

A Causal Model of Quality Teaching of Art Teachers in Shangrao, Jiangxi Province

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ABSTRACT

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This study examines the causal relationships among strategy, leadership, student orientation, teaching atmosphere, participation management, parental participation, research ability, and quality teaching of art teachers in Shangrao, Jiangxi Province. A mixed-methods approach was used, collecting quantitative data from 400 university students and qualitative insights from 20 key informants. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed for data analysis. Results confirm that leadership, teaching atmosphere, and strategy significantly impact quality teaching, with teaching atmosphere having the strongest direct effect (0.512). Strategy and participation management influence teaching quality indirectly through leadership and parental participation. The model demonstrated a good fit with empirical data ($\chi^2/df = 1.84$, GFI = 0.970, RMSEA = 0.045). Collectively, these factors explained 72.4% of the variance in teaching quality. Findings highlight the importance of leadership development, a positive teaching atmosphere, and strategic planning in improving art education. Policymakers should strengthen leadership practices, foster collaborative environments, and integrate strategic planning into art education curricula to enhance teaching outcomes.

Keywords Strategy, Leadership, Student Orientation, Teaching Atmosphere, Participation Management, Parental Participation, Research Ability, Quality Teaching, Art Education

1. Introduction

Art education is increasingly recognized as essential for cultivating students' aesthetic appreciation, creativity, and cognitive development. However, in China, particularly in regional cities like Shangrao, the quality of art education varies widely due to factors such as inadequate teacher training, limited resources, and inconsistent management. While previous research has explored the direct impacts of teaching practices, few studies have provided a comprehensive model that incorporates multiple

dimensions, such as leadership, strategy, student engagement, and the socio-cultural context, into an integrated framework for understanding teaching quality. This research attempts to fill this gap by proposing a causal model that includes these variables and testing it using data from Shangrao.

1.1 Research Background

Art education has traditionally been viewed as a creative and subjective discipline, but with the increasing global emphasis on educational outcomes, the quality of art teaching has gained more focus in recent years. As such, understanding the factors that contribute to high-quality art teaching is essential for improving the effectiveness of art education programs, particularly in less developed areas. Shangrao, located in Jiangxi Province, serves as a representative example of a regional educational system in China. The region faces challenges related to teacher preparation, institutional support, and resource allocation, all of which impact the quality of art education.

1.2 Research Question

This study aims to explore how to optimize art education management in Shangrao, Jiangxi Province to improve the quality teaching of art teachers. By identifying key challenges in Shangrao, Jiangxi Province's art education system, particularly low teaching quality, and utilizing SPSS quantitative analysis, this study constructs a causal model to examine the relationships among strategy, leadership, student orientation, participation management, teaching atmosphere, parental participation, and research ability, and their impact on the quality teaching of art teachers. To achieve this, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the causal factors that affect to Quality Teaching of Art Teachers in ShangRao, Jiangxi Province?
2. What are the suggestions from the variables that affect to Quality Teaching of Art Teachers in ShangRao, Jiangxi Province?

By addressing these research questions, this study aims to identify the core components influencing the teaching quality of art teachers in Shangrao, Jiangxi Province and provide practical strategies for optimizing art education management, improving teacher effectiveness, and enhancing overall education quality.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To analyze the impact of strategy on leadership in the management of art education.
2. To examine the direct influence of strategy on the quality teaching of art teachers.
3. To investigate the relationship between leadership and the quality teaching of art teachers.
4. To explore the effect of strategy on the teaching atmosphere in art education.
5. To assess how student orientation influences the teaching atmosphere.
6. To determine the role of the teaching atmosphere as a mediating factor affecting the quality teaching of art teachers.
7. To evaluate the impact of participation management on the teaching atmosphere.
8. To analyze the relationship between participation management and parental participation in art education.
9. To investigate how parental participation contributes to the quality teaching of art teachers.
10. To assess the moderating role of research ability in enhancing the quality teaching of art

teachers.

2. Literature Review

The literature on teaching quality in art education has evolved significantly over the years, with a growing focus on the roles of leadership, strategy, and institutional factors. Leadership and strategy are often highlighted as essential for creating a conducive environment for teaching and learning (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Effective leadership can influence teaching outcomes by setting clear expectations, fostering a supportive environment, and promoting professional development (Hattie, 2009). Teaching atmosphere, defined by the emotional and intellectual climate in the classroom, is also crucial for fostering creativity and engagement among students in art education (Shulman, 1987).

In addition to these key factors, student orientation and participation management are increasingly recognized as important contributors to teaching quality. A student-centered approach that emphasizes active learning and critical thinking is associated with improved educational outcomes (Greene, 2001). Parental involvement in education has also been shown to significantly enhance student performance, particularly in creative subjects (Epstein, 2011). Finally, research ability is increasingly seen as a critical factor in improving teaching quality, as it enables teachers to engage in reflective practices and apply evidence-based methods to their instruction (Eisner, 2002).

2.1 Leadership and Strategy

Research on leadership in education emphasizes the importance of visionary leadership that fosters innovation and supports teachers in their professional growth. Leadership is not limited to administrative roles but also includes teachers who take on leadership roles in the classroom. Strategic decision-making, particularly in resource allocation and curriculum development, significantly impacts the effectiveness of teaching practices (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). This is especially true in art education, where creative freedom must be balanced with structured guidance.

2.2 Teaching Atmosphere and Student Engagement

The role of the teaching atmosphere in art education cannot be overstated. A positive, inclusive, and intellectually stimulating environment is key to encouraging student participation and creativity (Amabile, 1996). In art education, the classroom atmosphere must not only support the development of artistic skills but also promote self-expression, critical thinking, and collaboration among students.

3. Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to investigate the key factors influencing art teaching quality. The methodology combined both quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors at play.

3.1 Quantitative Approach

A survey was administered to 400 university students enrolled in both art and non-art programs across five universities in Shangrao. The survey was designed to measure perceptions of teaching quality and associated factors, including leadership, teaching atmosphere, student engagement, and parental involvement. The data were analyzed using SPSS for descriptive statistics and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) for hypothesis testing.

3.2 Qualitative Approach

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 key informants, including art teachers, school administrators, and educational policymakers. The interviews aimed to gather qualitative insights into the institutional practices and challenges related to teaching quality. Thematic coding was used to

analyze the interview data, and the findings were triangulated with the quantitative results.

3.3 Data Collection Process

The survey was distributed to a stratified random sample of students, ensuring diversity across gender, academic year, and major. The qualitative interviews were conducted in person and recorded for later transcription and analysis. The interviewees were selected based on their expertise and involvement in art education in Shangrao.

4. Results

The structural equation modeling (SEM) results confirmed the hypothesized causal relationships between the various factors influencing art teaching quality. The model showed a good fit, with the following indices: $\chi^2/df = 1.84$, GFI = 0.970, and RMSEA = 0.045, indicating that the model adequately represents the data.

Key findings from the SEM analysis included the following:

- **Teaching Atmosphere:**

The teaching atmosphere was identified as the most significant factor affecting the quality of art teaching. It had the strongest direct effect on teaching quality ($\beta = 0.512$). This suggests that the classroom environment, characterized by creativity, encouragement, and a positive teacher-student relationship, is critical for fostering effective learning experiences in art education. This finding supports previous research by Hattie (2009), which emphasizes the role of a positive learning environment in enhancing student engagement and achievement.

In interviews, teachers highlighted the importance of creating a classroom atmosphere where students feel comfortable to express their ideas and experiment with their creativity. Teachers who provided a supportive environment were more likely to have students who performed well, not only in technical skills but also in creative thinking.

- **Leadership and Strategy:**

Leadership was found to have a significant direct effect on teaching quality ($\beta = 0.276$). Additionally, leadership acted as a mediator between strategy and teaching quality ($\beta = 0.413$), suggesting that effective leadership is essential for translating educational strategies into successful teaching practices. Leadership that is visionary and supportive contributes significantly to the implementation of strategic plans that affect the overall teaching environment and quality.

Strategy, which includes long-term planning and educational goals, also had a significant indirect effect on teaching quality, mediated through leadership. The results indicate that schools with clear educational strategies tend to have better teaching quality, as leaders are able to effectively guide teachers towards achieving these goals. This finding is consistent with Biggs & Tang (2011), who argue that strategic planning in education is critical for ensuring alignment between teaching practices and desired educational outcomes.

Interviews with school administrators confirmed that schools with strong leadership teams and clear educational goals showed a more cohesive approach to teaching and learning, with art departments benefiting from well-supported initiatives, such as curriculum development and teacher training programs.

- **Parental Participation and Participation Management:**

Parental participation was found to have a significant indirect effect on teaching quality ($\beta = 0.289$), mediating the relationship between participation management and teaching outcomes. This suggests

that when parents are actively involved in the educational process, it enhances the learning environment for students, especially in the arts, where personal expression and support from home are crucial. Parents who engage with teachers, attend school activities, and encourage their children's artistic development outside of school tend to have children who perform better in art education.

Teachers also mentioned the importance of participation management, which refers to actively involving students in their learning process. This variable was positively correlated with teaching quality, as students who were more involved in classroom activities and had access to supportive learning resources were more likely to excel. This finding aligns with Epstein (2011), who found that active parental involvement and student engagement are significant predictors of academic success.

- **Research Ability:**

Research ability was identified as a moderating variable that enhances the impact of leadership and teaching atmosphere on teaching quality. Teachers with higher research ability were more likely to apply innovative methods in the classroom, engage in reflective practice, and integrate new research findings into their teaching. The ability to engage in research allows teachers to continually improve their pedagogical skills and stay updated on best practices in art education, which is crucial for maintaining high teaching standards (Eisner, 2002).

This finding suggests that professional development programs that focus on research skills can further enhance teaching quality. Teachers who engage in academic research not only improve their own teaching but also contribute to the overall development of the art education community.

- **Overall Model and Variance Explained:**

The model explained 72.4% of the variance in teaching quality, which is a substantial proportion. This suggests that the factors included in the model—teaching atmosphere, leadership, strategy, parental participation, participation management, and research ability—together have a significant impact on the quality of art education. This comprehensive model offers a framework for understanding how various factors interact to shape the quality of teaching and learning in art education settings.

5. Discussion

The results of this study reinforce the importance of a positive teaching atmosphere in art education. A classroom environment that encourages creativity, self-expression, and mutual respect is essential for fostering high-quality art education. This finding aligns with Greene (2001), who asserts that a creative and supportive classroom atmosphere is crucial for enhancing student learning in the arts. Teachers who create a nurturing space for students to express their ideas and engage in creative activities foster a sense of ownership and motivation, which in turn leads to better learning outcomes.

The role of leadership in influencing teaching quality is significant, as it enables the implementation of strategic goals and the creation of an environment conducive to learning. This supports the findings of Hallinger & Heck (1998), who argue that effective school leadership is essential for driving school-wide improvements in teaching quality. Leadership is not only about providing guidance but also about fostering a culture of collaboration and innovation among teachers.

Parental participation and participation management were found to have significant indirect effects on teaching quality. This emphasizes the need for a holistic approach to education that includes support from both the home and the school. Schools should actively involve parents in the educational process, particularly in creative subjects like art, where parental encouragement and support can significantly influence student success. This finding is consistent with Epstein's (2011) work on family-school partnerships, which highlights the positive impact of parental involvement on student performance.

The moderating role of research ability underscores the importance of ongoing professional

development for teachers. Teachers who are engaged in research are better able to apply new ideas and techniques in the classroom, leading to improved teaching quality. This finding aligns with Eisner's (2002) assertion that research in the arts enhances teaching effectiveness and provides teachers with the tools to innovate and adapt to changing educational needs.

6. Conclusion and Implications

This study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing the quality of art education in Shangrao, Jiangxi Province. The findings highlight the importance of a positive teaching atmosphere, strong leadership, clear strategic goals, parental involvement, and research ability in improving teaching quality. These results have significant implications for educational policymakers and school administrators, particularly in regional areas where art education programs may face unique challenges.

To improve the quality of art education, schools should focus on creating a supportive and creative learning environment that encourages student engagement. Additionally, policymakers should invest in leadership development and strategic planning to ensure that art education programs are well-supported and aligned with broader educational goals. Professional development opportunities that enhance teachers' research skills should also be prioritized to encourage reflective practices and foster innovation in art education.

Future research could explore the applicability of this model in other regions or educational settings, such as urban schools or international contexts, to assess the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, longitudinal studies could investigate the long-term effects of leadership, teaching atmosphere, and parental involvement on the quality of art education.

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