, followed by good timbre and musical sense; 45.95% of choirs have a tiered structure. From the statistical results, it can be seen that the formation of middle school choirs in Chengdu is relatively good, and teachers have a correct understanding of choirs.

Table 2. Formation of choirs

Project	Number of recruits (30-60 people)	Recruitment requirements (good pronunciation, passion)	Hierarchical setting
Proportion	62.16%	91.89%	45.95%

### 3.2.4 Implementation of Choirs

A survey shows that 51.35% of schools rehearse once a week, indicating that at least half of the schools do not guarantee sufficient rehearsal time

(see “Figure 3”). In summary, it was found that despite the emphasis on choir development in schools, at least half of the schools still cannot guarantee sufficient practice time for rehearsals, reflecting a clear supply-demand imbalance.

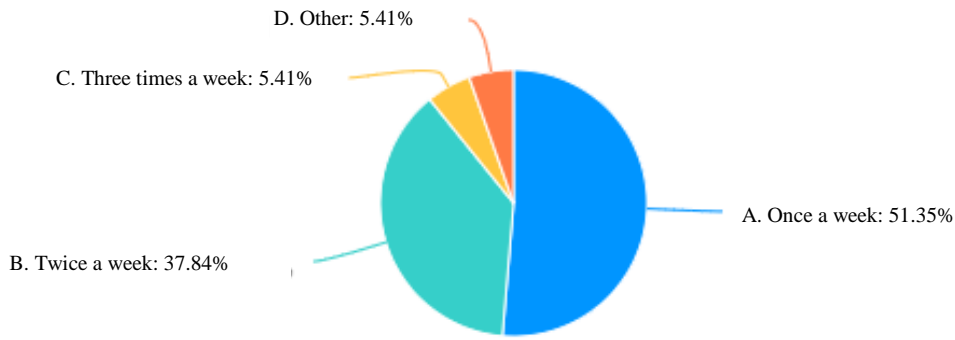


Figure 3 Choir rehearsal cycle.

### 3.2.5 Achievements of Choirs

The survey shows that, 10.81% of choirs have participated in national level competitions or above (see “Figure 4”), indicating significant achievements of Chengdu middle school choirs in

this field. Meanwhile, over 90% of teachers believe that participating in the choirs can enhance the musical literacy of its members and increase collective honor (see “Figure 5”). It can be seen that the impact brought by the choirs is positive.

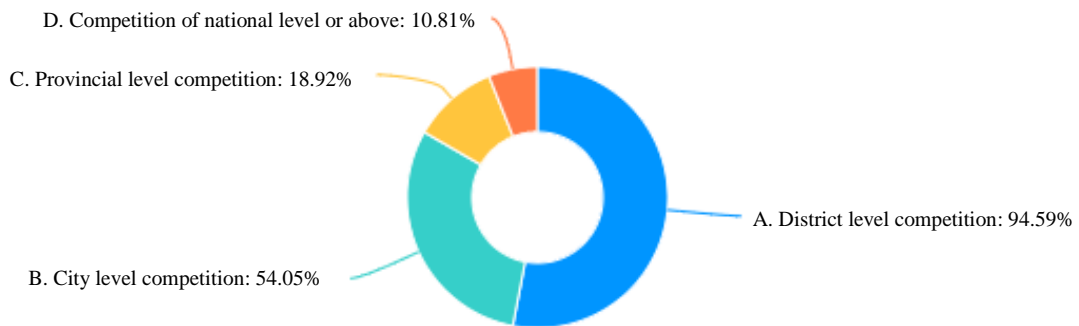


Figure 4 The competition levels that the choir has participated in.

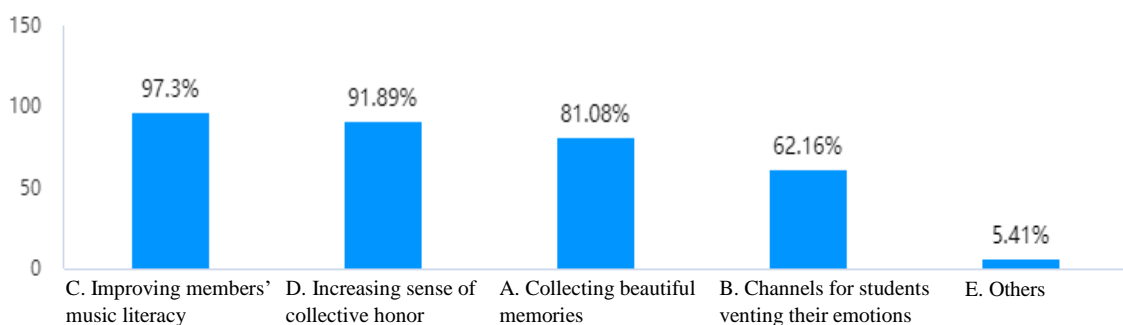


Figure 5 The significance of the choirs.

### 3.2.6 Difficulties Encountered During Choir Rehearsals

The survey shows that the biggest difficulty teachers encounter during rehearsals is the lack of guaranteed rehearsal time, followed by heavy

teaching tasks and the dispersion of teaching energy by other things, and then the lack of attention from school leaders and insufficient professional abilities. Meanwhile, in a survey on the future expectations of the choir, it is found that 89.19% hoped the choir could have more learning opportunities, and

78.38% hoped to increase rehearsal time. This indicates that teachers have a very positive attitude towards the choir and have high requirements for their own professional abilities. However, in the specific rehearsal process, on the one hand, the rehearsal time of the choir cannot be guaranteed,

and at the same time, teachers also face heavy teaching tasks and other work; On the other hand, school leaders also do not attach importance to it. These two main reasons ultimately make it difficult for choir leaders to put in concrete practice to promote the development of the choir.

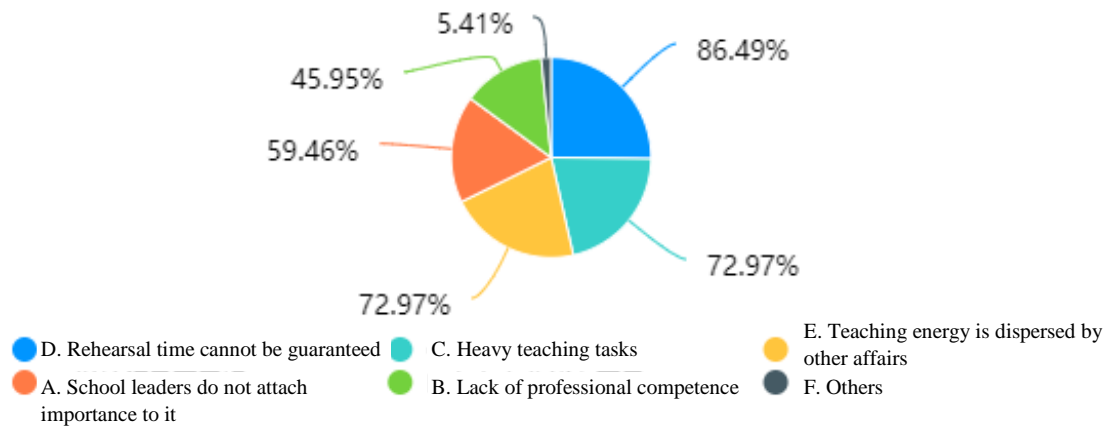


Figure 6 Difficulties encountered during choir rehearsals.

### 3.3 Research Limitations

The main method used in this study is a questionnaire survey, targeting choir instructors. Due to insufficient resources and manpower, field research and video recording of all choir training have not been conducted based on the facts of the questionnaire survey.

The sampling method is convenience sampling and commissioned sampling, resulting in a certain bias among the respondents of the collected questionnaire. (1) The schools where the respondents are located are mostly key schools or experimental schools. (2) The respondents are only choir instructors, not school leaders. Therefore, the importance that schools attach to choirs can only be inferred from other aspects, rather than the direct thoughts of current leaders.

### 3.4 Suggestions and Countermeasures

Summarizing the survey results, it is found that the formation of middle school choirs in Chengdu has become a relatively common phenomenon, but there are still some problems in the formation and rehearsal process. The following suggestions will be made for the problems of insufficient rehearsal time, heavy workload of guidance teachers, and insufficient professional teaching staff of choirs for reference.

#### 3.4.1 Cleverly Utilizing Winter and Summer Vacations to Ensure the Rehearsal Time of the Choirs

Daily choir training needs to be conducted in a three-day cycle, scientifically and reasonably occupying students' time.[2] However, middle school students face great academic pressure and find it difficult to participate in choir rehearsal activities according to this cycle. From the survey data, 51.35% of schools can only rehearse once a week, and 5.41% of schools choose other options (i.e. once a week cannot be guaranteed), indicating that at least half of schools do not have sufficient time for choir rehearsals. Especially for students in their third year of middle high and third year of high school, they have to give up choir training in order to cope with further education. The choirs also lose a large number of key members as a result. Recruiting members again requires a lot of time for adaptation, leaving teachers exhausted. Therefore, cleverly utilizing winter and summer vacations can ensure the rehearsal time of the choirs. For example, Chengdu No.8 Middle School combines short-term training during winter and summer vacations with daily rehearsals to ensure the orderly rehearsal of the choir. This approach not only ensures rehearsal time, but also reduces students' daily study pressure and enriches their holiday life.

### 3.4.2 *Innovating Rehearsal Modes to Improve the Efficiency of Club Rehearsals*

On October 15, 2020, the General Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued the "Opinions on Strengthening and Improving the Art Education Work in Schools in the New Era". The "Music Curriculum Standards for Ordinary High Schools (2017 Edition, 2020 Revision)" pointed out that schools can offer elective courses based on their own educational philosophy and students' interests and hobbies. Students can choose to study independently, and after completing 18 hours of study and passing the assessment, they can obtain one credit. [3] Based on this, the choir can be introduced into the school curriculum system, with choir activities scheduled during elective classes, and all grade students broken up and reorganized, using a running class format for classes. The time for students to participate in rehearsals does not take up additional rest time, and at the same time, they can relieve the heavy academic pressure and improve their music literacy through choir rehearsals. High school students can also earn credits as a result. Students are more willing and actively participate in rehearsal tasks.

Not only that, but a combination of online and offline methods can also be used for training. The combination of online and offline means that students can be sent the audio of choir works and corresponding voices in advance for self-study. For example, the choir of Shishi Middle School in Chengdu adopts this model. Teacher of art performance, the choir leader of Shishi Middle School in Chengdu, said, "We all send the audio of the choir works to students in advance for their own learning. When we rehearse together, everyone is basically familiar with the melody, and the efficiency will be higher. Using this model, the children in our choir learn a new piece in about two weeks." It can be seen that this mode can save the choir's rehearsal time and improve rehearsal efficiency.

### 3.4.3 *Relying on Student Cadres to Alleviate the Pressure of Choir Management*

In traditional choirs, daily affairs are mostly handled by the supervising teachers, such as requiring students to sing with a unified voice, express consistent emotions, and wear

predetermined costumes. [4] Not only that, 72.97% of teachers also have heavy teaching tasks, and 72.97% of teachers believe that their teaching energy is dispersed by other things. In such a situation, teachers can play the main role of students and encourage them to participate in team management and organization as much as possible. For example, teachers can select a choir leader, voice section leader, etc. in the choir, and assign them to be responsible for attendance during each rehearsal, coordinating the wearing of predetermined costumes, etc. At the same time, it is also possible to use excellence to guide weaknesses. Using excellence to guide weaknesses, that is, guiding experienced and professional old members in the choirs to help new members master basic sound training, content of works, etc. In this way, choir affairs of instructors are reduced. Meanwhile, for a long time, students have helped each other and gradually become the true masters of the team. Although they have done more, they are able to gain satisfaction in the process and also cultivate a spirit of unity and cooperation among students.

### 3.4.4 *Providing Professional Guidance to Ensure the Artistic Level of the Choirs*

As an instructor, the most important task is to provide professional guidance to the choirs. [4] Choir emphasizes the harmony and unity of sound, as well as accurate grasp of artistic emotions. In daily training, it is necessary to conduct basic sound training, composition training, etc. However, all of these require teachers with strong vocal professional abilities to complete. The data shows that only 35.14% of choir vocal teaching is undertaken by vocal professional teachers. For example, the choir of Shishi Middle School in Chengdu has a very strong teaching staff, including music teachers from the school and external guidance teachers. The external teaching team includes Mao Xiaolu from the Music Research Institute of Sichuan Academy of Arts as the vocal instructor for female choir members, Yang Xiaoxiao, a master's student in the Piano Department of Sichuan Conservatory of Music as the piano art instructor, Li Xilin, Vice Chairman of the China Choral Association, and He Fan, Director of the China Choral Association, as artistic advisors. These teachers not only provide professional guidance to the choir before the competition, but also frequently participate in the choir's daily rehearsals. Therefore, other schools can follow this model or hire students from major music schools or primary and secondary school teachers to guide the

choir through substitute teaching, ensuring the artistic level of the choir.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Since the strong promotion of aesthetic education in the country, Chinese school education has increasingly emphasized the influence of campus culture on students' values and moral sentiments. School choirs not only creates excellent campus culture and aesthetic education for students, but also cultivates a new generation of young people with team spirit, sense of responsibility, and an upright outlook on life. Throughout the history of choir development, a good choir culture cannot be achieved overnight. Therefore, in order to promote the healthy development of the choir, it is necessary to be good at absorbing and drawing on the excellent qualities of other excellent choirs, and also be good at summarizing experiences in rehearsals over the years, so as to continuously advance the development level of Chengdu middle school choirs.

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