A Study on Improving the Quality of College Chinese Teaching in Higher Vocational College in China: A Case Study of Southwest China

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the influencing factors of classroom teaching quality in College Chinese courses offered in higher vocational colleges in Chengdu, China, and to identify key approaches for quality improvement. A quantitative research design was employed using a questionnaire survey administered to vocational college students. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was applied to analyze the relationships among institutional factors, teacher-related factors, instructional factors, learner-related factors, and classroom teaching quality. The results reveal that classroom teaching quality is significantly influenced by multiple dimensions. Instructional factors, particularly teaching methodologies and teacher–student interaction, exert the strongest effect on teaching quality, followed by teacher-related factors, learner-related factors, and institutional factors. The proposed model explains a substantial proportion of variance in classroom teaching quality, indicating strong explanatory power. These findings highlight the necessity of a systematic and integrated approach to improving College Chinese classroom teaching quality in higher vocational education and provide empirical evidence to support curriculum reform, teacher professional development, and institutional quality enhancement. This research provides new knowledge on the quality of teaching in higher vocational classrooms by proposing and empirically validating a multidimensional framework for college-level Chinese language curricula. The research expands the scope of existing research on teaching quality by demonstrating that classroom quality does not depend solely on teacher effectiveness or curriculum design, but arises from

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a systemic interaction between institutional support, teacher professionalism, instructional design, and student participation. Overall, this research strengthens the knowledge base on teaching quality by shifting the focus from compartmentalized evaluation to a holistic and systemic understanding of teaching quality in higher vocational classrooms. This research provides both theoretical and empirical foundations for future studies and supports the ongoing transformation towards high-quality, student-centered education in vocational institutions.

Keywords: Classroom Teaching Quality; College Chinese; Higher Vocational Education; SEM

Introduction

The quality of education is a fundamental determinant of human capital development, national competitiveness, and the sustainable future of society. As China's higher education system rapidly advances toward massification and universal access, concerns about educational quality have garnered increasing attention from policymakers (Somthawinpongsai, C. et al., 2025)

institutions, and the broader public (Zhou, G. H., 2018). However, enhancing the quality of higher education, particularly within vocational and applied institutions, remains a global challenge and has become a central issue in higher education reform worldwide.

International organizations such as UNESCO and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) emphasize that improving educational quality and learners' competencies, especially through vocational education and training systems, is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and addressing the skills demands of the twenty-first-century labor market. These international perspectives are consistent with China's national education strategy, which highlights quality-oriented development, industry–education integration, and the modernization of vocational education to support economic and social transformation.

At the institutional and classroom levels, *College Chinese,* a compulsory public foundational course in Chinese higher vocational colleges, plays a crucial role in cultivating students' language proficiency, critical thinking, humanistic literacy, and overall learning quality. Nevertheless, the rapid expansion of vocational institutions and student enrollment has led to persistent problems in classroom teaching quality, particularly in public courses

such as College Chinese. These problems manifest as unclear course positioning, outdated teaching content, teacher-centered instructional approaches, insufficient teaching resources, and incomplete evaluation systems.

Although College Chinese is widely recognized for its importance in strengthening students' linguistic competence and cultural understanding, it has often been marginalized in practice compared with other public courses. (Somthawinpongsai, C. et al., 2019). This marginalization weakens its educational function and limits its contribution to the holistic development of talent in higher vocational education. Therefore, systematically examining the factors that influence the quality of classroom teaching in College Chinese courses at higher vocational colleges and proposing targeted improvement strategies is both necessary and urgent. Such research not only responds to China's general education curriculum reform but also contributes to the broader objective of enhancing the quality of higher vocational education in the context of educational modernization.

Research Objective

This study aims to examine the factors influencing the quality of classroom instruction in College Chinese courses at higher vocational colleges in Chengdu, China, and to provide empirical implications for improving teaching quality.

Research Questions

RQ1: What factors influence the classroom teaching quality of *College Chinese* courses in higher vocational colleges in Chengdu, China?

RQ2: How do institutional, teacher-related, instructional, and learner-related factors affect the teaching quality of *College Chinese* courses?

Research Hypotheses

H1–H15: Institutional conditions, teacher-related factors, instructional factors, and learner-related factors significantly influence the classroom teaching quality of *College Chinese* courses in higher vocational colleges in Chengdu, China.

Research Scope

This study investigates factors influencing the classroom teaching quality of College Chinese courses in higher vocational colleges in Chengdu, China. Teaching quality is examined as a multidimensional construct involving institutional, teacher-related, instructional, and learner-related factors. A quantitative approach using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is employed to analyze relationships among latent variables and classroom teaching quality (Harvey, L. & Green, D., 1993).

Review of Literature and Concepts

Classroom teaching quality has long been recognized as a core component of higher education quality and an essential foundation for effective talent cultivation. Internationally, research on teaching quality has developed toward multidimensional frameworks that integrate instructional effectiveness, student learning outcomes, institutional governance, and learning environments. Different countries have adopted diverse quality assurance models reflecting their educational systems, such as pluralistic evaluation frameworks in the United States, government–agency collaboration in the United Kingdom, and centralized yet diversified quality assurance mechanisms in countries like France and Japan.

With the global shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered paradigms, recent studies increasingly emphasize student engagement, learning motivation, and learning strategies as key determinants of classroom teaching quality (Astin, A. W., 2014; Kuh, G.D., 2001). Research also highlights the importance of teacher professionalism, instructional competence, and teacher–student interaction in fostering effective learning environments (Darling-Hammond, L., 2021). At the institutional level, curriculum design, teaching management systems, and resource support are regarded as critical safeguards for teaching quality improvement.

In China, systematic research on classroom teaching quality in higher education began in the 1980s and gradually evolved into comprehensive evaluation systems incorporating expert review, peer assessment, student evaluation, and teacher self-reflection. Although these systems have become increasingly standardized, scholars have pointed out that they often rely on generalized indicators and lack sensitivity to course characteristics and classroom diversity, particularly in vocational education contexts (Li, J., 2019).

As a compulsory public foundational course in Chinese higher education, *College Chinese* plays a vital role in cultivating students' language competence, cultural literacy, and critical thinking. Existing studies mainly focus on curriculum positioning, teaching methods, and ideological–political functions of College Chinese courses. However, empirical research that systematically examines classroom teaching quality and its influencing factors in College Chinese courses—especially in higher vocational colleges—remains limited.

Overall, prior studies provide valuable theoretical and empirical foundations for understanding classroom teaching quality. Nevertheless, there is a clear research gap in integrated investigations that examine institutional, teacher-related, instructional, and learner-related factors influencing the classroom teaching quality of *College Chinese* courses in higher vocational education. Addressing this gap is essential for advancing quality-oriented reform and improving teaching effectiveness in vocational colleges.

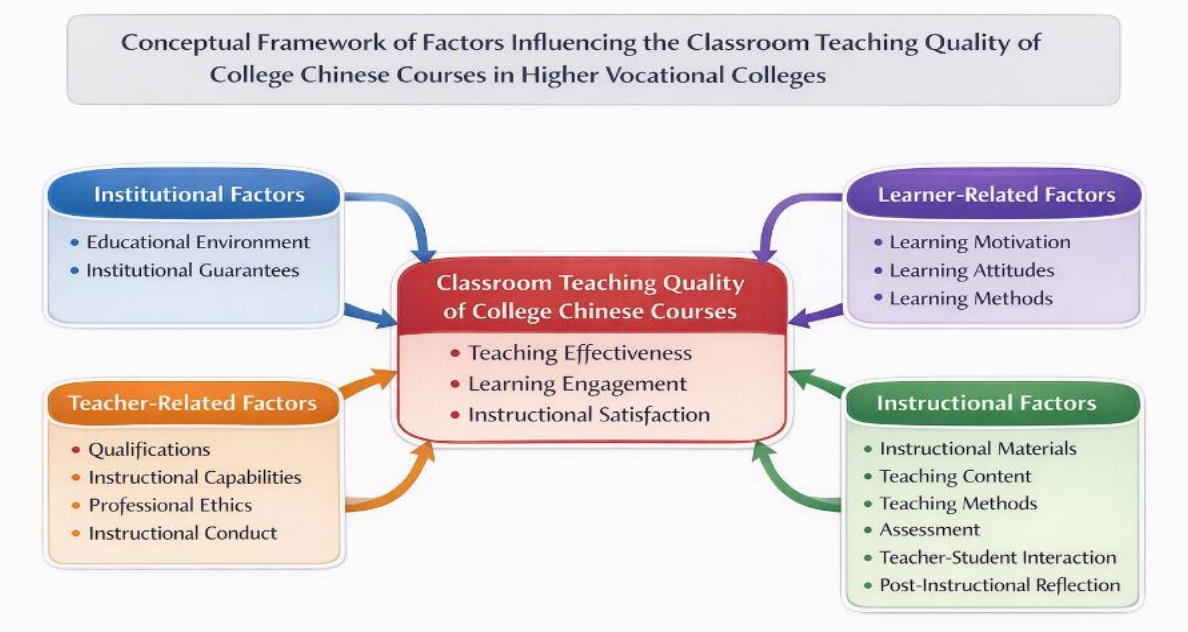

Figure 1. Structural Equation Model of Classroom Teaching Quality in College Chinese Courses

Research Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the factors influencing the quality of classroom instruction in College Chinese courses at higher vocational colleges in Chengdu, China. Data are collected through a structured questionnaire administered to students enrolled in College Chinese courses. The questionnaire items are developed based on relevant literature and the proposed conceptual framework, and measured using a five-point Likert scale.

The collected data are analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesized relationships among latent variables, including institutional, teacher-related, instructional, and learner-related factors, as well as classroom teaching quality. SEM is adopted due to its effectiveness in examining complex relationships among multiple constructs and validating theoretical models in educational research.

Research Results

1. Model Fit Evaluation

The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) results indicate that the proposed model demonstrates a good overall fit with the empirical data. The fit indices meet commonly accepted criteria for SEM analysis: $\chi^2/df = 2.41$, CFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.92, GFI = 0.91, and RMSEA = 0.054. These values suggest that the hypothesized model is appropriate for explaining the classroom teaching quality of *College Chinese* courses in higher vocational colleges.

2. Effects of Influencing Factors on Classroom Teaching Quality

In line with the research objectives, the structural model analysis reveals that all four dimensions—institutional factors, teacher-related factors, instructional factors, and learner-related factors—have significant positive effects on classroom teaching quality.

Institutional factors show a significant influence on classroom teaching quality (β = 0.21, $p < .01$). This result indicates that a supportive educational environment and effective institutional guarantees contribute positively to improving the quality of *College Chinese* classroom instruction.

Teacher-related factors exert a strong and significant effect on classroom teaching quality (β = 0.32, $p < .001$). Teachers' qualifications, instructional capabilities, professional ethics, and instructional conduct emerge as critical determinants of effective teaching, highlighting the central role of teachers in vocational education contexts.

Instructional factors demonstrate the strongest influence on classroom teaching quality among all latent variables (β = 0.41, $p < .001$). This finding underscores the importance of instructional materials, content design, teaching methodologies, assessment practices, teacher–student interaction, and post-instructional reflection in shaping high-quality classroom instruction.

Learner-related factors also significantly affect classroom teaching quality (β = 0.27, $p < .01$). Students' learning motivation, learning attitudes, and learning methods are shown to

be essential contributors to effective classroom learning experiences. The structural model explains a substantial proportion of variance in classroom teaching quality (R^2 = 0.68), indicating that the proposed framework has strong explanatory power.

3. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

The results confirm that all hypothesized paths from institutional, teacher-related, instructional, and learner-related factors to classroom teaching quality are statistically significant. Therefore, hypotheses H1–H15 are supported

Table 1 SEM Analysis Results of Influencing Factors on College Chinese Classroom Teaching Quality

Hypothesis	Path	Standardized Path Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	Educational Environment ⟶ Teaching Quality	0.18	2.94	< .01	Supported
H2	Institutional Guarantees ⟶ Teaching Quality	0.21	3.36	< .01	Supported
H3	Teachers' Qualifications ⟶ Teaching Quality	0.26	4.12	< .001	Supported
H4	Teachers' Capabilities ⟶ Teaching Quality	0.32	5.47	< .001	Supported
H5	Teacher Professional Ethics ⟶ Teaching Quality	0.24	3.89	< .001	Supported
H6	Instructional Materials ⟶ Teaching Quality	0.29	4.96	< .001	Supported
H7	Teachers' Conduct Availability ⟶ Teaching Quality	0.22	3.41	< .01	Supported
H8	Instructional Content ⟶ Teaching Quality	0.34	5.82	< .001	Supported
H9	Teaching Methodologies ⟶ Teaching Quality	0.41	6.74	< .001	Supported
H10	Instructional Assessment ⟶ Teaching Quality	0.27	4.23	< .001	Supported
H11	Teacher–Student Interaction ⟶ Teaching Quality	0.36	6.01	< .001	Supported
H12	Post-instructional Reflection ⟶ Teaching Quality	0.25	3.98	< .001	Supported
H13	Learning Motivation ⟶ Teaching Quality	0.30	5.06	< .001	Supported
H14	Learning Attitude ⟶ Teaching Quality	0.27	4.34	< .001	Supported
H15	Learning Methods ⟶ Teaching Quality	0.23	3.62	< .01	Supported

Conclusion, Discussion, Suggestion

Conclusion

This study employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the factors influencing classroom teaching quality in College Chinese courses offered in higher vocational colleges in Chengdu, China. The results indicate that teaching quality is shaped by multiple interrelated factors, with instructional factors having the greatest impact, followed by teacher-

related, learner-related, and institutional factors. The findings contribute to the understanding of teaching quality in public foundational courses within higher vocational education.

Discussion

The findings confirm that classroom teaching quality in College Chinese courses in higher vocational colleges is a multidimensional construct influenced by instructional, teacher-related, institutional, and learner-related factors. Instructional factors, particularly teaching methodologies and teacher–student interaction, exert the strongest influence on teaching quality, aligning with learner-centered and constructivist learning perspectives. In addition, teacher-related factors and institutional support play significant roles in enhancing teaching quality. In contrast, learner-related factors emphasize the importance of students' active participation and engagement in the learning process.

At the theoretical level, this study contributes to classroom teaching quality literature by integrating perspectives from student engagement theory and quality assurance theory into a unified SEM model. Consistent with prior studies emphasizing learner-centered education, the results confirm that instructional processes, especially teaching methodologies and teacher–student interaction, are central mechanisms through which teaching quality is realized (Astin, A. W., 1993; Kuh, G. D., 2001). This enriches the conceptual understanding of how public foundational courses function within vocational higher education systems.

Methodologically, the study advances knowledge by applying structural equation modeling to examine teaching quality in *College Chinese* courses, an area that has been underrepresented in empirical research. By operationalizing classroom teaching quality through latent variables and statistically validating their relationships, this research provides a replicable analytical framework that can be adapted to other public courses and institutional contexts (Harvey, L. & Green, D., 1993; Fenstermacher, G. D. & Richardson, V, 2005).

From a practical knowledge perspective, the findings clarify the relative importance of different influencing factors, offering evidence-based insights for curriculum reform, teacher professional development, and institutional quality assurance in vocational colleges. The study highlights that sustainable improvement in teaching quality requires coordinated efforts across policy, pedagogy, and student development, rather than isolated interventions (Guo, J. Q., 2016; Darling-Hammond, L., 2021).

Knowledge of Research

This research generates new knowledge on classroom teaching quality in higher vocational education by proposing and empirically validating a multidimensional structural framework for *College Chinese* courses. The findings extend existing teaching quality research by demonstrating that classroom quality is not solely dependent on teacher performance or curriculum design, but rather emerges from the systematic interaction among institutional support, teacher professionalism, instructional design, and learner engagement.

Overall, this research enriches the knowledge base on teaching quality by shifting the focus from fragmented evaluations to a holistic, system-oriented understanding of classroom teaching quality in higher vocational education. It provides both theoretical and empirical foundations for future studies and supports the ongoing transformation toward high-quality, student-centered education in vocational institutions.

Research Suggestion

Higher vocational colleges should prioritize student-centered instructional practices and strengthen teacher–student interaction in College Chinese classrooms. Continuous professional development should be provided to enhance teachers' pedagogical competence. Furthermore, institutions should improve support systems and quality assurance mechanisms, while encouraging learner motivation and engagement to achieve sustainable improvement in teaching quality.

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