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Art Curriculum Management for Vocational Certificate Students: A Case Study of Baise City Youjiang Art Secondary Vocational and Technical School, China

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ABSTRACT

Secondary vocational schools in China are expected to develop students' technical competence and holistic growth, yet art curriculum management may be constrained by fragmented planning and limited learning resources. This study aimed to map the problems and needs of art curriculum management from students, teachers, and administrators at Baise City Youjiang Art Secondary Vocational and Technical School, and to develop guidelines. A mixed-method development design combined questionnaire surveys of 240 students, 40 art teachers, and 10 administrators with semi-structured interviews including three experts and five outstanding students. Quantitative data were analyzed with descriptive statistics. Semi-structured interviews with three experts and five outstanding students were conducted, transcribed, and analyzed thematically using manual coding. Overall problem levels were moderate. Learning Resources was rated the most problematic domain by both groups. Improvement needs were high. Students prioritized Instruction of Art Education, whereas teachers/administrators prioritized Learning Resources. Interview themes converged on interdisciplinary curriculum design, teacher capacity building, modernized pedagogy, and stronger practical/digital resource support. Seven guidelines were developed and expert-validated for suitability and correctness, providing an actionable roadmap to strengthen interdisciplinary integration, modernize instruction and assessment, optimize learning resources, and enhance support systems in secondary vocational art education.

Keywords: Art Curriculum Management, Secondary Vocational Education, Guidelines Development, Learning Resources

1. INTRODUCTION

Vocational education has become central to national human capital strategies in China. In 2019, China's State Council issued a comprehensive reform plan to build a high-quality vocational education system, targeting 50 high-level schools and 150 key majors by 2022, and continuing initiatives through 2027 to train over 30 million skilled workers (State Council, 2019). As a result, vocational schools have supplied more than 70% of new frontline workers in manufacturing, emerging industries, and services, producing nearly 10 million graduates annually to enhance productivity (Chen, Pei, Zhang & Wu, 2025). Specifically, China is seeking more high-quality, skills-oriented talents to support new economic reform. Secondary

vocational schools (VETs) are expected to deliver both technical competence and broader humanistic development, yet persistent challenges remain in arts education. Secondary vocational schools (VETs) are expected to deliver both technical competence and broader humanistic development, yet persistent challenges remain in arts education. For example, some students undervalue art courses, exhibit low motivation, and lack effective learning strategies. This disengagement is partly due to the absence of clear career pathways in the arts and limited integration between theory and practice (Chen, 2024). Additionally, interaction among students, teachers, and peers is often limited, which narrows interpersonal coordination and stifles student development (Pichkur, 2021). Resource constraints further hinder practical activities and feedback, due to a lack of funding, insufficient infrastructure, and inadequate teaching materials (Liao, 2016). All of these issues collectively affect student learning outcomes and hinder arts education's role in producing well-rounded vocational graduates (Yu, 2019).

The Ministry of Education of China released the "Art Curriculum Standards for Secondary Vocational Schools" in 2020, which frames art education with core competencies including artistic perception, aesthetic ability, artistic expression, and communication. According to the standard, art curriculum management is defined here as the systematic planning, organization, implementation, support, and evaluation of art learning in secondary vocational settings. It includes several key areas (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2020). First, it involves goal setting, which means aligning artistic, cultural, and employability outcomes. Second, it covers curriculum structure and content, sequencing creation, theory, and industry-linked practice. Third, instruction requires learner-centered, authentic, and innovative teaching methods. Fourth, teacher capacity is built through professional development and dual-skilled expertise. Fifth, learning resources encompass studios, instruments, digital platforms, and school‑industry partnerships. Sixth, assessment must be diversified, performance-based, and formative. Finally, it involves robust support systems, such as mentoring, feedback, and collaboration. This framework for art curriculum management aims to foster holistic development and interdisciplinary integration. It also seeks to modernize teaching and optimize practical and digital resources. Furthermore, it focuses on building strong support structures. Recent commentary and policy scholarship repeatedly emphasize these specific conditions.

Existing discussions stress the value of art for creativity, cultural literacy, and employability, but they often 1) foreground ideals and policy missions over empirical mapping of on-the-ground problems; 2) examine single stakeholder groups rather than triangulating students, teachers, and administrators; and 3) under-specify management levers that translate into practical guidelines for secondary VET (Ren, and Liu, 2024). Using questionnaires to analyze data with descriptive statistics. Based on the research findings and in-depth literature review, this study ultimately aims to develop a set of actionable guidelines for art curriculum development, providing reference and insights for similar secondary vocational schools.

In summary, a clear gap remains in research on secondary VET art education. Most studies discuss policy goals and general value, but provide limited school-based evidence on what actually goes wrong in daily curriculum management. Many studies also focus on a single group (students or teachers) and rarely compare views among students, teachers, and administrators within the same school. Finally, few studies translate findings into practical, management-oriented guidelines that schools can apply. To address these gaps, this study explores the research questions: What problems in art curriculum management are perceived by Vocational Certificate students, teachers, and administrators at Baise City Youjiang Art Secondary Vocational and Technical School? Based on the evidence, what actionable guidelines can be

developed to strengthen art curriculum management in this school and similar secondary vocational institutions?

1.1 Research Objectives

(1) To investigate problems and needs of Art curriculum management encountered by students, teachers, and administrators.

(2) To develop the guidelines for art curriculum management for Vocational certificate students.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents how the study applies art curriculum management across four focal domains: Art Courses, Skills for Art Education, Art Instruction, and Learning Resources, thereby forming practice-oriented guidelines for secondary VET.

2.1 Art Course

To remain relevant, the art curriculum must move beyond traditional boundaries. It should cultivate imagination and making, foster critique and aesthetic judgment, and intentionally link form, context, and expression to advance both personal and social aims (Eisner, 2022; Read, 2021). This integrated perspective is crucial because visual art functions less as a stand-alone subject and more as an "adhesive" for meaningful thematic, cross-subject integration across the curriculum (Blackshields et al., 2014). Consequently, modern vocational education and training (VET) must broaden its scope beyond narrow technical skills to strategically include the arts as a vital pathway for developing the multi-skilled, innovative talent that is responsive to dynamic market needs (Yang, 2024)

2.2 Skills for Education

Art education is fundamentally linked to both creativity and employability. Integrating the arts with vocational preparation not only produces skilled craftspeople; it also enhances students' creativity, aesthetic literacy, and overall workplace competitiveness, particularly in the design, media, and related industries (Zhiping et al., 2024). Furthermore, skill development in the arts is rooted in experiential skill formation. Artistic skills, such as image-making and aesthetic judgment, emerge through recursive experiential cycles. These cycles involve an ongoing process of internalizing practice and externalizing performance. This progression is often described as moving "from technology to Tao," signifying the journey from technical proficiency to internalized mastery (Wang, 2023). This process is essential for building a deep, core aesthetic and creative literacy.

2.3 Instruction of Art

Effective art instruction relies on clear design principles and a commitment to continuous improvement. Quality art teaching expertly balances appreciation, critique, and judgment with creation (Kalin, 2018). Rather than integration on the surface, this instruction must use authentic, concept-driven units collaboratively guided by teaching teams and feature diverse assessment methods to accurately gauge student learning (Johnson et al., 2023). Furthermore, pedagogical quality is enhanced by adopting an inquiry stance (Dickson & Clover, 2021). For example, Art-Based Educational Research helps teachers cultivate a deeper empathetic understanding and broaden their educational imagination, which, in turn, significantly enriches their teaching practices and overall pedagogy.

2.4 Learning Resources

Modern art education requires a shift toward ubiquitous, smart ecosystems for learning resources. These resources shouldn't be static; they must be generative, social, and adaptive (Shufang & Ping, 2020). This means they need to support context-aware, personalized learning that seamlessly bridges both physical and digital spaces (Xu, 2021). Crucially, these resources must have a strong fit with VET. Physical assets such as studios and instruments, as well as the various digital platforms used for learning, must be flexible. They need to evolve in tandem with learners' cognitive levels and their preferred media. The ultimate goal is to serve practice-rich, industry-linked art learning that directly prepares students for the vocational sector (Xu, 2021).

At the national level, China has strengthened aesthetic education as part of quality-oriented schooling, for example, The General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving School Aesthetic Education in the New Era (General Office of the CPC Central Committee & General Office of the State Council, 2020) and reinforced vocational education reforms through updated legal and system requirements that support clearer standards and stronger school‑industry collaboration, for example, Vocational Education Law of the People's Republic of China (National People's Congress, 2022). These policy directions create a supportive macro-context for improving art curriculum management in secondary vocational schools, including localized implementation in Baise City.

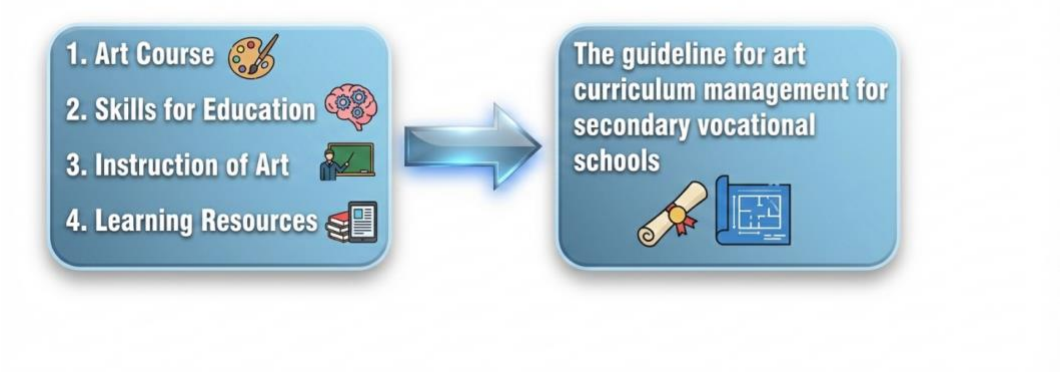

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
Source: (Compiled by the author, 2025)

Figure 1 summarizes the study's conceptual framework. The four domains (Art Courses, Skills for Art Education, Art Instruction, and Learning Resources) were derived from the literature and used to (1) structure the review, (2) guide the development of the questionnaire and interview protocols for students, teachers, and administrators, and (3) organize the analysis into actionable guideline components. The framework, therefore, provides a clear line of linkage from prior scholarship to the study design and to the final set of seven guidelines, which were subsequently validated by experts for suitability and correctness.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study aimed to examine the problems and needs in art curriculum management within secondary vocational schools and to provide an empirical foundation for developing guidelines for vocational certificate students. The study employed mixed methods, including quantitative and qualitative approaches. First, the researchers developed a questionnaire based on the research objectives and relevant literature, which used a quantitative approach, served as the main instrument, and included three parts: general information, problems encountered in art curriculum management, and corresponding needs, with separate versions for students, teachers, and administrators. In addition, a semi-structured interview form was used as the qualitative method to gather supplementary qualitative insights from three experts and five outstanding students to support and enrich the development of the curriculum management guidelines.

3.2 Population

Participants were drawn from Baise City Youjiang Art Secondary Vocational and Technical School to match the school-based case design. The 240 students were selected using stratified sampling by grade/major to ensure representation, while all available art teachers (n=40) and relevant administrators (n=10) were included through purposive/total sampling based on direct responsibility for art curriculum management; potential selection bias from purposive sampling is acknowledged and mitigated by triangulating survey and interview evidence.

3.3 Research Instruments

(1) Questionnaires

The questionnaire consisted of three parts: general information, problems encountered in art curriculum management, and needs related to it. Separate versions were prepared for students, teachers and administrators. The development of the questionnaire items was guided by relevant literature emphasizing the alignment of vocational art curricula with practical skills and industry requirements. The research instrument uses a 5-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932), in which respondents indicate their level of agreement on a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

For the validity of the questionnaires, three experts examined all items using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). The experts were selected based on having a Master's degree or higher, at least 10 years of professional experience, and senior professional titles, ensuring strong subject-matter and vocational education expertise. The development of the questionnaire items was guided by relevant literature emphasizing the alignment of vocational art curricula with practical skills and industry requirements. Each expert independently rated every item for its congruence with the intended construct/objective (e.g., −1 = not congruent, 0 = unclear, +1 = congruent), and IOC (Item-Objective Congruence)values were calculated at the item level. The IOC values ranged from 0.67 to 1.00, indicating acceptable content validity.

For reliability, a pilot test with 30 respondents from the students' side, and 30 from the teachers/administrators' side was conducted. The instrument demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha exceeding 0.70, a threshold commonly regarded as acceptable for research purposes (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). Following the pilot test, the questionnaire was revised for clarity,

including refinements to wording and re-organization of item arrangement to reduce ambiguity and improve respondent comprehension.

As a result of two pilot tests, the student-version questionnaire demonstrated strong internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.873$) based on 35 items from a 30-participant pilot sample. Likewise, the teacher/administrator version showed strong internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.862$) using the same 35 items.

The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSSPRO (an online statistical analysis platform), which was used to conduct descriptive statistics and related analyses reported in the Results section.

(2) Semi-structured Interview

A semi-structured interview form was used to gather additional qualitative information from three experts and five outstanding students, who were selected based on their top-five academic ranking in the previous semester. The interviews provided reflective thoughts on learning experiences and challenges in art education.

The qualitative interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis with manual coding. Interview recordings were transcribed and read several times to become familiar with the data. I then created initial codes by highlighting key statements and assigning short labels to their meanings. Similar codes were grouped into categories, and categories were merged into themes that addressed the research questions and aligned with the study framework. I kept a coding log and returned to the transcripts to check that each theme was supported by clear evidence (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.4 Data Collection

With permission from the principal and the head of academics, the researchers distributed the questionnaires in person on campus and collected responses from students, teachers, and administrators.

Administrative permission was then obtained from the principal and the head of academics at Baise City Youjiang Art Secondary Vocational and Technical School. The self-administered questionnaire was originally developed in Chinese and programmed on the online survey platform Questionnaire Star (www.wjx.com). The survey link was distributed to students, teachers, and administrators through the school's WeChat groups and direct WeChat messages. Before responding, all participants were informed of the purpose of the study, assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and reminded that participation was entirely voluntary.

In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with three experts and five outstanding students via a Tencent Meeting room to obtain supplementary information on art curriculum management. Using the online meeting platform, the sessions were automatically recorded. The interviews were conducted in Chinese; after transcription and thematic analysis, the findings were translated into English.

3.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the completed questionnaires were exported to an online package programme statistical software and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean (μ), and standard deviation (σ). For interpretation of the mean scores, the following criteria were applied: 4.51–

5.00 represented the highest level of problems and needs; 3.51–4.50, a high level; 2.51–3.50, a moderate level; 1.51–2.50, a low level; and 1.00–1.50, the lowest level.

In addition to the quantitative analysis, data obtained from semi-structured interviews with three experts and five outstanding students were analyzed through content analysis to identify key themes and insights related to art curriculum management. Interview transcripts were analyzed using qualitative content analysis, moving from open coding to categories and themes to summarize students, teachers, and administrators' perspectives on art curriculum management. The integration of both data sources provided a comprehensive understanding of stakeholder concerns and informed the development of the curriculum management guidelines.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This section reports findings aligned with the study objectives: (1) identifying key curriculum management problems, (2) clarifying their practical implications for curriculum planning, implementation, and support, and (3) summarizing priority improvement needs. Quantitative results describe perceived problem severity and needs, while qualitative evidence explains how these issues influence day-to-day curriculum management practices at the school.

4.1 The Results from the Survey

4.1 presents the descriptive results obtained from vocational students (N=240) and teachers and administrators (N=50) at Baise City Youjiang Art Secondary Vocational and Technical School. The findings encompass the demographic profiles of both respondent groups and their overall status regarding problems and needs in art curriculum management across four dimensions.

Table 1. Demographic Profiles of Students

Demographic Profiles		Total (N)=240	
		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	135	56.25
	Female	105	43.75
Total		240	100
Ages	Under 18 years old	223	92.92
	18-20	17	7.08
Total		240	100
Educational Level	First year	79	32.92
	Second year	86	35.83
	Third year	75	31.25
Total		240	100

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 240 student respondents, revealing a relatively balanced gender distribution with a slight male majority (56.25% male, 43.75% female), while the age distribution shows a strong concentration of adolescents under 18 years old (92.92%), with only a small proportion aged 18-20 (7.08%). In terms of educational level, students were fairly evenly distributed across the three years of study, with second-year students comprising the largest group at 35.83%, followed by first-year students at 32.92%, and third-year students at 31.25%.

Table 2. Demographic Profiles of Teachers and Administrators

Demographic Profiles		**Total (N)=50**	
		Frequency	**Percentage**
Gender	Male	18	36
	Female	32	64
Total		50	100
Ages	21-25	7	14
	26-30	11	22
	31-35	15	30
	36-40	10	20
	41-45	5	10
	46 and above	2	4
Total		50	100
Education	Bachelor's Degree	40	80
	Master's Degree	6	12
	Doctoral Degree	4	8
Total		50	100
Years of working in the school	1-5	31	62
	6-10	7	14
	11-15	5	10
	16-20	4	8
	21-25	2	4
	26 and above	1	2
Total		50	100

Table 2 presents the demographic profile of the 50 teachers and administrators, revealing a female-dominated workforce (64% female, 36% male) with a relatively young age distribution, predominantly

concentrated in the 31-35 age range (30%), followed by 26-30 years old (22%) and 36-40 years old (20%). Educational qualifications reveal that the majority hold Bachelor's degrees (80%), with smaller proportions holding Master's degrees (12%) and Doctoral degrees (8%). Regarding teaching experience, the sample is characterized by relatively new teachers and administrators, with 62% having worked at the school for 1-5 years, while only 14% have 6-10 years of experience, and very few (2%) have served for 26 years or more, indicating a predominantly early-career teaching staff.

Table 3. Students' Opinion on Current Problems of Art Curriculum

Items	**N=240**		**Level of P**roblems
	μ	**σ**	
Art Course	3.04	0.65	Moderate
Skills for Education	3.25	0.83	Moderate
Instruction of Art	3.22	0.90	Moderate
Learning Resources	3.30	0.93	Moderate
Total	3.20	0.83	Moderate

Table 3 summarizes responses from 240 students and shows that perceived problems in art curriculum management were moderate across all domains (overall $\mu = 3.20$, $\sigma = 0.83$). Learning Resources recorded the highest mean problem level ($\mu = 3.30$, $\sigma = 0.93$), followed by Skills for Education ($\mu = 3.25$, $\sigma = 0.83$) and Instruction of Art ($\mu = 3.22$, $\sigma = 0.90$), whereas Art Course showed the lowest yet still moderate level ($\mu = 3.04$, $\sigma = 0.65$).

Table 4. Teachers' and A**dministrators' Opinion on Current Problems of Art Curriculum**

Items	**N=50**		**Level of P**roblems
	μ	**σ**	
Art Course	3.27	1.24	Moderate
Skills for Education	3.23	1.37	Moderate
Instruction of Art	3.15	1.33	Moderate
Learning Resources	3.36	1.30	Moderate
Total	3.25	1.31	Moderate

Table 4 presents responses from 50 teachers and administrators, indicating that perceived problems in art curriculum management were moderate overall ($\mu = 3.25$, $\sigma = 1.31$) and remained moderate across all domains. Learning Resources was rated as the most problematic area ($\mu = 3.36$, $\sigma = 1.30$), followed by Art Course ($\mu = 3.27$, $\sigma = 1.24$) and Skills for Education ($\mu = 3.23$, $\sigma = 1.37$), while Instruction of Art showed the lowest mean problem level ($\mu = 3.15$, $\sigma = 1.33$).

Table 5. Students' Opinion on Current Needs of Art Curriculum

Items	N=240		Level of Needs
	μ	σ	
Art course	3.64	0.93	High
Skills for art education	3.69	0.96	High
Instruction of art education	3.93	0.92	High
Learning resources	3.75	0.99	High
Total	3.75	0.95	High

Table 5 summarizes responses from 240 students and indicates that perceived needs to improve art curriculum management were high overall (μ = 3.75, σ = 0.95) and remained consistently high across all domains. Instruction of art education showed the highest level of need (μ = 3.93, σ = 0.92), followed by Learning resources (μ = 3.75, σ = 0.99) and Skills for art education (μ = 3.69, σ = 0.96), while Art course registered the lowest, though still high need level (μ = 3.64, σ = 0.93).

Table 6. Teachers' and Administrators' Opinion on Current Needs of Art Curriculum

Items	N=50		Level of Needs
	μ	σ	
Art course	3.91	1.14	High
Skills for art education	3.64	1.19	High
Instruction of art education	3.88	1.20	High
Learning resources	4.14	1.25	High
Total	3.89	1.20	High

Table 6 reports responses from 50 teachers and administrators and shows that perceived needs for improving art curriculum management were high overall (μ = 3.89, σ = 1.20) and remained high across all domains. Learning resources was rated as the highest priority need (μ = 4.14, σ = 1.25), followed by Art course (μ = 3.91, σ = 1.14) and Instruction of art education (μ = 3.88, σ = 1.20), while Skills for art education showed the lowest−though still high−need level (μ = 3.64, σ = 1.19).

Table 7. Comparative Analysis of Students vs. Teachers &Administrators on Current Problems

Item	Students (μ)	Teachers and Administrators (μ)	Δ (Teachers &Administrators - Student)	Key Observation
Learning Resources	3.3	3.36	+0.06	Both groups rank this as the highest problem area.
Art Course	3.04 (Lowest)	3.27	+0.23	Teachers and administrators perceive this as a significantly greater problem than students do.
Instruction of Art	3.22	3.15 (Lowest)	-0.07	Teachers and administrators rate this as the lowest problem, suggesting they feel more confident in their instruction compared to other areas.
Standard Deviation (σ)	0.83 (Overall)	1.31 (Overall)	N/A	Teachers' and administrators' perceptions show substantially greater variability than student perceptions, suggesting less consensus among teachers/administrators.

Table 7 compares mean ratings between students, teachers and administrators on current problems in art curriculum management and shows broad convergence with some notable gaps. Both groups identify Learning Resources as the most serious problem (students $\mu = 3.30$; teachers & administrators $\mu = 3.36$; $\Delta = +0.06$), indicating shared concern about resource constraints. However, teachers & administrators perceive Art Course issues as considerably more problematic as students do (students $\mu = 3.04$ vs. teachers & administrators $\mu = 3.27$; $\Delta = +0.23$), suggesting teachers & administrators see stronger structural or curricular challenges. In contrast, teachers & administrators rate Instruction of Art as the least problematic area (teachers & administrators $\mu = 3.15$ vs. students $\mu = 3.22$; $\Delta = -0.07$), implying comparatively higher confidence in instructional practices. Finally, the higher overall standard deviation among teachers & administrators ($\sigma = 1.31$ vs. students $\sigma = 0.83$) indicates greater variability and weaker consensus in teachers & administrators' perceptions.

Table 8. Comparative Analysis of Students vs. Teachers & Administrators on Current Needs

Item	Students (μ)	Teachers and Administrators (μ)	Δ (Teachers &Administrators - Student)	Key Observation
Learning Resources	3.75	4.14	+0.39	Teachers and administrators perceive the need for improvement in learning resources as the highest and most urgent, with the largest difference from student opinion.

Instruction of art education	3.93 (Highest)	3.88	-0.05	Students see this as the highest need, suggesting they most desire improvement in how they are being taught.
Art course	3.64 (Lowest)	3.91	+0.27	Teachers and administrators see a much higher need for change in the structure/content of the art course than students do.
Standard Deviation (σ)	0.95 (Overall)	1.20 (Overall)	N/A	Similar to the problems data, staff views show greater variation, reflecting less uniformity in their opinions on what is needed.

Table 8 compares students' and teachers/administrators' perceived needs for improving art curriculum management and reveals both shared priorities and meaningful divergences. Teachers & administrators rate Learning Resources as the most urgent need (teachers & administrators $\mu = 4.14$ vs. students $\mu = 3.75$; $\Delta = +0.39$), representing the largest gap and indicating stronger staff concern about resource enhancement. By contrast, students identify Instruction of art education as their highest need (students $\mu = 3.93$ vs. teachers & administrators $\mu = 3.88$; $\Delta = -0.05$), suggesting they prioritize improvements in teaching practices and learning experiences. Teachers & administrators also perceive a substantially greater need for changes to the Art course itself (staff $\mu = 3.91$ vs. students $\mu = 3.64$; $\Delta = +0.27$), implying staff see more room for reform in course design and content. Consistent with the problems comparison, teachers' and administrators' responses show higher overall variability ($\sigma = 1.20$ vs. 0.95), indicating less consensus among teachers/administrators regarding improvement priorities.

4.2 The Results of Interviews on Art Curriculum Management

Interviews with outstanding students showed that clear learning goals, self-discipline, time management, and the ability to connect art with their professional subjects were key factors in their success. Students mentioned challenges such as abstract theory, limited materials, and low confidence, but they overcame these through teacher support, increased practice, peer collaboration, and exposure to artistic examples. They agreed that art courses improved creativity, aesthetic awareness, communication, and teamwork, and suggested expanding practical projects, interdisciplinary activities, and access to resources.

Interviews with expert teachers highlighted the important role of art education in developing creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills for vocational students. Experts identified challenges, including limited interdisciplinary curriculum design, insufficient teacher capacity, outdated instructional content, and inadequate resources. They recommended enhancing teacher training, updating course content, strengthening industry cooperation, and improving learning resources. These findings helped clarify existing problems and needs in art curriculum management and guided the overall direction of curriculum improvement.

Table 9. Thematic Analysis of an Interview on Art Curriculum Management

	Theme	Codes	Key Findings	Quote
1	Strategic Self-Management	Goal setting, Time blocking, Self-discipline, and Flexibility.	Students succeed by dividing daily schedules into "blocks", (e.g., morning for skills, afternoon for art).	*"I divide my day into blocks. I do skills in the morning and art in the afternoon." (Student A)*
2	Interdisciplinary Synergy	Skill integration, Creative problem-solving, and Narrative expression.	High achievers don't see art and professional courses as separate; they use art to enhance professional outputs (e.g., using color theory in digital media).	*"Art is not separate from my major. Color theory improves my digital work." (Student B)*
3	Psychological & Creative Resilience	Creative bottlenecks, Confidence building, and Persistence.	Challenges include "abstract theory" and "creative blocks." Overcoming these requires peer feedback and exposure to external exhibitions.	*"The theory can feel abstract, and I get creative blocks. Peer feedback helps me continue." (Student C)*
4	Career & Academic Edge	Aesthetic literacy, Originality, and Competitive advantage.	Experts and students agree that art training makes professional work more "attractive" and "innovative," aiding in internships and employment.	*"Art training makes students' work more attractive and innovative. This helps in internships."(Expert A)*
5	Institutional Support & Resources	Resource scarcity, Faculty collaboration, and Facility optimization.	Experts highlight "curriculum silos" and "insufficient teacher training" as major barriers to integration.	*"Curriculum silos and insufficient teacher training are key barriers to integration." (Expert B)*
6	Pedagogical Innovation	Visual note-taking, Micro-learning, and Project-driven assessment.	Students utilize "visual notes" and "daily 15-minute practices" to maintain proficiency without burnout.	*"I use visual notes and do fifteen minutes of practice every day. It prevents burnout." (Student D)*

Table 9 presents a strong consensus between high-achieving students, teachers, and administrators. The management of vocational art curricula must move away from isolated subjects toward an interdisciplinary ecosystem. While students focus on personal "micro-strategies" like time-blocking and visual memory, experts emphasize the need for "macro-structural" changes, such as industry-aligned projects and shared training bases, to ensure that artistic literacy translates directly into career competitiveness.

5. DISCUSSION

In this Discussion, the quantitative rankings and mean scores (Tables 3–6) are interpreted alongside interview themes to explain why the key problems exist, how they affect curriculum effectiveness and daily implementation, and what actionable responses are feasible at the school level. Differences in perceptions between stakeholder groups are also addressed using Table 7 to support evidence-based curriculum

decision-making.

5.1 Learning Resources as the Highest-Ranked Constraint

Quantitative results indicate that Learning Resources is perceived as the most severe problem by both groups, with the highest mean score for students ($\mu = 3.30$) and teachers/administrators ($\mu = 3.36$) (Table 3). This ranking suggests that learning resources are a "binding constraint" on curriculum effectiveness: even when course content is appropriate, insufficient resources limit hands-on practice, reduce task authenticity, and produce uneven learning opportunities across classes. As a result, student learning outcomes may become inconsistent because performance depends on whether adequate materials, tools, space, or reference examples are available during instruction rather than on the intended curriculum design (Greer et al., 2023; Yu et al., 2024; Wirtati et al., 2025).

Importantly, resource shortages should not be treated only as an instructional issue; they are closely tied to curriculum management processes. Several root causes are plausible in this context, including budget constraints, insufficient external support, and administrative/procurement issues (e.g., delayed purchasing cycles, unclear responsibility for resource planning, or weak prioritization across modules). Interview findings can be used to strengthen this explanation by showing how resource limitations appear in practice—for example, teachers may rely on personal materials, simplify tasks, or reduce studio/practical time when equipment is unavailable, which directly widens the gap between intended curriculum objectives and actual classroom implementation (Wirtati et al., 2025).

Based on these results, curriculum managers can respond through targeted, practical steps: (1) establish a minimum resource standard for each module (essential materials/tools per learning outcome), (2) strengthen resource planning and accountability (annual resource audit, named responsibility, and transparent procurement timeline), (3) develop local partnerships with enterprises, studios, and community organizations to share practice sites or equipment, and (4) expand digital and low-cost resource substitutes (demonstration videos, exemplar portfolios, rubric banks, and virtual galleries) to reduce reliance on limited physical resources while maintaining learning continuity (Wang, 2024; Zhang, 2024) .

5.2 Art Course Problems

Survey results also identify significant problems related to the Art Course (Tables 3‑6). These concerns suggest that curriculum coherence may be weakened when course objectives, content sequence, and assessment tasks do not form a clear progression. Such problems often stem from gaps in curriculum management, including limited alignment between intended competencies and actual teaching tasks, insufficient curriculum mapping, or weak routine review mechanisms. This pattern is consistent with prior work highlighting theory‑practice gaps and weak alignment when learning outcomes are not connected to structured project pathways and industry collaboration (Zhang, 2024), as well as research emphasizing the importance of clear vertical sequencing from basic skills to integrated, career-relevant projects (Yao, 2025). When the Art Course structure lacks coherence, teachers may interpret content differently across classes, and students may experience repeated or fragmented content rather than cumulative skill development.

Interview data can be used to provide concrete illustrations of this gap. For example, if students report that course content does not effectively support skill growth or career preparation, and teachers report difficulty coordinating content across modules, these insights together indicate that curriculum planning and implementation monitoring require strengthening. The gap between intended curriculum and actual

delivery becomes visible when students do not clearly understand learning expectations, when assignments are not aligned to stated outcomes, or when assessment criteria are inconsistent across instructors.

One good solution is to have a curriculum mapping process that links (1) learning outcomes → (2) weekly topics/tasks → (3) assessment rubrics → (4) required resources. Moreover, the school may organize a curriculum review meeting each semester, using information from surveys and interviews as input to first revise the modules with the highest problem ratings. Hence, this way changes will be based on data and they'll be focused on improving curriculum coherence (Velayutham, 2024).

5.3 Theory – Practice Gap

Problems related to Skills for Education (Tables 3–6) indicate a persistent theory–practice gap: students may understand concepts but have limited opportunities to translate them into observable performance. From a curriculum management perspective, this gap often reflects insufficient integration between competency requirements and daily learning tasks, limited practice intensity, or assessments that emphasize knowledge recall over applied performance. When "skills" are not translated into routine practice tasks and measurable performance standards, curriculum implementation becomes less effective, and students may graduate without stable competence in core professional or artistic skills. Prior studies suggest that when art programs neglect transferable skills and structured learning designs, students struggle to connect art learning with broader educational development goals (Greer et al., 2023). Conversely, transversal skills can be strengthened when tasks are designed with explicit outcomes and structured reflection (Kyomugisha, 2024; Sulaieva & Batiievska, 2023).

Interview feedback will help clarify the mechanism underlying the problem by indicating where the practice is breaking down (e.g., no practice conditions, unclear performance criteria, or insufficient feedback cycles). For example, when there is very limited access to the learning resources, it is quite possible that skills training can only be demonstrated or explained rather than be followed by guided practice, this drastically diminishes the learning outcomes and confidence. Actionable strategies. A feasible improvement is to redesign each module around competency-based tasks, with clear performance criteria and staged practice. Curriculum management can support this by requiring each module to include (1) a minimum number of practical tasks, (2) formative assessment checkpoints, and (3) a rubric aligned with the intended skill outcomes. This makes skills development measurable, monitorable, and more consistent across instructors.

5.4 Instruction of Art: moving from teacher-centered delivery to implementable active learning

The study reveals that instruction remains predominantly lecture- and teacher-centered (Tables 3-6). A similar pattern of teacher-dominated approaches that reduce student autonomy and engagement has been reported, even when modern tools and projects are involved (Chen & Che Din, 2024; Yu et al., 2024). Nevertheless, beyond merely pointing out this issue, the Discussion section should analyze the reasons for it and suggest ways to transition to more interactive practices. Teacher-centered instruction may continue for a variety of reasons, such as: lack of resources, which limits hands-on activities, inadequately trained teachers in active learning methodologies, the pressure of time to cover the syllabus, or the absence of institutional support (such as lesson templates, assessment tools, and well-managed class structures) that is necessary for the implementation of student-centered strategies.

A shift toward student-centered, project-based, or studio-based learning should be supported by concrete implementation steps. For example, curriculum management can require that each module converts a planned proportion of instructional time into task-based learning, including critique sessions, studio practice, and project milestones) and provides the support that makes this feasible rather than aspirational (Kyomugisha, 2024).

Practical ways to make this transition workable include: (1) converting a defined portion of lecture time into studio/project tasks aligned with learning outcomes, (2) providing short, targeted teacher development workshops on project-based learning, critique routines, and formative feedback, (3) using portfolio-based assessment with rubric-based evaluation and periodic checkpoints, and (4) creating a shared repository of model lesson plans, project templates, and assessment rubrics so that teachers have ready-to-use tools to implement interactive instruction consistently (Wang, 2024; wang et al., 2025).

5.5 Why Rank of Problems Differ

Table 7 suggests that students and teachers/administrators do not always prioritize curriculum problems in the same way. This discrepancy is meaningful for curriculum management because it reflects differences in daily experience and professional responsibility. Students often rank Learning Resources as more severe because resource shortages are immediately felt in task completion, practice quality, and confidence during learning activities. In contrast, teachers/administrators may perceive Art Course issues as more urgent because they are responsible for curriculum design, sequencing, assessment standards, and overall program coherence. Therefore, different rankings are not contradictions; rather, they indicate that curriculum improvement must balance “visible implementation barriers” (resources that shape daily learning) with “structural curriculum issues” (course design and coherence).

A data-driven improvement plan should combine both perspectives: prioritize the highest-ranked constraints affecting implementation (Learning Resources) while simultaneously improving curriculum structure and coherence (Art Course mapping and outcome alignment). This dual strategy reduces the risk of revising curriculum documents without improving classroom feasibility, or of investing in resources without clarifying which competencies and tasks those resources should support.

5.6 Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Evidence

The mixed-method design is most useful when quantitative and qualitative evidence are synthesized. Survey data (Tables 3–6) identify which problems are most severe and how stakeholder groups rank them, while interviews explain the underlying causes and operational consequences, such as how resource constraints lead to simplified tasks, why teacher-centered instruction persists, and what forms of support are feasible. Synthesizing both sources indicates that the curriculum management challenges are not isolated classroom problems but system-level constraints involving planning, implementation support, resource allocation, teacher capacity development, and monitoring mechanisms. This integration also strengthens the practical value of the findings by moving from problem description to cause explanation and implementable responses.

The overall findings indicate that enhancing curriculum management entails concerted efforts in four areas: (1) resource governance: standards, planning, partnerships, and digital supplements (Wang, 2024; Zhang, 2024; Wirtati et al., 2025), (2) curriculum coherence: mapping learning outcomes to tasks and assessment (Zhang, 2024; Yao, 2025), (3) instructional capacity support: practical active learning tools and teacher training (Chen & Che Din, 2024; Yu et al., 2024; Kyomugisha, 2024), and (4) monitoring and

feedback mechanisms: regular reviews based on stakeholder input. For reforms that require sequencing and budgeting considerations, it is advisable to align changes with institutional constraints and relevant standards (Chen et al., 2025). These implications derive from the quantitative rankings and are further supported by interview explanations; thus, they are useful for curriculum developers, school heads, and teachers seeking feasible ways of improvement.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

The questionnaire findings show that the overall level of curriculum management problems was moderate for both groups, including students and teachers/administrators. Among the four domains, Learning Resources was rated as the most serious problem by both groups. In contrast, the overall level of improvement needed was high. Students reported the strongest need in Instruction of Art Education, while teachers/administrators reported the strongest need in Learning Resources. Comparative data from students, teachers, and administrators highlighted a significant demand for modernized management structures.

Based on these findings, curriculum management improvement should prioritize four evidence-based actions: (1) strengthen resource allocation and governance through module-level minimum resource standards, transparent procurement planning, partnerships with local enterprises/studios, and expanded digital learning resources; (2) improve curriculum coherence through curriculum mapping that aligns outcomes, tasks, assessment rubrics, and required resources; (3) support instructional improvement by providing implementable student-centered teaching tools (project templates, critique routines, and portfolio rubrics) and targeted teacher development; and (4) establish routine monitoring and feedback mechanisms that use stakeholder evidence and performance data to guide iterative curriculum updates.

6.2 Recommendations

The synthesis of interview data led to several critical implications for the future of vocational art curriculum management:

(1) School administrators should reduce curriculum silos by establishing a shared plan across arts and professional subjects, so that teachers deliver connected content in a consistent sequence.

(2) Curriculum coordinators should require integrated learning outputs that combine art training with vocational production, so that students routinely apply artistic principles to improve the quality of their professional work.

(3) Art and vocational teachers should replace overly abstract delivery with guided practice and clear performance tasks, so students can understand theory through doing and reduce learning barriers.

(4) Teachers should build regular peer-feedback routines in class, so students receive timely critique and can move through creative blocks with structured support.

(5) Teachers should coach students to manage their learning with time blocks and short daily practice so they maintain proficiency without burnout.

(6) Schools should provide scheduled exposure to external exhibitions and professional works so that students broaden their references, strengthen their motivation, and improve their creative output.

(7) School administrators should strengthen teacher training focused on integrated teaching, so teachers can design cross-subject tasks and guide students effectively. Internship coordinators and teachers should emphasize high-quality, attractive, and innovative work in student outputs, so that integrated

learning better supports internship performance and employment readiness.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE STUDIES

This study has several limitations. First, survey responses may be affected by social desirability bias, response bias, and recall bias, which could lead participants to overreport positive views or underreport problems, thereby influencing the reported mean scores. Second, the study is school-based and focuses on one secondary vocational school in Baise City, so the findings reflect a specific institutional and regional context and may not be fully generalizable to other vocational schools or regions. Third, the sample of teachers and administrators was relatively small compared with the student sample, which may limit the stability of group comparisons and help explain the greater variability in staff responses. Finally, although qualitative interviews were used to support interpretation, the study did not aim to achieve broad representativeness of all stakeholder views beyond this case.

Future studies could extend this work in several ways. First, researchers can conduct multi-site replication by applying the same framework in vocational schools with different sizes, majors, and resource conditions to test transferability and refine the guidelines. Second, implementation and evaluation studies are needed to examine how the proposed guidelines are adopted in practice, including barriers, facilitators, and implementation fidelity. Third, longitudinal or pre‑post designs can assess the long-term effects of guideline implementation on outcomes such as teaching practices, student engagement, skill development, and resource use. Fourth, future research may use comparative stakeholder analysis (students vs. teachers vs. administrators) to explore why perceptions differ and how these differences shape curriculum decisions. Finally, more focused studies can evaluate the effectiveness of specific interventions within each domain (e.g., digital resource upgrades, teacher capacity-building programs, or diversified assessment models) to identify which changes produce the greatest improvements.

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Consent to Participate: Before data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants, clearly explaining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

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