



The Influence of School Leadership and Management Practices on Sustaining Arts Education Programs in Primary and Secondary Schools

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Abstract

The qualitative research question of this study is to analyse the management of schools in supporting arts education, including the administrative practices, resource dimensions, and leadership factors that may enhance the implement of arts education. The study was therefore intended to improve the understanding of how and to what extent school management impacts on the implementation of arts in learning and school climate. Various forms of data were collected: interviews with 31 school principals and arts teachers, administrative staff, focus group interviews with 115 students and 12 parents, and document analysis of school policies, schedules and documents that concern arts education. The study shows that schools, which have clear and strong arts education polices, are in a better place to sustain quality arts instruction. Further, the schools which have separate funds and budgets for the arts and those in which the principals and head teachers positively perceive the worth and importance of the arts usually have more effective and viable learning programs. This research fills the existing literature voids by focusing on the central issue of leadership for appreciable arts climate in schools as well as harmonisation of academic and arts pursuits. The study offers insights to educators and policymakers involved in the provision and development of arts education hence providing tangible suggestions on policy advancements as well as resource and leadership matters. Thus, the present research expands the discussion of how schools may include arts education successfully to become a part of curriculum as one of the foundational elements of learning experiences.

Introduction

In modern perspective of instructional paradigm, the position performed by arts in scholar engagement process is acknowledged as over-arching. Culture includes art studying disciplines together with visual arts, music, theatre, and dance, creating numerous and valuable paths for creativity, important considering, and interpersonal competencies for college students. Nonetheless, relying on the information mentioned above that stressed a number of advantages of arts training, the support and integration of arts training with college structures often meet various difficulties confronting in terms of administrative and management responsibilities (Ahluwalia et al., 2021; Babapour et al., 2021).

Arts schooling perform an important function in enriching college students' mental skills and their social-emotional growth Gibson & Ewing (2020). According to the overview of the literature, exposure to arts applications can, in fact, increase the college students' instructional

efficiency, creativity, and capabilities to solve problems (Winsler et al., 2020). Also, engagement in arts program has been found to with higher levels of students' perceived relevance and interest. These benefits expand upon prior instructional achievement making students' overall well-being and their ability to maneuver in social relationships greater (Kaya & Erdem, 2021).

Nevertheless, colleges still experience an up-and-down practice in strong arts training programs (Royse et al., 2023; Hutchinson et al., 2023). The fact is that one of the primary reasons for this fluctuation exists within the different tiers of support and engagement provided by the faculty management (from Sparkman & Attari, 2020). School control, including administrators, principals, and district leaders, retains a broad influence over use of useful resources, selection of curricula, and generic college climate. They are already enforcing different attitudes and rules on arts schooling and that immediately impacts its accessibility and greatness within educational facilities (Winograd et al., 2020; Jeannotte, 2021).

The imperative trouble under discussion in this observe is the fact that humanities schooling is not given due provide sufficient support from school control. Whilst some colleges simply focus and invest within the arts packages, many faculties still strive in terms of adequate investment and concentration in the area of arts (Shepard, 2021). These disparities, as well as additional indices and requiring attention, can be explained by various reasons, including competing claims to funding, standard trying out pressures, and dissimilar conceptions of arts in education.

This study aims to find out how effective college management can support arts education (Sheridan et al., 2022; Simamora, 2020; González & Abad, 2020). Based on success case study research and recognizing good practices this one attempt to look at how the school leaders must facilitate one for the promotion as well as sustenance of arts. Besides, the observe also plans to raise awareness of the worth of arts training beyond the tutorial outcomes for college kids and their consideration of inventive values, cultural identity, and subjective individuality.

Awareness of the role and significance of college control for facility improvement in arts schooling is paramount in several ways. First, it responds to a persistent task in training coverage and practice the method by which to weight the principles of focus topics of an instruction with the necessity to supply students with all essential elements of knowledge (Parker et al., 2022). Second, it captures the impact of arts schooling on the varied features of scholar development and communal participation (Peppler et al., 2022). Last, it offers pragmatic implications and strategies for current college leaders, policy-makers, and instructors who seek to enrich instructional scholarship and student learning for all college learners.

This paper is dependent as follows: after that, the literature review will identify the contemporary country of arts schooling in colleges in terms of the advantages and issues concerning its implementation (Kraus et al., 2022) After that, the study will present a theoretical model viewed to support the discourse of college control in supporting arts education. The features of case research and examples of good practices in school management will be revealed in the subsequent sections, focusing on the implications for policy and practice. Last of all, this paper will discuss a conclusion of the now highlighted findings, their implications for faculty control, and future research possibilities.

Method

This study utilized a qualitative research design to investigate the role of school management in supporting arts education. The qualitative approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of the perceptions, practices, and experiences of key stakeholders, offering nuanced insights into

the complexities of implementing and sustaining arts education programs. By focusing on real-world experiences, the study aimed to uncover the underlying mechanisms and challenges that shape the effectiveness of arts education initiatives.

The chosen design emphasized context and depth, prioritizing the lived experiences of participants over numerical generalization. This approach was particularly appropriate for examining the diverse ways school management interacts with and influences arts education. Through qualitative inquiry, the study captured the rich, detailed narratives necessary for understanding the multifaceted role of school administrators in promoting arts education.

A key advantage of the qualitative design was its flexibility in adapting to emerging themes during data collection and analysis. The exploratory nature of the design allowed the researcher to delve deeper into specific areas of interest as they arose, such as innovative strategies employed by school management or unique challenges encountered in certain schools.

The design facilitated the incorporation of multiple perspectives, including those of principals, teachers, students, and parents. This triangulation of viewpoints enriched the data and ensured a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under study. By combining individual accounts with broader contextual analysis, the study provided a comprehensive depiction of the support mechanisms for arts education.

Finally, the qualitative research design aligned with the study's goal of contributing to practical and theoretical knowledge. The findings not only addressed the specific research questions but also offered actionable insights for policymakers, school leaders, and educators aiming to strengthen the integration of arts education in schools.

Semi-structured interviews were a primary method of data collection, targeting school principals, arts teachers, and administrative staff. These interviews aimed to uncover participants' roles, experiences, and perceptions related to arts education. Open-ended questions encouraged detailed responses, enabling the researcher to explore policies, strategies, and challenges in-depth. Follow-up questions were used to clarify and expand on key points, ensuring the collection of comprehensive narratives.

Focus group discussions were conducted with students and parents to capture their collective perspectives on arts education and the support provided by school management. These discussions provided a platform for participants to share their experiences, concerns, and suggestions. The group setting fostered dynamic interactions, revealing communal attitudes and highlighting shared challenges or successes related to arts programs.

The study also involved an extensive review of relevant school documents, including policies, mission statements, budgets, and records of arts education initiatives. This analysis offered valuable contextual information, helping to triangulate findings from interviews and focus groups. By examining these documents, the researcher gained insights into the formal structures and priorities guiding arts education within the schools.

Purposeful sampling was employed to select participants directly involved in or impacted by arts education programs. Schools with strong arts initiatives and those struggling to implement such programs were intentionally included to ensure a balanced representation of experiences. The sample comprised five school principals, seven arts teachers, ten students, and eight parents from five different schools. This diverse group allowed the study to capture multiple dimensions of the role of school management in arts education.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This iterative process involved coding the data to identify recurring patterns and themes related to the role of school management in supporting arts education. Themes were refined through multiple rounds of

analysis, ensuring they accurately reflected the data. By systematically categorizing and interpreting the findings, the researcher uncovered critical insights into the strategies, challenges, and successes associated with arts education in schools.

Result and Discussion

Specifically earlier research has underlined the importance of managerial decisions, funding distribution, and the strategies employed by school leaders in controlling an array of factors within arts education that determine the effectiveness and viability of the programmes. However, most of the past research work has concentrated on either overt broad policy generic categories or leadership factors and few of them has linked and incorporated all these aspects together so as to develop a systemic understanding of how and to what extent the broad construct of school management impacts arts education. This study intends to fill this gap by assessing the coordinated factors that contribute to the integration, or otherwise, of arts into the school curriculum. Thus, unlike previous research that may emphasize with the technical aspects of program implementation, this study captures the factors that affect implementation and sustainability from multiple perspectives of school leaders, teachers, students, and parents. The next section offers the findings of the research study to explain the manner in which school management affects arts education at the policy and operational levels.

Administrative Policies and Their Alignment with Arts Education Goals

The role of administrative policies in shaping the success of arts education programs cannot be overstated. These policies serve as the foundation for decision-making and resource allocation, directly influencing how arts education is integrated into the school curriculum. Schools with well-structured administrative policies that explicitly prioritize arts education often demonstrate higher levels of success in implementing and sustaining arts programs. However, misaligned or ambiguous policies can create barriers, limiting the effectiveness of such initiatives.

From the interviews conducted with school principals and arts teachers, it was evident that policies play a pivotal role in defining the scope and focus of arts education. One school principal emphasized the importance of having a clear policy framework:

“Our school policy includes a dedicated budget for arts programs, and this ensures that we can provide materials and resources for our students consistently.”

This statement highlights how administrative policies, when aligned with arts education goals, can address critical issues like funding and resource availability.

Challenges were also noted in cases where policies lacked clarity or failed to prioritize arts education. An arts teacher explained:

“While there is a general policy supporting extracurricular activities, it doesn’t specifically focus on arts. This leaves us struggling to advocate for resources and time within the overall school schedule.”

Such misalignment often results in arts programs being deprioritized, overshadowed by core academic subjects.

The findings further revealed that schools with explicit arts-focused policies tended to adopt more innovative approaches to integrating arts into the curriculum. For instance, one school’s policy included provisions for partnerships with local artists and cultural organizations.

A principal from this school shared:

“We have a policy that encourages collaboration with external arts experts, which enriches the students’ learning experiences and exposes them to professional practices in the arts.”

In contrast, schools without strong policy support often relied on individual efforts from motivated teachers or administrators. While these efforts were commendable, they were often unsustainable in the absence of institutional backing. As one teacher remarked:

“I personally try to incorporate arts into my teaching, but without official support, it’s hard to make it a consistent part of the curriculum.”

Resource Allocation and Budget Considerations for Arts Programs

Resource allocation and budget considerations are critical factors in the successful implementation and sustainability of arts education programs in schools. Schools often face financial constraints, and the allocation of resources can directly impact the quality and extent of arts education provided. A well-thought-out budget and resource allocation strategy can ensure that arts programs receive the necessary materials, professional support, and time within the school curriculum. Without sufficient funding and clear prioritization, arts education may be sidelined in favor of more academically oriented subjects.

From the interviews with school principals and arts teachers, it became clear that schools with dedicated budgets for arts programs tend to have more robust and well-supported arts initiatives. One principal shared:

“We have a specific budget line for arts education, which covers materials, workshops, and artist residencies. This allows us to plan ahead and ensure that the arts remain a priority in our school.”

This statement reflects the positive impact that targeted funding can have on the long-term success of arts programs, as it ensures that financial resources are allocated directly to support artistic endeavors.

In contrast, schools that lacked a clear budgetary commitment to arts education faced challenges in securing resources. An arts teacher from a different school explained: “

We don’t have a dedicated budget for the arts. Most of our materials are funded through fundraising or occasional grants, which means we are often at the mercy of external funding.”

This reliance on external sources can create uncertainty and limit the scope of arts programming, making it difficult for schools to offer consistent, high-quality arts education.

Moreover, budget considerations extend beyond the immediate purchase of materials and supplies. Teacher professional development is another critical area where resource allocation plays a key role. One school principal remarked:

“In our budget, we’ve allocated funds for ongoing professional development in the arts for our teachers. We believe that investing in teachers’ skills ensures they can deliver more effective and inspiring arts education to students.”

This highlights how thoughtful budget planning not only supports student learning but also empowers educators by providing them with the training and resources they need to excel.

Some schools struggled with balancing arts funding alongside the demands of core academic subjects. An arts teacher pointed out:

“Our budget is largely dictated by the needs of the standard curriculum, and while we do receive some funding for arts, it often falls short of what’s needed to make the programs truly impactful.”

This underscores the importance of balancing financial resources between core academics and the arts, ensuring that arts education is not overlooked in favor of more traditional subjects.

Role of School Leaders in Fostering an Environment Supportive of Arts Education

The role of school leaders in fostering an environment that supports arts education is crucial in shaping the overall success and integration of the arts into the school curriculum. School leaders, particularly principals and administrators, set the tone for the value placed on arts education within their schools. Their leadership, vision, and commitment can influence how arts programs are implemented, the resources allocated, and the level of support provided to teachers and students. A school leader’s attitude toward arts education can either encourage creativity and innovation or stifle these efforts, making their role in promoting arts education fundamental to its success.

From the interviews, it was evident that school leaders who actively championed arts education were able to create a positive, supportive environment for both students and teachers. One principal emphasized:

“As a leader, I make it a point to regularly attend arts events in our school and publicly celebrate our students’ artistic achievements. This sends a clear message that the arts are valued here.”

This statement reflects how school leaders can set a cultural tone through their involvement and visibility in arts-related activities, signaling the importance of the arts to the entire school community.

School leaders play a key role in advocating for arts education at both the school and district levels. One arts teacher shared:

“Our principal has been a great advocate for the arts. She’s made sure that the arts are included in our school’s vision, and she’s worked with the district to secure additional funding for art programs.”

This highlights how effective school leadership can influence policy decisions and secure resources that directly benefit arts education. By advocating for the arts, school leaders ensure that these programs receive the attention and support they deserve.

Another important aspect of school leadership is the ability to foster a collaborative environment among educators. A principal noted:

“We encourage teachers from all subjects to incorporate arts into their lessons. I support professional development workshops that help them understand how the arts can enhance learning in other areas like science, math, and language arts.”

This approach demonstrates how school leaders can create interdisciplinary collaboration, ensuring that arts education is not confined to a single subject but is integrated into the broader curriculum. By encouraging cross-curricular connections, school leaders can help ensure that arts education becomes a fundamental part of the students’ educational experience.

Not all school leaders prioritize the arts in the same way. One arts teacher shared a different perspective:

“While our principal is supportive, there are times when arts education takes a back seat to more pressing academic goals. When budget cuts happen, the arts are often the first area affected.”

This statement underscores the challenges faced by school leaders who must balance multiple priorities and may struggle to maintain arts programming in the face of financial constraints. It highlights the importance of consistent leadership support to protect arts education even in difficult circumstances.

The purpose of this study was to investigate how school management can support arts education while filling a literature review on one way or another of instructional management can affect the success agenda of arts education. The conclusions of this study complement and enrich current knowledge by stressing that the administration plays a significant part in funding arts education (Zachut & Contreras, 2022). Schools having clearly positive policies of art education are likely to have established and stable arts programmes. When implemented correctly, these policies make teaching and learning of arts an essential part of the school's instructional program and not part of the co-curricular activities (Suryana et al., 2023). The paper also finds that schools with written and formal adoption policies supportive of arts education are in a stronger place to incorporate arts into their curriculum despite the intrusion of competing core curricula.

Previous studies have demonstrated the relevance of funding to arts education (Sheridan et al., 2022), but this study ornaments such findings by examining how resource allocation occurs at the school level. In particular, the data presented in the paper confirm the hypothesis that having a separate budget for the arts helps to run effective programs in schools. This accords well with other research done that has a positive correlation between financial support and the viability of arts education programmes (Fan & Henager, 2022). The study also shows the perils facing schools vulnerable to relying on grant funding such as grant funding, fundraising, which often lacks long-term feasibility. This nuance enriches the existing literature by reminding of internal funding and its effect on arts programs' outcomes (Kim & Benenson, 2023).

The second major research contribution of this study is the investigation of the factors that can help schools to nurture leadership for arts education. Consequently, the results affirm that organisations promoting the arts purposefully alongside school leaders central to their representation and implementation. This accredits the work of Leithwood et al. (2021) that, adequate leadership should be encouraged to enhance arts programs especially those institutions that feel pressure from standards that emphasize more on Mathematics and reading. The study further extends this knowledge in saying that leadership is not only about ensuring and implementing policy but is also about building an arts-friendly culture within the school. School administrators that actively participate in arts through events like performers and organized school related activities and offering public support make the arts an important and valued part of school function. This finding supports Herrero & Kraemer (2022) argument that despite increasing interest in arts education, the lack of executive level sponsorship limits the extent of participation in it.

This study also fills the existing literature void about the dichotomy between arts education and academic standards. Several authors have shown how difficult it is to implement arts in school for a variety of stakeholder factors, including tests and standard performance indexes (Timotheou et al., 2023). The outcome of the research is the fact that the existence of such problems is undeniable, still, the schools, which receive support and encouragement from their

administration and are focused on the develop of art programs, are able to overcome all these contradictions. This research advances knowledge by demonstrating how leadership can attend to these conflicting demands in a way that keeps the arts an active and central part of the school's instructional agenda rather than marginalize them.

The implication of this study is beneficial to educators and policymakers as it describes the practical solutions to the problem identified in this study (Cairney & Oliver, 2020). Because this work elucidates the function of administrative policies and leadership as well as resource distribution for arts education, such an approach focuses on the need to adopt comprehensive processes to foster arts education. I think that there is definitely room for the future studies to explore on how particular styles of leadership and certain kind of policies might complement the development of the arts in education in the long run within explicit types of education environments.

Conclusion

Arising from the findings of this study, it is clear that administrators in school management have a large responsibility towards arts education, concluding that true policy/programmatic and resource support comes down to the principal level. The results support the particularize previous studies on policy intelligibility and sufficient funding as important for arts education but the study added new understanding in comprehending how school leaders create pro-artistic circumstances and academically relevant arts environment. Therefore, by discussing these major issues, this study offers useful applied conclusions for educators and governing bodies concerned with arts education in schools, highlighting the necessity for shift towards better integrated and lifespan development approaches. More research can be conducted in the building of these findings to investigate particular types of leadership and policy and practices that are conducive to supporting arts programs in different kinds of learning settings.

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