

**A NARRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW TO IDENTIFY THE
FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENT MOTIVATION AND
ENGAGEMENT IN HIGH SCHOOL VOCAL
MUSIC EDUCATION IN CHINA**

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a narrative literature review aimed at identifying the key factors influencing student motivation and engagement in high school vocal music education in China. Given the growing significance of music education in fostering creativity and holistic development, understanding what drives students to remain motivated and engaged is crucial for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers. The review synthesizes existing literature on educational psychology, student engagement, and music pedagogy, focusing on factors such as teacher-student interaction, curriculum design, peer influence, cultural context, and technological integration. Findings indicate that effective teaching strategies, a supportive learning environment, opportunities for performance, and the use of digital tools play a significant role in enhancing motivation and engagement. The study also highlights the challenges faced by educators in balancing traditional and contemporary teaching methods in a rapidly changing educational landscape. Recommendations for future research include empirical studies that explore specific interventions and the longitudinal impact of these factors on student outcomes. This review contributes to the broader discourse on improving music education and provides valuable insights for advancing student-centered approaches in Chinese high schools.

Keywords: Student motivation, Student engagement, Vocal music education, High school education, Music pedagogy, Narrative literature review.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

High school vocal music education is pivotal in fostering students' artistic talents, creativity, and personal growth. It provides a meaningful platform for emotional expression and collaborative endeavors, helping students develop essential life skills. Ensuring high levels of student motivation and engagement in these programs is fundamental to achieving optimal learning outcomes and instilling a lifelong appreciation for music (Jones, 2009). As a specialized field within music education, vocal music education focuses on nurturing students' vocal abilities while expanding their musical knowledge and appreciation of various vocal genres, such as choral singing, solo performances, and ensemble work (Biasutti & Concina, 2013). By emphasizing artistic development, creativity, and a lasting love for vocal music, it inspires students to engage with music both personally and collaboratively (Georgii-Hemming & Westvall, 2010).

High school vocal music programs offer a comprehensive curriculum that combines essential musical concepts, vocal techniques, music theory, sight-reading, and numerous performance opportunities (Green, 2017). Guided by skilled educators, students gain proficiency in vocal production, interpretation, and musicianship. Choral ensembles, a core component of these programs, help students cultivate harmonization skills and foster a sense of teamwork (Garcia et al., 2014). Beyond choral singing, students also engage in solo performances, refining their unique vocal expressions and artistic identities (West, 2007). Collaborative opportunities in ensemble settings further enhance creativity and teamwork by blending vocal and instrumental elements.

Instruction in music theory strengthens students' understanding of theoretical concepts and their ability to read music, while musicianship training develops essential ear training skills (Gouzouasis, 2011). Performance platforms such as concerts, competitions, and community events provide valuable stage experience and offer constructive feedback (Juárez-Díaz & Ojeda-Ruiz, 2021). Furthermore, exposure to diverse musical styles and traditions broadens students' cultural and historical perspectives, fostering a deeper appreciation for the rich heritage of global vocal music (Ilari et al., 2013).

High school vocal music education significantly contributes to personal, social, and cognitive development. It nurtures creativity, self-expression, teamwork, discipline, and resilience, while equipping students with transferable skills like effective communication, critical thinking, and collaboration (Hallam, 2010). These attributes not only enhance students' musical journeys but also prepare them to meet broader life challenges.

Motivation and engagement are crucial determinants of student success in high school vocal music education. Motivation, defined as the internal drive to pursue goals, can be intrinsic—stemming from personal interest and enjoyment—or extrinsic, driven by external rewards or pressures (Filgona et al., 2020). Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation influence students' behavior, effort, and commitment. Engagement, on the other hand, encompasses behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of active participation in learning (Lian & Pan, 2022). Vocal music education promotes engagement by encouraging students to take part in artistic activities, fostering a lifelong passion for music, and supporting further studies and professional pursuits in music (Scripp & Gilbert, 2019). The skills acquired through these programs not only enrich students' artistic development but also broaden their career prospects in music-related fields (Ilari et al., 2013).

2.0 NARRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

A narrative literature review is a method used to synthesize existing research and provide a comprehensive understanding of a specific topic. Unlike systematic reviews, which adhere to a rigid methodological framework, narrative reviews offer flexibility in summarizing and critically analyzing findings from diverse studies. Baumeister and Leary (1997) suggest that narrative reviews are valuable for identifying emerging themes, highlighting research gaps, and proposing future research directions. This approach is particularly beneficial in multidisciplinary fields like education and music, where studies may vary widely in focus and methodology.

One of the key benefits of a narrative literature review is its ability to present a cohesive overview of how a particular topic has evolved over time. By connecting findings from various studies, it helps researchers gain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing a phenomenon. In the context of this study, a narrative review is especially useful for examining complex issues such as student motivation and engagement, which are shaped by a combination of psychological, social, and environmental factors (Randolph, 2009).

This review offers several advantages for the current study. First, it integrates research findings from multiple disciplines, including educational psychology, music pedagogy, and student engagement, providing a holistic perspective on factors influencing student motivation in high school vocal music education. Second, it contextualizes these findings within the specific cultural and educational environment of China, where distinct cultural values and educational practices play a significant role in shaping student behavior (Liu & Hu, 2021). Third, the narrative review identifies best practices and strategies that educators can implement to enhance student engagement and motivation in music education.

In conclusion, by employing a narrative literature review, this study aims to synthesize existing knowledge, identify key factors influencing student motivation and engagement, and provide actionable insights for educators and policymakers. This approach not only highlights the current state of research but also lays a foundation for future empirical investigations in high school vocal music education.

3.0 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the recognized importance of motivation and engagement in shaping students' learning experiences in high school vocal music education, significant gaps remain in understanding the specific factors that influence these constructs. Existing research highlights the interplay between motivational processes and social influences but lacks comprehensive investigations specifically focused on vocal music education. Centralized curricula often limit genre diversity, sidelining students' preferences, which are known to significantly impact emotional engagement and intrinsic motivation (Evans et al., 2013). Moreover, few studies have systematically explored the role of factors such as age, experience, and genre preferences in shaping students' motivation and engagement (Zelenak, 2011).

In Heilongjiang Province, understanding the dynamics of student motivation and engagement is critical for developing effective instructional strategies that cater to diverse student needs. While prior research has noted the importance of these factors, the lack of a nuanced exploration addressing their interplay limits the practical application of findings in real-world educational settings (Fredricks et al., 2004; Hallam, 2010). Identifying the specific types of musical pieces that resonate with students can help educators create a more inclusive curriculum, fostering deeper engagement and motivation. Additionally, understanding these preferences enables the selection of a repertoire that reflects diverse student backgrounds and musical tastes, thereby enhancing the overall quality of their musical experiences (Bokiev et al., 2018).

Addressing these gaps is essential for designing engaging and student-centered high school vocal music programs. This study aims to provide actionable insights for educators and

policymakers, ultimately improving both student engagement and motivation. The study will answer the following questions:

1. What are the key factors influencing student motivation in high school vocal music education?
2. What are the key factors influencing student engagement in high school vocal music education?

3.1 Literature Search Strategy

To establish a robust theoretical foundation for the study, an extensive review of the literature will be conducted. The researchers will focus on identifying factors influencing student motivation and engagement in high school vocal music education. Multiple academic databases, including Scopus, PsycINFO, SocINDEX, ProQuest, and Google Scholar, will be utilized to locate relevant studies and articles. Targeted keywords such as "motivation," "engagement," "vocal music education," and "teaching and learning" will be applied in individual searches to thoroughly explore each concept. Subsequently, findings will be synthesized to identify gaps in the literature and examine the relationships between these constructs and students' learning outcomes.

The literature review will also examine prior research highlighting the importance of institutional support in fostering student persistence, particularly during transitions such as adapting to new instructional models or technologies (e.g., Milman et al., 2015). This insight will inform the current study by emphasizing the role of infrastructure, resources, and teaching strategies in enhancing student motivation and engagement in vocal music education. By systematically analyzing the existing body of knowledge, this study aims to bridge gaps in the literature and provide valuable insights into the factors shaping student experiences in high school vocal music education.

4.0 THE FINDINGS

Findings: Factors Influencing Student Motivation and Engagement

The narrative literature review identified several key factors that influence student motivation and engagement in high school vocal music education. These factors are categorized into external and internal influences:

4.1 External Factors

Educational Policies and Funding: Government policies and financial support significantly impact the infrastructure of vocal music education. Schools with greater financial resources can provide better facilities, hire qualified teachers, and organize more extracurricular music activities (Quan & Jia, 2021).

Curriculum Design: Schools that prioritize arts education tend to have well-structured music programs, which include diverse genres and student-centered learning approaches. These programs enhance intrinsic motivation by aligning with students' interests (Green, 2017).

Qualified Teachers: The presence of skilled and experienced vocal music educators is a critical factor in shaping students' motivation and engagement. Effective teachers employ a variety of pedagogical approaches, providing both challenge and support to their students (Hallam, 2010).

Technological Integration: Digital tools, including music composition software and online learning platforms, enhance students' access to learning resources. Research has shown that integrating technology into music education improves student participation and engagement (Yu & Leung, 2019).

Parental Support: Active involvement and encouragement from parents play a significant role in sustaining students' interest in vocal music. Parental support helps in building a positive self-concept in music, which further drives motivation (Sichivitsa, 2007).

Extracurricular Opportunities: Opportunities to participate in choirs, competitions, and performances offer students real-world applications of their learning. These activities help students develop confidence and a sense of belonging, thus increasing their engagement (Juárez-Díaz & Ojeda-Ruiz, 2021).

Socioeconomic Status: Students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds generally have more access to private lessons and extracurricular opportunities. Socioeconomic disparities can create unequal access to quality music education (Zhu et al., 2018).

4.2 Internal Factors

Self-Concept in Music: A student's perception of their own musical abilities directly influences their motivation and engagement. A strong self-concept fosters persistence and a willingness to take on challenges (Zelenak, 2011).

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation: Intrinsic motivation, which stems from personal interest, leads to deeper engagement, while extrinsic motivation, driven by rewards or recognition, can encourage initial participation (Filgona et al., 2020).

Peer Influence: Positive peer interactions create a supportive learning environment, encouraging students to participate in group activities and performances. Conversely, negative peer pressure can hinder engagement (Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2013).

Emotional Connection to Music: Music that evokes personal emotions and resonates with students' experiences enhances their engagement. Emotional connection to the content has been shown to increase both intrinsic motivation and enjoyment (Jääskeläinen, 2022).

Performance Feedback: Constructive feedback from teachers and peers helps students improve their performance and builds a growth mindset. Positive feedback also boosts self-efficacy, which is critical for sustained engagement (Garcia et al., 2014).

Personal Value of Music: Students who place a high value on music as an important part of their lives are more likely to remain motivated and engaged in their learning journey. This value can be shaped by cultural influences and personal experiences (Ilari et al., 2013).

The narrative literature review identified several key factors that influence student motivation and engagement in high school vocal music education. These factors are categorized into external and internal influences (table 1):

Table 1, A Summary of the Key Factors that Influence Student Motivation and Engagement in High School Vocal Music Education

Category	Factors	Description
External Factors	Educational Policies and Funding	Government policies and funding impact the availability of resources, qualified teachers, and infrastructure (Quan & Jia, 2021).
	Curriculum Design	Schools emphasizing arts education and diverse genres foster student-centered learning, enhancing intrinsic motivation (Green, 2017).
	Qualified Teachers	Skilled teachers employing diverse strategies positively influence students' intrinsic motivation and engagement (Hallam, 2010).
	Technological Integration	Digital tools and online platforms improve accessibility and engagement in music education (Yu & Leung, 2019).
	Parental Support	Supportive families contribute to a positive self-concept in music and sustained participation (Sichivitsa, 2007).
	Extracurricular Opportunities	Participation in choirs, competitions, and performances enhances confidence and social belonging (Juárez-Díaz & Ojeda-Ruiz, 2021).
	Socioeconomic Status	Socioeconomic conditions affect access to private lessons and extracurricular activities (Zhu et al., 2018).
Internal Factors	Self-Concept in Music	A positive self-concept enhances persistence and engagement in musical tasks (Zelenak, 2011).
	Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation	Intrinsic motivation fosters deeper engagement, while extrinsic motivation drives initial participation (Filgona et al., 2020).
	Peer Influence	Supportive peer interactions positively influence attitudes toward music and engagement (Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2013).
	Emotional Connection to Music	Strong emotional connections to music enhance students' overall learning experience (Jääskeläinen, 2022).
	Performance Feedback	Constructive feedback fosters a growth mindset and self-efficacy, boosting motivation (Garcia et al., 2014).
	Personal Value of Music	Students who place a high value on music are more likely to remain motivated and engaged (Ilari et al., 2013).

5.0 CONCLUSION

This study highlights the interplay between humanistic values, student-centric approaches, and holistic curriculum design in shaping physical education programs at universities in Sichuan Province, China. While significant progress has been made in promoting health and fostering teacher-student relationships, critical gaps in empathy, inclusivity, and interdisciplinary

integration remain. By addressing these challenges, universities can develop transformative PE programs that contribute to students' holistic development, aligning with global educational goals and the unique needs of the region. These findings offer valuable guidance for educators, policymakers, and curriculum designers seeking to enhance the quality and impact of physical education programs.

5.1 Ethical Approval

This study involving human subjects was conducted following ethical standards, and ethical approval was obtained from UPSI.

5.2 Conflict of Interest

The researchers declare no potential conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this study.

5.3 Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this research are not publicly available due to confidentiality agreements with participants. However, data can be made available upon reasonable request to the corresponding author, subject to approval and adherence to ethical guidelines.

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