Guidelines for leadership development for art teachers in Guangzhou Middle Schools under Guangdong Province

He Dingyi[1], Vorachai Viphoouparakhot[2],
Nidwadee Jirarotepinyo[3]
Leadership in Educational Administration program,
 Bangkokthonburi University[1],
Faculty of Education, Bangkokthonburi University[2,3]
E-mail: Vorachai.vip@bkkthon.ac.th[1,2,3]

Abstract

This study aimed to develop guidelines for leadership development of art teachers in Guangzhou middle schools, Guangdong Province, China. A mixed-method approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods, was employed. Key informants included 20 administrators selected through purposive sampling, while a focus group of 5 experts provided additional insights. Data collection involved in-depth interviews, and the findings were analyzed using content analysis and frequency analysis. Results indicated that while art teachers in Guangzhou middle schools demonstrated strong capabilities and positive outcomes, several challenges remained. These included fragmented teaching objectives, such as prioritizing ideas over design, a disconnect between theory and practice, and insufficient integration of educational goals. Additionally, the shift from skill-based to accomplishment-based teaching posed further obstacles. Based on these findings, this study proposed targeted recommendations to address core issues and enhance the leadership development of art teachers.

KEYWORDS: Leadership development, Art teachers, Guangzhou Middle School, Guangdong Province.

Introduction

The Xinhua News Agency Beijing (2017) report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China emphasized that building a strong education system is a foundational project for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Education and scientific research are identified as crucial tools for advancing national development and addressing imbalances in education quality and access. Fundamental questions such as "Who are you training?", "How to train people?", and "Who are you training people for?" are central concerns for middle school principals and leadership personnel, particularly in the evolving educational landscape.

Leadership development in schools is critical to ensuring quality education, as it shapes the direction of school policies, teaching strategies, and resource allocation. According to Hamilton and Bean (2013), leadership is highly contextualized, involving complex interactions among leaders, followers, and situations. Situational leadership theory (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977) and

contingency theory (Fiedler, 1967) argue that leadership styles must adapt to specific situations and followers' needs. However, these theories often fall short in explaining how leaders can actively change unfavorable contexts (Northouse, 2004). Moreover, Hersey (2022) noted that in the transition from the industrial to the information age, leadership has evolved from command-and-control models to facilitative approaches that empower skilled employees in complex work environments.

In China, significant strides have been made in educational reforms, including the "Basic Education Curriculum Reform Outline" (Ministry of Education, 2001) and subsequent curriculum overhauls. These initiatives aim to cultivate students' core qualities, including practical abilities, scientific literacy, and aesthetic sensibilities. However, challenges persist, particularly in the realm of aesthetic education, which remains a weak link in the educational system. The State Council (2020) emphasized the need for comprehensive reforms to strengthen aesthetic education by integrating resources and addressing deficiencies in implementation and resource allocation. As a first-tier city, Guangzhou is at the forefront of this reform, integrating aesthetic education resources and exploring innovative leadership models to enhance the quality of fine arts education in middle schools.

Internationally, researchers such as Peter F. Drucker (2018) highlight that leadership development has become a focal point for organizations aiming to achieve competitive advantage. The Center for Creative Leadership's studies (McCauley et al., 2018) and works by authors like Conger and Benjamin (2019) have contributed significantly to understanding the complexities of leadership development. These studies underscore that leadership is not merely about directing others but about fostering environments that encourage growth, collaboration, and innovation.

Despite these efforts, gaps remain in understanding how leadership development specifically impacts art teachers, particularly in middle schools where aesthetic education plays a critical role in fostering students' creativity and cultural awareness. Liu and Zhang (2020) found that a positive work environment enhances teacher morale and creativity, which is vital for leadership development. However, challenges such as the separation of theory from practice, uneven resource allocation, and the undervaluing of aesthetic education continue to hinder progress in this area (State Council, 2020).

Building on these findings, this study aims to address the need for targeted leadership development among art teachers in Guangzhou middle schools. Effective leadership development can empower art teachers to integrate innovative teaching methods, foster a collaborative learning environment, and enhance the overall quality of aesthetic education. By bridging gaps between policy, practice, and leadership theory, this research contributes to the broader goal of cultivating high-quality educators capable of meeting the demands of modern education.

Purposes

The purpose of this research is to develop guidelines for leadership development for art teachers in Guangzhou middle schools under Guangdong Province.

Benefit of Research

This research aims to explore and propose guidelines for leadership development for art teachers in Guangzhou middle schools under Guangdong Province. These guidelines will contribute to the academic management efforts of enhancing students' educational experiences in universities across Guangdong Province.

Research Process

Step 1: Literature Review and Analysis of Policies and Current Situation

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of existing literature, including theories, models, and case studies on leadership development.

2. Study relevant policies and analyze the current state of leadership practices among art teachers in Guangzhou middle schools.

3. Identify gaps and challenges in leadership development to inform subsequent research steps.

Step 2: Development of Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Analyze the content of key leadership components identified in Step 1.

2. Design interview questions to explore the perspectives of administrators and experts on leadership development.

3. Pre-test the questions with a small group of educators to ensure clarity and relevance, making necessary adjustments.

Step 3: Conduct In-Depth Interviews

1. Use purposive sampling to select 20 administrators from Guangzhou middle schools as key informants.

2. Conduct semi-structured interviews to gather qualitative data on their experiences, challenges, and recommendations for leadership development.

3. Record, transcribe, and analyze the interview data for emerging themes.

Step 4: Expert of 5 to Focus Group Discussion

1. Facilitate a focus group with five experts in Guangdong Province to review and validate the findings from the in-depth interviews.

2. Refine the proposed guidelines based on expert feedback and insights.

Key Informants and Experts

1. Key informant, 20 administrators from Guangzhou middle schools selected through purposive sampling for in-depth interviews.

2. Expert to Focus Group: 5 experts in educational leadership and academic management from Guangdong Province.

Instruments

1. Semi-Structured Interviews: Designed to elicit detailed insights from administrators on leadership development practices and challenges.

2. Focus Group Discussion: Facilitated discussions with experts to validate and refine the proposed guidelines.

Data analysis

The data analysis in this study employs qualitative methods and content analysis to systematically examine the data collected from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The process is outlined as follows:

1. Content Analysis of In-Depth Interviews:

1.1 Perform frequency analysis on the responses from the 20 key informants to identify recurring themes, patterns, and key components of leadership development.

1.2 Organize the identified themes into categories relevant to academic management and leadership development.

1.3 Propose a basic academic management model based on the analyzed data.

2. Focus Group Discussion Analysis:

2.1 Facilitate a focus group discussion with five experts to evaluate and score the proposed academic management model.

2.2 Use qualitative techniques, such as thematic analysis, to interpret expert feedback on the model's relevance, feasibility, and comprehensiveness.

2.3 Incorporate insights and suggestions from the experts to refine the model.

3. Joint Evaluation and Verification:

3.1 Conduct a collaborative discussion between the researcher and the expert group to critically evaluate the refined academic management model.

3.2 Verify the model's validity and reliability by ensuring it addresses the identified challenges and aligns with the leadership development goals.

3.3 Make final modifications based on the consensus reached during the evaluation.

Conclusion and discussion

Content analysis and to analyse for Leadership Development Components for Middle School Art Teachers in Guangzhou

Based on the analysis of qualitative interviews and focus group discussions, five core components of leadership development for middle school art teachers in Guangzhou have been identified. These components align with the cultivation of teachers' core qualities and address the challenges of integrating leadership principles into art education.

1. Internal Progress and External Guidance. Detail:

1.1 Emphasizes the importance of self-driven growth (internal progress) complemented by external support from school leadership, policies, and professional networks.

1.2 Art teachers must cultivate individual motivation, creativity, and critical thinking while receiving structured guidance through mentoring and administrative support.

1.3 This dual approach ensures balanced development in both personal and professional capacities.

2. Multiple and Integral Objectives Detail:

2.1 Leadership development should integrate diverse goals, including fostering students' aesthetic appreciation, enhancing teachers' pedagogical skills, and achieving school-wide academic excellence.

2.2 Teachers need to align their artistic vision with educational objectives, ensuring that leadership roles are adaptable to varying demands, from classroom management to curriculum innovation.

3. Periodic and Continuous Growth. Detail:

3.1 Leadership training must be periodic, with structured phases for skills development, and continuous to adapt to changing educational landscapes.

3.2 Art teachers require access to workshops, seminars, and reflective practices that promote lifelong learning.

3.3 This principle encourages iterative improvement rather than static skill acquisition.

4. Adaptability and Extensibility. Detail:

4.1 Leadership skills for art teachers should be adaptable to different teaching contexts and extendable to broader educational frameworks.

4.2 Teachers must be equipped to respond to unique challenges, such as integrating technology into art classes, managing diverse student needs, and contributing to interdisciplinary projects.

4.3 This component ensures flexibility in leadership roles, fostering innovation and resilience.

5. Systematic and Practical Assessment. Detail:

5.1 Leadership development must include robust assessment mechanisms to evaluate teachers' progress and the practical application of their skills.

5.2 Double-chain assessment rules emphasize both formative and summative evaluations to ensure comprehensive feedback.

5.3 The assessment system should focus on tangible outcomes, such as improvements in classroom engagement, curriculum design, and collaboration with colleagues.

Interview Data from 15 key informants as table 1

Table 1 Key Insights from Interview Data

Component	Insights from Interviews	Frequency n = 15
Internal Progress and External Guidance	Teachers highlighted the need for autonomy in developing artistic methods while receiving mentoring from experienced leaders and administrators.	15
Multiple and Integral Objectives	Administrators emphasized aligning personal teaching goals with broader institutional objectives to foster holistic leadership in art education.	14
Periodic and Continuous Growth	Interviewees noted the importance of periodic workshops and continuous self-improvement to stay updated with trends and challenges in art education.	13
Adaptability and Extensibility	Respondents stressed that leadership training should prepare teachers for diverse classroom contexts and collaborative projects beyond their immediate roles.	12
Systematic and Practical Assessment	Experts suggested implementing structured evaluations to measure leadership development outcomes, including peer reviews, student feedback, and administrative observations.	11

These five components form a robust framework for cultivating leadership qualities in middle school art teachers in Guangzhou. The guidelines emphasize balance between individual efforts and systemic support, adaptability to changing educational demands, and continuous evaluation to ensure meaningful progress. These principles aim to bridge theoretical concepts and practical applications, ultimately enhancing the role of art teachers as leaders in their schools.

Results from Focus Group Discussion of 5 Experts Based on 5 Components

The focus group discussion with five experts provided detailed insights into the development of leadership for art teachers. Each of the five components was analyzed, leading to the identification of actionable sub-items to be developed into recommendations. As below;

1. Internal Progress and External Guidance;

Sub-items Identified:

1.1 Balancing Autonomy and Guidance: Experts emphasized the importance of empowering art teachers to develop their teaching methods while providing structured mentorship.

1.2 Mentorship Framework: The need for a formal mentorship program with clearly defined roles for mentors and mentees.

1.3 Continuous Feedback: Regular feedback mechanisms between administrators and art teachers to assess progress and address challenges.

1.4 Resource Accessibility: Ensuring access to resources that facilitate both independent and guided growth.

1.5 Emphasizing Collaboration: Encouraging collaboration between teachers and administrators to foster a culture of shared leadership.

2. Multiple and Integral Objectives
Sub-items Identified:

2.1 Alignment of Goals: Ensuring that personal teaching goals of art teachers align with institutional objectives for a holistic leadership model.

2.2 Integrated Curriculum Design: Developing a curriculum that incorporates leadership components while maintaining artistic integrity.

2.3 Student-Centered Leadership: Focusing leadership activities on enhancing student engagement and creativity.

2.4 Leadership Workshops: Organizing workshops to train teachers in balancing multiple objectives effectively.

2.5 Interdisciplinary Approaches: Promoting collaboration across different subjects to broaden leadership perspectives.

3. Periodic and Continuous Growth
Sub-items Identified:

3.1 Structured Training Cycles: Implementing periodic training sessions to refresh and update leadership skills.

3.2 Self-Reflection Opportunities: Encouraging teachers to engage in reflective practices to evaluate their leadership development.

3.3 Access to Advanced Studies: Providing funding or opportunities for advanced degrees or certifications in leadership and art education.

3.4 Peer Learning Groups: Establishing peer networks for ongoing support and shared learning experiences.

3.5 Integration of Modern Trends: Incorporating emerging trends and technologies in art education to keep leadership practices relevant.

4. Adaptability and Extensibility
Sub-items Identified:

4.1 Flexible Leadership Models: Developing adaptable leadership models tailored to various school and classroom contexts.

4.2 Scenario-Based Training: Providing scenario-based leadership training to prepare teachers for diverse challenges.

4.3 Support for Innovative Practices: Encouraging art teachers to experiment with new teaching and leadership methods.

4.4 Cross-School Collaboration: Facilitating partnerships with other schools to share resources and ideas.

4.5 Teacher-Led Initiatives: Empowering teachers to lead initiatives that extend beyond the classroom, such as art exhibitions or community projects.

5. Systematic and Practical Assessment
Sub-items Identified:

5.1 Double-Chain Evaluation: Establishing a dual-focus assessment

system that evaluates both leadership development and classroom impact.

5.2 Student Feedback: Incorporating student feedback as a key component in assessing leadership effectiveness.

5.3 Leadership Portfolios: Encouraging teachers to maintain portfolios documenting their leadership activities and achievements.

5.4 360-Degree Reviews: Implementing 360-degree evaluation systems involving administrators, peers, and students.

5.5 Benchmarking Performance: Comparing teacher performance with established benchmarks to identify areas for improvement.

Guide from 5 experts for Development Based on Focus Group Results

1) Establish a formal mentorship program with clear guidelines and measurable outcomes.

2) Develop leadership workshops and interdisciplinary training sessions to broaden teachers' perspectives.

3) Implement flexible, scenario-based training to prepare teachers for diverse challenges and contexts.

4) Introduce comprehensive assessment systems, including double-chain evaluations and 360-degree feedback.

5) Promote collaboration and networking opportunities among art teachers to share best practices and foster innovation.

These detailed insights provide a foundation for actionable strategies to enhance the leadership development of art teachers in Guangzhou middle schools, to proposed figure 1 for leadership development in schools.as Figure 1;

Leadership Development for Art Teachers in Guangzhou Middle Schools Under Guangdong Province
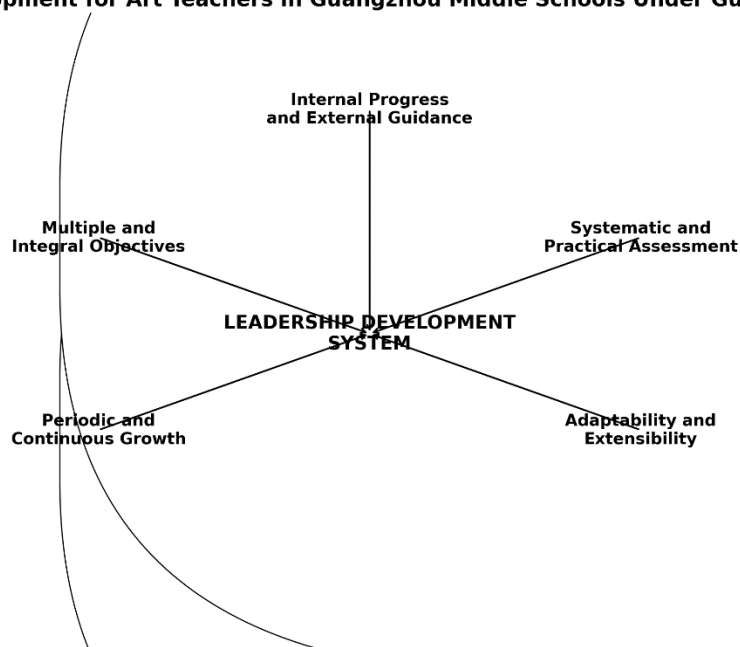
Figure 1 : a system of five interconnected components for leadership development tailored for art teachers in Guangzhou middle schools

The figure presents a system of five interconnected components for leadership development tailored for art teachers in Guangzhou middle schools under Guangdong Province. Each component addresses a specific area essential for

fostering leadership skills and improving overall educational outcomes.

Components and Their Management by School Leaders

1. Internal Progress and External Guidance; This component emphasizes the balance between individual self-development (internal progress) and structured support from mentors and administrators (external guidance).

Management by School Leaders: Establish mentorship programs pairing experienced teachers with new or developing art teachers.

1.1 Create policies that allow autonomy in teaching methods while providing structured guidance.

1.2 Organize regular one-on-one sessions with teachers to discuss progress, set goals, and provide feedback.

2. Multiple and Integral Objectives; Leadership development must align the individual goals of art teachers with the broader objectives of the school, such as enhancing student engagement, improving teaching quality, and achieving institutional excellence.

Management by School Leaders:

2.1 Integrate leadership development into the school's strategic plan, ensuring alignment with the school's academic and cultural goals.

2.2 Encourage interdisciplinary projects that combine art education with other subjects, fostering collaborative leadership.

2.3 Facilitate regular meetings to align teachers' personal teaching objectives with school-wide targets.

3. Periodic and Continuous Growth; Leadership development should follow a periodic and continuous cycle of training, evaluation, and improvement.

Management by School Leaders:

3.1 Schedule regular workshops, training sessions, and seminars for professional development.

3.2 Provide access to external training opportunities, such as conferences, certifications, and advanced studies.

3.3 Implement reflective practices, encouraging teachers to review and refine their leadership approaches.

4. Adaptability and Extensibility; Leadership skills should be adaptable to various classroom contexts and extendable to broader educational frameworks, such as interdisciplinary or community projects.

Management by School Leaders:

4.1 Foster an environment where teachers can experiment with innovative teaching and leadership methods.

4.2 Encourage teachers to take on leadership roles beyond the classroom, such as organizing art exhibitions or leading community outreach programs.

4.3 Provide resources and support for teachers to adapt to emerging educational trends and challenges.

5. Systematic and Practical Assessment; A robust assessment system evaluates the progress and practical application of leadership skills among art teachers.

Management by School Leaders:

5.1 Implement double-chain evaluation systems focusing on both leadership development and teaching outcomes.

5.2 Incorporate 360-degree feedback mechanisms involving peers, students, and administrators.

5.3 Use data-driven insights to refine leadership development programs and address specific areas of improvement.

How School Leaders Manage the System as a Whole

1. Integration: School leaders must ensure that these five components are interconnected and function cohesively as part of the school's overall strategic framework. Each component should complement the others, creating a holistic approach to leadership development.

2. Resource Allocation: Allocate necessary resources, such as time, funding, and tools, to support the successful implementation of each component.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation: Regularly assess the effectiveness of the system through feedback, performance metrics, and stakeholder input, making iterative improvements where necessary.

4. Encouragement of Collaboration: Facilitate collaboration between art teachers, other departments, and external experts to enrich the leadership development experience.

5. Focus on Sustainability: Develop a long-term plan to ensure that leadership development initiatives are sustainable and adaptable to future challenges.

The findings of this research align with both Chinese and international studies on leadership development in education. Liu and Chen (2021) highlighted the importance of resource accessibility in supporting teacher growth, which aligns with the component of Systematic and Practical Assessment identified in this study. Similarly, Zhao and Li (2021) emphasized the role of government policies in fostering leadership in aesthetic education, reinforcing the need for External Guidance through structured mentoring and administrative support. From an international perspective, Ryan and Deci's (2017) Self-Determination Theory underscores the significance of autonomy and competence, which is reflected in the component of Internal Progress in this study. Furthermore,

Noddings (2015) advocates for the importance of creating supportive environments that enable teacher leadership, consistent with the emphasis on Adaptability and Extensibility. Drucker (2018) and Hersey (2022) have similarly identified that modern leadership requires balancing directive approaches with supportive and collaborative strategies, resonating with the identified components of Multiple and Integral Objectives and Periodic and Continuous Growth. These connections demonstrate the global relevance of the leadership development system proposed in this study.

According to McCauley et al. (2018), effective leadership development requires a comprehensive framework that combines individual growth, organizational support, and situational adaptability. This aligns with the findings of this study, particularly the emphasis on Internal Progress and External Guidance as a critical component for fostering leadership among art teachers in Guangzhou middle schools. The integration of structured mentoring programs and resource accessibility highlighted in this research resonates with the leadership development strategies proposed by McCauley et al. (2018), which advocate for creating tailored development pathways within educational settings.

Recommendations

Recommendations from Research

1. Establish Structured Mentorship Programs: Develop formal mentorship initiatives to guide art teachers in leadership skills, with clear objectives and measurable outcomes.

2. Promote Continuous Professional Development: Organize regular workshops, training sessions, and access to advanced studies to enhance teachers' leadership competencies.

3. Implement Collaborative Leadership Models: Encourage team-based projects and interdisciplinary collaborations to foster shared leadership responsibilities among teachers.

4. Enhance Resource Allocation: Ensure equitable distribution of teaching materials, tools, and support systems to facilitate leadership development.

5. Integrate Leadership Assessment Mechanisms:

Introduce practical and systematic evaluation frameworks, including peer reviews and 360-degree feedback, to measure leadership growth and effectiveness.

Recommendations for Future Studies

1. To Exploration of Digital Tools in Leadership Development: Investigate the impact of technology and digital platforms on the leadership development of art teachers in middle schools.

2. To Comparative Analysis of Urban and Rural Leadership Challenges: Conduct a comparative study of leadership development challenges and opportunities in urban and rural middle schools.

Reference

Conger, J. A., & Benjamin, B. (2019). *Building leaders: How successful companies develop the next generation*. Jossey-Bass.

Drucker, P. F. (2018). *The effective executive*. Harper Business.

Hamilton, F., & Bean, C. J. (2013). The importance of context in leadership development. *Leadership Quarterly, 24*(3), 317-331.

Hersey, P. (2022). *Situational leadership and the evolution of leadership styles*. Center for Leadership Studies.

Liu, J., & Chen, F. (2021). Resource disparities and their impact on teacher retention and motivation in Guangdong schools: Empirical evidence. *Journal of Education and Resource Equity, 14*(2), 145-160.

Liu, S., & Zhang, Y. (2020). The role of a supportive work environment in enhancing teacher creativity: Insights from urban Chinese schools. *Journal of Educational Development, 18*(3), 204-219.

McCauley, C. D., et.al. (2018). *The Center for Creative Leadership handbook of leadership development*. Jossey-Bass.

Ministry of Education. (2001). *Basic Education Curriculum Reform Outline (Trial).* Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China.

Noddings, N. (2015). *The ethics of care: Personal, political, and global (2nd ed.).* University of California Press.

Northouse, P. G. (2004). Leadership: Theory and practice (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2017). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness*. Guilford Press.

State Council. (2020). *Opinions on strengthening and improving comprehensive school aesthetic education work*. State Council of the People's Republic of China.

Xinhua News Agency Beijing. (2017). *Report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China.* Beijing.

Zhao, Y., & Li, H. (2021). The critical role of government policies in shaping aesthetic education: Challenges of implementation at the grassroots level. *Journal of Educational Policy and Practice, 15*(4), 345-362.