

The Positive Impacts of Chorus on Junior High School Emotion Regulation and Mental Health

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Abstract: The junior high school stage is a vital transition for adolescents' physical-mental development and psychological formation. Puberty causes sharp emotional swings in teenagers, making them vulnerable to anxiety, loneliness and interpersonal-related psychological problems. Traditional mental-health education with single teaching modes yields unsatisfactory outcomes; hence, effective psychological intervention methods are urgently required. This paper adopts literature review, classroom observation and case-study analysis, taking campus group chorus as the research object to explore its influences on junior high-school students' emotion regulation and mental health conditions. Data show that chorus mitigates junior high students' negative emotions, enhances emotional competence, lessens adolescent loneliness and anxiety, and facilitates peer interaction. It functions via emotional catharsis, establishment of social support and belonging, cognitive reappraisal, as well as positive experience generation. Chorus combines aesthetic education with psychological cultivation, acting as an implicit mental-education carrier. Incorporating chorus into routine campus aesthetic and psychological education systems can greatly promote adolescents' physical and mental health and cultivate healthy personalities.

Keywords: Chorus; Junior high school students; Mental health; Music education

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1. Introduction

Schools at primary and secondary levels now receive extensive public and educational focus on student mental wellness, with psychological literacy training gaining greater priority. Seventeen national departments headed by the Ministry of Education issued a 2023–2025 initiative to boost teen mental health nationwide, requiring mental wellness guidance to integrate seamlessly with daily instruction and moral education. Junior high school students suffer heavy academic loads while going through puberty, which renders them emotionally sensitive. As a result, teenagers in this phase commonly struggle with unstable moods, social anxiety and blurred self-identity^[1]. Music carries human emotions. Chorus, as a collective aesthetic

practice, is widely available in junior high schools—it is, in fact, a regular part of campus life. Yet despite its prevalence, there has been little research into how it affects students' emotional well-being and mental health. That is exactly where this study begins.

2. Singing in chorus is a collective deep breath

Cyclic breathing is a professional choral technique. When a phrase is unusually long—requiring notes to be held for extended durations, sometimes even connecting into the next phrase—no single singer has enough breath to sustain it all the way through. The solution requires each member of the section to take a quiet breath at a different moment and re-enter the line, so that the overall melody never breaks. This is what teamwork looks like in a choir. Chorus is a collective aesthetic activity. Adolescence is a time when students easily feel lonely—and at school, they can feel small, too, which chips away at the fragile self-worth many sensitive teenagers carry. A choir might look like just another group, where one person's absence seems like no big deal. But the sound of a choir is actually the sum of every single voice. Through rehearsals, students gradually develop a sense of group identity, learning that each voice part depends on the others. A choir, ideally, is an inclusive artistic community that still honors each person's individuality ^[2].

Early teenage secondary students grow emotionally sensitive amid puberty. They long for peer acknowledgment, value friendships and care deeply about others' impressions, while constantly exploring personal self-worth. Fear of being isolated or overlooked makes them highly sensitive to outside comments. Choir, as a group art activity, relies on every student's unique voice and equal importance of all vocal parts, perfectly matching their psychological needs. Youngsters at this age crave recognition and a clear sense of self-value, which choir rehearsals and stage performances fully provide. Furthermore, group singing can stir, reshape and transform people's inner emotional states.

3. Analysis of junior high school students' psychological status and compatibility with chorus

Junior high school represents a pivotal turning point in adolescents' physical and mental development, as well as a peak period for concentrated psychological conflicts and emotional problems. Hormonal shifts during puberty and uneven neural development render students' emotional perception extremely acute, yet their self-regulatory capacities fail to mature synchronously, resulting in an unbalanced psychological state marked by "high sensitivity and low self-control".

Students in this stage experience drastic, unstable mood swings. Minor incidents including academic pressure, interpersonal friction and others' evaluations may trigger persistent anxiety, irritability and low mood. Restricted by immature mental development, junior high school students lack diverse, scientific strategies for emotion regulation. Most cope with negative emotions merely through suppression or impulsive outbursts. Without effective long-term emotional release channels, psychological stress accumulates continuously, leading to chronic internal mental friction ^[3].

Upon entering junior high school, peer relationships replace parent-child and teacher-student bonds as students' primary source of psychological support. However, pubertal peer relationships are highly unstable, accompanied by widespread group division, interpersonal competition, misunderstandings, conflicts and social exclusion. On one hand, students are eager to integrate into groups and gain peer approval; on the

other hand, they are overly concerned with others' opinions and fear denial and isolation. Trapped in long-term social approach-avoidance conflicts, they are prone to loneliness, sensitivity and inferiority. Once gaps or shortcomings emerge, they tend to make overgeneralized self-negative judgments, developing a fragile, unstable system of self-worth that further exacerbates psychological sensitivity and emotional volatility.

Choir activities are widely accessible in middle schools, and such musical teaching fits perfectly with mental health guidance. It addresses adolescents' multifaceted needs in emotional catharsis, personal growth, and the construction of self-worth. Unlike individual aesthetic forms such as instrumental solo and painting, chorus centers on group participation, vocal harmony coordination and immersive aesthetic experience.

4. The positive impacts of chorus on junior high school students' emotion regulation and mental health

4.1. Chorus's cathartic and regulatory effects on junior high school students' emotional states

The core pain point of emotional problems in adolescence is that students experience abundant and delicate inner feelings, yet they severely lack formal channels for emotional expression. When irritability, anxiety, or pent-up frustration drag on without release, they accumulate into a kind of internal static that wears students down and gets in the way of both their studies and their peace of mind. Chorus offers something different—a concrete, low-stakes way for students to let that pressure out.

Musical melody has clear emotional associations. An ascending line often feels bright and hopeful; a descending phrase brings resolution and calm. The high register sounds luminous and expansive, perfect for climactic or passionate moments; the middle range feels natural and intimate, almost conversational; the low register, with its heavier texture, conveys depth and emotional restraint. Consider the choral piece *Whisper*: its light, playful melody includes passages that mimic hushed speech, while the call-and-response between upper and lower voices draws singers closer to one another, strengthening their sense of ensemble. China also has a strong tradition of choral music; among the most widely sung is the patriotic piece *I Love You, China*. When junior high students perform it, the song awakens their capacity for empathy, gives them access to emotional strength, and nurtures a sense of national identity.

The first lesson chorus teaches students has little to do with singing technique—it is about learning to be gentle with one's own body and emotions. Choral repertoire is diverse, and each song carries its own emotional tone and artistic character. Yet within a fixed melody and set of lyrics, each person can find something of themselves. Different people, at different moments, can feel the same pulse of the music. Music also has a peculiar quality of delayed resonance: we may not fully understand its meaning at the moment we sing it, but at some later point in life, its significance suddenly becomes clear. One of my students once said to me: "What words cannot reach, literature can; what the soul cannot reach, music can." When emotions cannot be articulated, let them be felt in music—those melodies that touch the heart have the power to heal.

4.2. Chorus boosts students' psychological literacy and team collaboration skills

Adolescent psychological distress has many sources—and academic pressure is only part of the picture. Students also get stuck in chronic loneliness, struggle with social situations, and hold distorted views of themselves. These are the issues that bother them most. Chorus, however, is built on collaboration. That very structure can pull students out of their social isolation and change how they relate to others.

At the heart of choral training are listening, empathy and coordination. Students are required to

constantly focus on vocal balance, their peers' rhythmic timing and the overall harmonic texture while singing. Long-term group practice effectively mitigates the egocentric thinking prevalent among teenage students, guiding them to listen to others, embrace differences and take the initiative to cooperate. Through daily rehearsal coordination and joint efforts to deliver stage performances, students gradually build sincere, supportive and stable peer friendships. This greatly relieves the pervasive loneliness, alienation and social anxiety of adolescence, and helps students develop healthy, inclusive interpersonal communication patterns.

From the perspective of cognitive development, the artistic form of interdependent multi-part harmony subtly reshapes students' modes of thinking. Each vocal line stands independent yet serves as an indispensable component of the choir, with all parts accommodating one another. This team-oriented feature of chorus alleviates junior high students' self-negativity stemming from academic-only evaluation standards. During collaboration, students genuinely recognize their own worth and sense of identity, consistently gaining feelings of achievement and belonging, and progressively forming an objective, positive and stable self-concept.

In addition, the code of conduct for chorus and the structured rehearsal process — which entails disciplined routines, focused practice and repeated refinement — steadily cultivates students' concentration, self-control, comprehension and emotional empathy for musical works. It effectively eases the impetuous and impulsive personality traits typical of adolescents, and comprehensively strengthens students' psychological resilience and overall mental well-being.

5. Conclusion

Overall, adolescent junior high students suffer three key psychological conflicts in puberty: weak emotion regulation, severe social anxiety and unstable self-perception. Traditional school psychological interventions tend to be rigid and monotonous. As an indirect intervention, chorus participation helps students relieve and dredge negative emotions through artistic experience, optimize their emotional states and boost mental well-being.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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