

Exploring Spiritual Education in the Chinese Context: Concepts, Objectives and Methods

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to explore in depth the development of spiritual education in China, focusing on analyzing its concepts, objectives, and implementation methods. As an educational approach to cultivating inner emotional wisdom and moral awareness, spiritual education is gradually emerging in Chinese academics. As an educational model focusing on the individual's inner growth, emotional cognition, and meaning of life, it highlights the cultivation of inspirational wisdom, moral values, and social responsibility. It integrates traditional cultural values with modern educational requirements. It is essential to supplement formal subject education, promote all-round development, and foster a sense of social responsibility. The methods and strategies for conducting spiritual education cover various dimensions, including curriculum development, educational activities, teacher training, and student participation. These methods and techniques can help guide students to emotional expression, inner growth, emotional intelligence, and holistic development. Through a systematic review approach, this paper presents a comprehensive picture of spiritual education's status and significance in China. It provides valuable guidance for future educational practice and research to cultivate more emotionally intelligent and socially responsible students.

Keywords: Spiritual Education; Chinese Context; Concepts; Objectives; Methods

1. Introduction

In this section, the process of peeling back the key issues from the broader context will be guided, with a focus on clarifying the research objectives and highlighting the importance of this research to the field of education.

1.1 Background of the study

With the advancement of social change and modernization, China's education system is also evolving, showing a trend of diversification and comprehensive development. In this context, spiritual education, as an educational method focusing on students' inner development, emotional growth, and moral values, is gradually gaining widespread attention (Hu, 2013; Lin, 2015; Zhang, 2016). Spiritual education emphasizes the cultivation of an individual's inner qualities, the enhancement of emotional wisdom, the encouragement of exploring the meaning of life, as well as the promotion of harmony and communion between the individual and the social and natural environments (Li & Wang, 2018; Zho, 2011).

Although spiritual education has been widely discussed internationally, the concept and practice of spirituality have not received sufficient attention and in-depth exploration in the Chinese context, and research on spiritual education is still relatively limited. Therefore, one of the motivations of this study is to fill the knowledge gap in this research area and to explore in depth the value and significance of spiritual education in the Chinese cultural and social context, as well as how it can be integrated into the education system and implemented comprehensively and effectively in order to cultivate more well-rounded and intrinsically strong students.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In China's educational context, spiritual education is gradually attracting widespread attention as an educational approach to cultivating students' inner qualities, emotional wisdom, and moral values. However, the development of spiritual education is also facing some challenges in China. Firstly, the conceptual definition of spirituality is somewhat complex due to its multiplicity and needs to be clarified in the unique cultural context of China. Secondly, the objectives and values of spiritual education in the Chinese context need to be clarified. Finally, the diversity of methods and strategies for implementing spiritual education makes the effective integration of spiritual education into the school education system an issue that needs to be explored. Therefore, this study will explore the following three questions. First, how can we accurately define spiritual education, clarify its connotation and scope, and differentiate it from traditional education models? Second, what are the objectives and values of spiritual education? Third, in implementing spiritual education, how can different methods and strategies be used to integrate spiritual education into the education system effectively?

Through an in-depth discussion of these questions, this study aims to provide helpful guidance for developing spiritual education in China, promote its sustainable development in the Chinese education system, and contribute to cultivating more intrinsically valuable and well-rounded students.

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to explore and analyze in depth the development of spiritual education in China, focusing on its concepts, objectives, and implementation methods. Based on the research questions, the researcher determined the following research objectives.

RO1: To explore the concept and connotation of spiritual education in the Chinese cultural context.

RO2: To analyze the objectives and values of spiritual education.

RO3: To explore the implementation methods and strategies of spiritual education.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study has a positive impact on promoting spiritual education in China and the overall development of students. Also, it provides valuable guidance for academic research and social practice. Through an in-depth analysis of spiritual education's concepts, objectives, and methods, this study provides schools and educational institutions with guidance and reference when implementing spiritual education. From educational policy to curriculum design, the findings can help educators better understand how to incorporate spiritual elements to promote students' inner growth, emotional well-being, and moral values. At the same time, this study fills, to some extent, the gap in systematic research on spiritual education in the Chinese context, providing academics with in-depth insights into spiritual education. The findings can enrich the theoretical system in spiritual education and provide a reference framework for future research.

II Literature Review

In the literature review section, the study reviews and analyses existing research and perspectives to reveal the multi-layered nature and implications of spiritual education. By exploring the different definitions of spirituality among research scholars and the goals of spiritual education, a solid theoretical foundation is provided for the subsequent discussion.

2.1 Definition of spirituality

The conceptual definition of spirituality is the basis for exploring spiritual education. The term spirituality has an early origin, appearing in ancient China's and the West's languages, and both seem to extend and expand their lexical meanings. As early as the medieval period in the West, spirituality mainly arose in the field of religion, referring to God's influence on human society, a religious and spiritual existence; in modern times, with the establishment of other disciplines, the term spirituality has also been applied in many different fields. In China, the meaning of the word spirituality has also evolved and extended. According to the Chinese Dictionary, spirituality is mainly applied to animals, referring to their wisdom and intelligence after being domesticated by humans (What does spirituality mean Spirituality Explanation _ Chinese Dictionary _ Dictionary. com. (n.d.)). Later, its meaning was extended from animals to human beings. It has the meaning of smart and intelligent, which refers to the wisdom and intelligence of human beings and their ability to feel and understand things; in addition, it also has the meaning of spirit and essence, which means that human beings can feel and understand things. In addition, there are different meanings, such as spirit, essence, religious enlightenment, soul. There are diversified understandings of the meaning of spirituality at present, which affects the diversification of the definition of spirituality in the academic world. In Table 2.1, Chinese scholars' understanding of spirituality is described.

Table 2.1 Chinese scholars' Understanding of Spirituality

Authors	Definition and description of spirituality
Zhu (2008)	It is a kind of spiritual consciousness with independent knowledge and experience, which can activate life, guide self-reflection, and open spiritual transcendence. It is the potential of life and spiritual tendency embedded in life.
Zeng (2018)	It is a sense of life, self-awareness, and reflection rooted in human beings and can lead to self-growth and self-transcendence. It is a characteristic of intelligence and wisdom that human beings possess.
Hou et al. (2016)	It is a state or power of human beings that permeates not only their knowledge and skills but also their wisdom, abilities, and qualities.
Zhang et al. (2018)	It is a spirit and ability possessed by human beings that can produce mysterious perceptions of things, communicate harmoniously with nature, and form a set of unconventional systems allowed by order.
Qi (2017)	It is both sacred and transcendent.
Wang (2011)	It is a set of deep beliefs possessed by individual beings
Chen (2018)	spirituality is an indispensable element in an individual's life, which can be presented through love, compassion, empathy, innovation, reverence, faith, and virtue, among others.

The table shows that the meaning of spirituality is exceptionally abstract and seems highly esoteric, although it also has its concrete manifestations. Spirituality is the highest level at which humans recognize or create things. It can know things through three levels - sensual, rational, and spiritual - and is considered the highest level meant to enlighten and guide people (Chen, 2018). There are eight levels of human cognition - sensual, rational, enlightenment, knowledge, poetic, philosophical, divine, and spiritual - and spirituality is at the bottom of these, the highest levels (Zeng, 2018). Hou et al. (2016), on the other hand, from the perspective of creativity, argued that spirituality is the key to people's ability to create, which is higher than knowledge, skills, and wisdom, and at the same time capable of creating new knowledge, skills, and understanding.

From the different interpretations of the meaning of spirituality in the academic world, we can at least draw the following common understanding. First, spirituality is a form of expression that encompasses and is above intelligence, wisdom, and enlightenment. Second, spirituality is an ideal belief or state of mind that expresses people's essence. Third, spirituality is the ability or potential to recognize the world and to transform and innovate it. Fourth, it is believed that spirituality is also a resource that exists in people's daily lives and is a spiritual resource that can be tapped, cultivated, and enhanced. Synthesizing these consensuses, we can understand spirituality as a state of mind that is intrinsic to human beings and superior to intelligence, wisdom, and enlightenment. It is a supernatural power and spiritual resource that represents the inner potential of human beings and the ideal beliefs they pursue.

2.2 Concepts and Connotations of Spiritual Education

Clarifying the concept of spiritual education is the basis for conducting research related to spiritual education. The term and conceptualization of spiritual education have only increased in recent years and have been interpreted differently depending on the understanding of

spirituality. Table 2.2 demonstrates Chinese scholars' understanding and interpretation of the concept of spiritual education.

Table 2.2 Chinese Scholars' Interpretations of Spiritual Education

Authors	Definition and description of spiritual education
Hou et al. (2016; 2017; 2018)	It is an educational goal at the highest level, capable of and situated above knowledge, skill innovation, and wisdom production (Hou & Zhang, 2016), leading to spiritual adulthood (Hou, 2018), encompassing character, humanistic, and life education, as well as creativity, imagination, and resilience education (Hou, 2017)
Wang et al. (2011)	Education promotes spiritual awakening and spiritual adulthood, including life and death education, classical study, disposition cultivation, and frustration training.
Yang et al. (2016)	It is positioned as an education that focuses on the spiritual pursuit of human beings, expands spiritual potential and emotional experience, raises spiritual awareness, and ultimately forms a sound moral and spiritual personality.
Wang (2015)	It takes the development of human spirituality as its base, pursues spiritual enhancement, carries out educational practices following the logic of spiritual growth, and cultivates an authentic scholarly sample.
Li et al. (2018)	It is a kind of education oriented to people's inner world, and it is an education that improves the quality of life and sound personality by focusing on people's emotional and spiritual needs.
Zhao (2019)	It is not only an education to cultivate people to acquire knowledge, improve skills, and develop wisdom but also to cultivate people to express their talent.
Zhang et al. (2020)	Spiritual sport is regarded as a sport that takes the development of spirituality in the spiritual dimension of human beings as a value orientation. Culturing spirituality through physical exercise is a new concept in sports development.
Li et al. (2020)	Spiritual sports stimulate the development of body and mind, synthesize emotional, intellectual, kinesthetic, and fitness quotient, and cultivate perfect social citizens, which is the essential attitude towards life.

As can be seen from the above, the meaning of spiritual education is comprehensive and rich in connotations, being both an educational philosophy and an educational model, implying the general process and method of education, reflecting the apparent objectives and objectives of education, and also embodying the profound realm and ideal of education. However, no matter from what angle we understand it, we must hold fast to its core purpose: aiming for something above knowledge, skills and wisdom; cultivating disposition; training frustration; forming sound moral personality; expressing talent; being value-oriented and cultivate social citizens. Therefore, spiritual education is, in short, education to develop something more than knowledge and skills, which cultivate values, talents, and disposition to become moral and value-oriented persons within society. This kind of education encompasses general knowledge education, skills education, and wisdom education and is higher than these levels of education. It is education aimed at exploring the world of the human mind, tapping into the spiritual potential of human beings, cultivating their spiritual consciousness, improving their spiritual character, and ultimately enhancing the quality of

their lives. Understanding the basic concepts of spiritual education is the foundation and prerequisite for researching issues related to spiritual education.

2.3 Objectives of Spiritual Education

Scholars in China have analyzed spiritual education's objectives throughout the educational process, covering the developmental needs of individuals in many aspects and promoting the cultivation of essential qualities such as creativity, emotional intelligence, and moral literacy. Table 2.3 presents scholars' elaboration of the objectives and values of spiritual education.

Table 2.3 Chinese Scholars' Interpretation of the Objectives and Values of Spiritual Education

Authors	Interpretation of the Objectives and Values of Spiritual Education
Hou & Zhang (2018)	It promotes spiritual growth and is a crucial way to promote the all-round development of human beings.
Yang & Hao (2016)	It embodies respect for nature, follows nature, emphasizes experience, focuses on meaning, and can correct the current prevalent education model of intellectualism. Its mission lies in believing in, discovering, developing, and perfecting human spirituality.
Li (2005)	Focusing on human nature, enlightening spirituality, perfecting personality, fostering creative talents, enabling people to enjoy a happy life, upgrading the realm of life, and constructing an intelligent life so that people's intelligent endowments can be nurtured
Zhu (2008)	The ontological purpose lies in enhancing people's spirituality.
Qi (2017)	It cultivates individual spirituality with sanctity and transcendence, which helps innovation and creativity, taking responsibility, shaping noble characteristics, and realizing social harmony.
Chen (2018)	It is the spiritualization of education, based on knowledge and skill enhancement, discovering human nature and personality concerning the mind, and influencing education's concept, mode, and direction.
Zhou (2011)	As a type of education, spiritual education is the basis for acquiring virtues and divine qualities, encompasses material and humanistic education, and embodies multidimensional educational goals.
Li (2006)	It is a new view of education that promotes social harmony, realizes education-driven development, and moves toward prosperity.
Gao (2003)	Early childhood spiritual education meets spiritual needs, understands children's prerequisites, guides accurate perception, promotes harmonious development of individuals and society, and embodies care and importance.
Wang (2015)	Spiritual education opens a life of wisdom, benefits innovation and creativity, enhances vitality, molds individuals, and embodies concern for happiness.
Xiang (2019)	Spiritual education satisfies children's spiritual development, promotes individual and social harmony, and embodies the pursuit of comprehensive development and a harmonious society.
Zhang & Li (2020)	Spiritual sports are humanistic sports that promote sports development by appealing to spirituality, cultivating creative talents, enhancing overall quality, and influencing the direction of education and sports. Enough to strengthen the quality of the university, enrich the campus

	culture of the university, and meet the development needs of university education
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Summarizing the academic discussions on the status and role of spiritual education, we can see that spiritual education, as a form of advanced education aimed at promoting human spiritual development, not only endows individuals with the ability to understand, transform, and innovate the world, but also promotes personal growth and spiritual needs. This form of education also propels the development of related disciplines and schools, even contributing to the harmony and prosperity of society. Due to the significance and prominence of spiritual education in the overall educational activities, an increasing number of people have dedicated serious research to it.

2.4 Approaches to Spiritual Education

Spiritual education is an educational philosophy of higher pursuit. After this educational philosophy was put forward, academics have explored more about the ways and methods of its implementation, aiming to utilize the positive objectives of this educational philosophy to a greater extent. Table 2.4 demonstrates the techniques and strategies proposed by Chinese scholars to carry out spiritual education.

Table 2.4 Methods and Strategies of Spiritual Education and Explanations by Chinese Scholars

Authors	Methods and Strategies of Spiritual Education and Explanations
Hou et al. (2016; 2017)	building a spiritual university community, developing spiritual education programs, conducting spiritual education research and building a spirit-filled faculty, building a cultural management team and spiritual administrators, and creating an elegant campus environment. It is emphasized that spiritual education is not divinized or religious, nor is it to be separated from other education.
Yang & Hao (2016)	constructing a spiritual curriculum system, creating a spiritual teaching model, cultivating a spiritual teacher team, and shaping a spiritual leadership style.
Wang & He (2011)	Through life education, classical learning, disposition cultivation, and frustration training, they focus on several aspects of knowledge, emotion, intention, and body and mind to reach spirituality.
Qi (2017)	Drawing on humanistic education and religious evangelism, emphasizing traditional Chinese cultural resources.
Li et al. (2018)	Construct a spiritually rich teacher team, provide environmental support and environmental drive, emphasize training teachers, and strengthen organizational leadership.
Zeng et al. (2018; 2019)	Cultivate spiritual wisdom in university students and cultivate spiritual understanding through transmutation, life spirituality, and humanistic education. Create a university campus culture with spirituality.
Long et al. (2017)	Combining the static campus environment and dynamic campus activities to cultivate students' spiritual awareness.
Zhang (2018)	Bringing students to nature to realize spirituality and pursue beautiful rural education.
He (2015)	Constructing a "field curriculum" that is in tune with life and nature to open up children's full perception of the truth of life.
Xu (2012)	Utilizing the countryside's beauty and the surrounding environment's resources to cultivate students' spiritual character.

Chen (2016)	Maintaining the harmonious coexistence of human body and mind with nature and the harmonious coexistence of opposites.
Wang (2016)	Stimulate children's inspiration and enlightenment through sports, art, literature, practical activities, and experiencing nature, constructing the relationship between teachers and students, curriculum, and teaching full of energy and vitality.
Zhou (2011)	Setting up a spiritual classroom to improve students' spiritual qualities and promote their spiritual health with virtues.
Xiang (2019)	Promote the transformation of educational concepts, improve educational objectives, emphasize natural and spiritual sciences, create an environment, and explore local cultural resources.
Liu et al. (2013)	Reducing children's Tang poetry education to comprehensive art education to cultivate children's spirituality.
Hao (2010)	Promoting children's spiritual development through emotional education.
Xia (2012)	Constructing an active classroom rich in interest and life, administering living education, and promoting students' spiritual development.

It can be seen from the existing research on spiritual education methods in the academic world that there are various paths, forms, and methodologies of spiritual education and that in engaging in the process of spiritual education, it is necessary to combine general education and teaching methods but also to base on the actuality of spiritual education itself. Exploring these implementation paths and ways provides methodological guidance for spiritual education and strongly promotes the current development of spiritual education.

III Research Methodology

This study will adopt a literature review methodology to delve into the conceptual connotations, objectives and values, and methodological strategies of spiritual education in China. The literature review method is a systematic approach that aims to integrate, analyze, and interpret qualitative data from existing literature to reveal emerging patterns, trends, and associations. In this study, we will first collect academic literature, research reports, and policy documents related to spiritual education in China to build a comprehensive literature base. We will then carefully read and analyze this literature to identify the information it covers about spiritual education's concepts, objectives, and methods.

When researching the concepts, objectives, and methods of spiritual education in the Chinese context, the literature collection strategy and criteria will play a key role in ensuring that valuable and reliable literature resources are collected. Conduct systematic searches using academic databases (e.g., Google Scholar, Baidu Scholar, CNKI) to obtain literature on spiritual education in China. Use relevant keywords such as spirituality, spiritual education, inner development, and holistic education to find literature related to the research topic. Trace the existing literature citations to find more spiritual education resources.

Prioritize literature published in academic journals to ensure that it has a high level of academic credibility and reliability. Select literature published by scholars and research organizations from well-known fields of education, psychology, and philosophy to ensure that it has a high level of authority. Collect different types of literature, including theoretical, empirical, and case studies, to obtain diverse perspectives and viewpoints.

The above literature collection strategies and criteria can ensure that literature resources covering a wide range of topics and high quality are collected to provide a solid theoretical foundation and empirical support for the study.

This study analyzed the collected literature to identify key themes, concepts, and perspectives on spiritual education. Different aspects of conceptual connotations, objectives, and implementation methods can be revealed by coding and categorizing keywords, phrases, and discourses in the literature. The ideas and conclusions from different literature are also compared to find commonalities and differences. Comparisons provide insights into how spiritual education is presented and understood in various literatures.

IV Research Findings

This study provides insights into spiritual education through a review and in-depth analysis of the literature. In the next sections, these findings are presented and explained to better understand the implementation of spiritual education in the Chinese context.

4.1 Concept and Connotation of Spiritual Education

Spiritual education is a model of education that encompasses inner growth, emotional awareness, and meaning in life (Wang, 2016). From the literature review, it can be concluded that spiritual education is not just about transmitting knowledge but is more about fostering understanding and growth in the inner world of students. Scholars may have slightly different definitions of spiritual education, but a common feature is that spiritual education emphasizes holistic development, including spiritual, emotional, moral, and values (Zhu, 2012; Hou, 2017; Chen, 2019).

One of the core features of spiritual education is that it views the individual's inner development as an essential part of the educational process (Li, et al, 2017). It emphasizes the development of self-awareness, emotional intelligence, emotional regulation, and the guidance of the individual's inner growth. In spiritual education, students are empowered with knowledge and skills and encouraged to explore their beliefs, emotions, and values to develop a more holistic personality.

In the Chinese educational context, the connotation of spiritual education may be influenced by cultural, religious, and social factors (Shen, 2013). Its position in the Chinese education system goes beyond knowledge transfer and emphasizes the development of students' emotional awareness, moral values, and social responsibility. In the literature, spiritual education fits in with the traditional Chinese culture that emphasizes inner cultivation and meaning in life and helps to develop a more well-rounded individual (Li, 2005).

Thus, the findings suggest that spiritual education reflects an educational philosophy focusing on inner growth, emotional cognition, and moral values in the Chinese context. This finding is essential for understanding the nature of spiritual education and provides helpful guidance for future educational practice and research.

4.2 Objectives and Values of Spiritual Education

Spiritual education has multiple objectives and values in Chinese educational practice, which go beyond traditional disciplinary education and emphasize the individual's inner growth, emotional wisdom, and meaning in life.

First, spiritual education is a crucial way to promote students' inner growth (Hou, 2017; Chen, 2019). It emphasizes the development of students' self-awareness, emotional expression, and self-management skills, helping them better understand their experiences and enhance their

emotional wisdom (Hao, 2010; Yan, 2012). It helps to build a positive self-image and improve self-esteem and self-confidence.

Secondly, spiritual education emphasizes the development of students' morals and values (Chen & Wang, 2012; Yang & Hao, 2016). By guiding students to explore the meaning of life, values, and ethical norms, spiritual education helps to develop students' moral judgment and values, enabling them to make sound moral choices in their daily lives.

In addition, spiritual education emphasizes the development of students' sense of social responsibility (Li, 2012; Zeng & Cui, 2017) and interpersonal relationships (Chen & Long, 2023). By paying attention to the needs of others, sharing, and helping each other, students can develop positive social emotions and become socially helpful citizens.

In addition, spiritual education helps students develop peace and tranquility of mind (Zhou, 2018; Wang, 2021). In modern society, students face various pressures and challenges. Spiritual education helps students develop emotional management and mental health through emotional regulation and meditation, promoting inner balance and tranquility.

In its practical application, spiritual education has several objectives and values in China, including promoting inner growth, fostering moral values, reinforcing a sense of social responsibility, and enhancing peace of mind. These objectives contribute to developing more well-rounded, emotionally intelligent, and socially responsible individuals and provide valuable insights for future educational practices.

4.3 Methods and Strategies of Spiritual Education

The methods and strategies for implementing spiritual education are somewhat unique in the Chinese educational environment, which emphasizes individual inner growth and emotional cognition while combining the characteristics of traditional culture and modern education.

First, curriculum is one of the most critical methods of spiritual education. Spiritual education is integrated into the education curriculum, and students are guided to think about the meaning of life, emotional experience, and values through reading, discussion, and experience. It helps students develop deep self-knowledge and emotional wisdom.

Second, educational activities play a crucial role in spiritual education. Through activities such as emotional expression, mental training, and meditation, students can better explore their inner world and develop the ability for emotional regulation and peace of mind. These activities not only enrich the educational process but also help improve students' emotional quality.

In addition, teacher training is an integral part of implementing spiritual education. Educators must have the knowledge and skills to guide students in their spiritual growth effectively. Training can include understanding spiritual formation, emotional education skills, and effective educational strategies.

In addition, a focus on student participation and experience characterizes spiritual education. By allowing students to participate and experience firsthand, spiritual education can better guide students to perceive the inner world and cultivate inner peace and balance.

In conclusion, the practical application of spiritual education methods and strategies in China emphasizes various aspects such as curriculum, educational activities, teacher training, and student participation. These methods and techniques help cultivate students' emotional intelligence, moral values, and sense of social responsibility in the educational environment, thereby promoting the individual's holistic development.

V Conclusion

Throughout the entire exploration of this study, multiple aspects of spiritual education have been delved into, from concepts and purposes to specific implementation methods, as well as the presentation of findings. Now, a summary will be provided, highlighting the contributions and limitations of this study, along with suggestions for future research to facilitate a deeper understanding and exploration of the field of spiritual education

5.1 Summary

We have systematically reviewed the concepts, objectives, and methods of spiritual education in China. Through the literature review and research findings, we have drawn some important conclusions, which are summarized below:

First, we explored the concept of spiritual education. We found that spiritual education is an educational model that focuses on an individual's inner growth, emotional cognition, and the meaning of life. It emphasizes holistic development, including emotional intelligence, moral values, and social responsibility. In Chinese education, spiritual education fits with the importance of traditional culture, which emphasizes the cultivation of holistically developed individuals.

Second, we explored the objectives of spiritual education and found that it has multifaceted value in Chinese educational practice. Spiritual education not only complements traditional academic education but also emphasizes cultivating individual emotional intelligence, moral values, and social responsibility. These features contribute to developing well-rounded students with emotional intelligence and a sense of social responsibility.

Finally, we explored the methods and strategies of spiritual education. We found that curriculum, educational activities, teacher training, and student participation are all important methods and strategies in Chinese educational practice. These methods and systems help guide students to emotional expression, inner growth, and social engagement and promote emotional intelligence and holistic development.

In summary, this paper provides an in-depth discussion of the concepts, objectives, and methods of spiritual education in China through a systematic review approach. We offer an in-depth analysis of the status and significance of spiritual education in China in terms of the definition of the concept, the purpose, and the application of the method. These findings provide valuable references for future educational practice and research, and we hope to contribute to cultivating more well-rounded, emotionally intelligent, and socially responsible students.

5.2 Contribution of the Study

The main contribution of this study is to provide an in-depth insight into spiritual education for Chinese educators and policy makers. Firstly, by analysing the Chinese cultural and social context in detail, this study helps to identify the needs and challenges of Chinese students and educators in spiritual education. Second, this study will provide a series of methods and strategies to help educational institutions better integrate spiritual education elements into teaching and curriculum design to meet the needs of students' holistic development. Most importantly, the results of this study will provide valuable information for educational policy makers, which will help to formulate educational policies that are more comprehensive and responsive to the needs of Chinese society, thus promoting the continuous development and improvement of China's educational system.

5.3 Limitations

Any research may have specific limitations affecting the study's scope, reliability, and applicability. The following three limitations may exist when exploring the concepts, objectives, and methods of spiritual education in China. First, cultural context may impact the study results when studying the concepts, objectives, and practices regarding spiritual education. The limitation of the study may be that it fails to adequately consider cultural factors in shaping spiritual education. Second, limited literature resources in a given period may limit understanding of the historical development and overall perception of spiritual education in China. Different types and qualities of literature may affect the depth and breadth of the study. Finally, this study may have used methods such as literature review without involving fieldwork or in-depth interviews, which may limit a comprehensive understanding of the actual situation of spiritual education.

5.4 Future Research Suggestions

Future research can be conducted in the following directions based on exploring the concepts, objectives, and methods of spiritual education in the Chinese context. First, more empirical studies are conducted to understand better the practical application effects of spiritual education in China. Questionnaire surveys, field observations, case studies, and other methods can be used to explore the impact of spiritual education on students' inner development, emotional intelligence, and sense of social responsibility. Second, spiritual education in China is compared with practices in other countries or cultural contexts to explore the impact of different cultures on the concepts and methods of spiritual education. It helps to understand the commonalities and differences of spiritual education in cross-cultural contexts. Finally, the application of spiritual education in educational policy-making and practical curriculum design in China is further examined. It explores how spiritual education can be integrated with education reform and whole-person development goals to guide actual educational practice.

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