

# A Study on Management Approaches For Student Art Troupes in Regular Higher Education Institutions: Taking Yibin University as an Example

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**Abstract:** This study examines the student arts ensemble at Yibin University through field research and case analysis, systematically reviewing the current state of arts ensemble development in higher vocational institutions. It identifies core issues, including inadequate management systems, insufficient teaching resources, and students' lack of a professional foundation. Drawing upon organisational behaviour and arts education theory, it proposes improvement pathways including refining management systems, strengthening faculty development, cultivating artistic leaders, and optimising facility allocation. The effectiveness of these approaches is validated through Yibin University's reform practices, offering theoretical reference and practical insights for arts ensemble management in mainstream higher education institutions.

**Keywords:** Higher education institutions; Arts ensemble management; Higher vocational colleges; Faculty development; Internal-external collaboration

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## 1. Introduction

The development of university arts ensembles is currently flourishing. Ensembles such as those at Yibin University have achieved notable success through participation in both on-campus and external artistic events. Their membership continues to expand, and the range of artistic disciplines represented grows ever more diverse. Some institutions have established professional management systems with dedicated teaching staff and facilities. However, the sector as a whole still faces challenges, including inadequate talent development mechanisms, uneven resource allocation, and lagging development in certain artistic disciplines. There is an urgent need to advance the transformation of these ensembles towards greater professionalism and systematisation through measures such as improving institutional safeguards, strengthening faculty development, and optimising resource allocation <sup>[1]</sup>.

## **2. The current state of university student art troupe development**

### **2.1. There is room for improvement in motivation**

Amidst the current trend of higher education institutions actively promoting arts education to support students' holistic development, the management model and curriculum delivery of university arts ensembles, as vital forces in disseminating and creating campus artistic culture, merit thorough examination. Presently, the ensemble operates under a management model combining central coordination by the university's Youth League Committee with collaborative support from constituent faculties <sup>[1]</sup>. This approach has yielded some success in preliminary resource allocation and event organisation. However, it exhibits notable shortcomings: most courses are delivered through interest-based societies, lacking robust integration with the institution's formal credit system. Student participation often stems from fleeting personal interests <sup>[2]</sup>. As involvement in the arts ensemble cannot be directly linked to academic performance or comprehensive quality assessments, tangible academic benefits from participation remain elusive <sup>[3]</sup>. Consequently, student enthusiasm and motivation for engaging with the ensemble remain low. Over time, this undermines the ensemble's sustainable development and hinders the cultivation of a profound artistic education ethos within the institution.

### **2.2. Facilities and conditions**

The cramped premises struggle to accommodate multiple artistic troupes rehearsing simultaneously. Different genres, such as the fluid movements of dance, the grand harmonies of choral work, and the vivid performances of theatre, inevitably interfere with one another within this confined area. This not only compromises rehearsal quality but also risks accidents arising from overcrowding. Moreover, the venue's infrastructure is outdated, featuring uneven flooring and dim lighting that fails to provide performers with a conducive rehearsal environment, thereby increasing the risk of training injuries <sup>[4]</sup>.

Moreover, there are shortcomings in the stock of costumes and props. Outdated and monotonous costumes fail to showcase the distinct characteristics and styles of different programmes, while damaged and missing props frequently disrupt rehearsal progress.

The enhancement of the arts troupe's facilities is a matter of urgency. The school should increase investment in the troupe's infrastructure, improve rehearsal space conditions, update musical instrument equipment, and expand the costume and prop inventory. Only through such measures can a solid material foundation be established for the troupe's development, enabling it to shine even more brilliantly on the stage of campus culture <sup>[2]</sup>.

### **2.3. Variations in student background and insufficient training duration**

The duration of the training cycle directly impacts the enhancement of students' artistic skills and the attainment of professional standards. Following admission to the troupe, students receive an average of merely 1.5 years of training. This brief period is undoubtedly insufficient for students to reach professional performance standards. Art is a discipline demanding long-term accumulation and refinement. From foundational skill development to enhancing artistic expression, substantial time and practice are essential. Within this 18-month window, students must simultaneously acquire specialised knowledge, undergo intensive technical training, and participate in rehearsals and performances, a schedule that proves exceedingly demanding. Many students are compelled to engage in complex programme rehearsals before fully mastering foundational techniques, resulting in uneven performance quality. Moreover, the limited training period hinders students' ability to deeply comprehend and internalise the essence of the art form. Consequently, their performances often lack depth and emotional resonance, failing to leave a lasting impression on audiences <sup>[5]</sup>.

## **2.4. Lack of team cohesion**

Team culture is the lifeblood of an arts ensemble, fostering a sense of belonging and cohesion among members while promoting the group's healthy development. However, vocational college arts ensembles exhibit significant shortcomings in cultivating team culture, lacking clearly defined team values and mechanisms for fostering cohesion.

Without the guidance of a cohesive culture, members lack shared objectives and convictions, resulting in superficial communication and collaboration <sup>[6]</sup>. To overcome its current predicament and achieve sustainable development, the arts ensemble must adopt a comprehensive approach encompassing several key measures: enhancing the calibre of its intake, extending training periods, fostering appropriate motivation among members, and strengthening team culture. These efforts will collectively inject fresh vitality into the ensemble's development.

## **3. Measures to strengthen and improve the management of university art troupes**

### **3.1. Refine the management system for the arts troupe and establish specialised courses**

#### **3.1.1. System optimisation**

The institutional framework serves as the bedrock for the orderly operation and sustained development of the arts ensemble <sup>[7]</sup>. Through this comprehensive system, the arts ensemble cultivates a healthy competitive environment and developmental momentum, propelling its overall standards to new heights <sup>[8]</sup>.

#### **3.1.2. Curriculum restructuring**

Courses serve as the core vehicle for talent cultivation within the arts ensemble. The introduction of a three-tiered curriculum comprising "Art Fundamentals", "Creative Composition", and "Stage Practice," integrated into the public elective system (2 credits per semester), represents a significant step towards establishing a scientifically structured arts education framework. The "Art Fundamentals" course serves as the cornerstone, providing students with foundational theoretical knowledge and practical skills across multiple disciplines, including music, dance, and theatre. This equips them with a comprehensive introductory understanding of the arts, laying a solid groundwork for subsequent studies <sup>[9]</sup>.

### **3.2. Cultivating the backbone of artistic talent**

#### **3.2.1. Tiered training**

Tiered training serves as an effective strategy for unlocking artistic potential and cultivating high-calibre artistic ensembles. Selecting the top 10% of members to form an "Elite Troupe" is akin to plucking the most brilliant pearls from the ensemble's vast pool, granting them superior development platforms and resources. These core members typically demonstrate exceptional artistic talent, learning aptitude, and performance drive, possessing the potential to become luminaries within their field <sup>[10]</sup>.

Providing specialised training resources for the Elite Troupe is paramount. External expert guidance introduces members to cutting-edge artistic concepts and professional technical instruction. Drawing upon extensive industry experience and profound artistic expertise, these specialists chart developmental trajectories, resolve technical challenges, and accelerate members' growth along their artistic paths. Participation in provincial competitions presents an exceptional opportunity to gauge members' proficiency and enhance their practical skills. Within the competitive arena, members engage with outstanding performers from diverse regions,

identifying their strengths and areas for improvement while accumulating invaluable competitive experience<sup>[11]</sup>. Through tiered development, Elite Troupe members achieve comprehensive advancement in artistic skills, cultural literacy, and overall capabilities. They emerge as leading figures within the troupe, driving its collective progress.

### **3.2.2. Mentoring newcomers**

Establishing a “senior mentor system” represents a talent development model characterised by continuity and practical effectiveness. Having senior core members oversee the training of newcomers allows the experience and strengths of upper-year students to be fully leveraged, providing guidance and support to freshers. Having undergone a period of study and practice within the arts troupe, these senior members possess a thorough understanding of its regulations, training methodologies, and performance requirements<sup>[12]</sup>. They can impart their accumulated experience and insights to newcomers, facilitating a smoother adaptation to the troupe’s lifestyle and academic demands<sup>[13]</sup>.

During training sessions, senior members can devise personalised training plans tailored to each newcomer’s characteristics and needs, offering targeted guidance and constructive feedback. Simultaneously, they serve as exemplary role models, inspiring enthusiasm and motivation among new members. The senior mentor system fosters a robust talent pipeline where both new and established members learn from and mutually encourage one another, achieving collective advancement. This tradition of mentorship not only supports the growth and development of new members but also strengthens the ensemble’s cohesion and sense of belonging, ensuring the enduring preservation and promotion of its spirit and cultural heritage<sup>[14]</sup>.

## **3.3. Stabilise the teaching workforce and strengthen teaching capacity**

### **3.3.1. Recruitment of full-time teaching staff**

Full-time teaching staff form the backbone of the arts ensemble’s instruction and administration. Recruiting two to three full-time teachers with specialised backgrounds in arts education will introduce professional pedagogical concepts and methodologies to the ensemble. Possessing robust theoretical knowledge and extensive practical experience, these educators can design scientifically structured curricula and teaching content tailored to the ensemble’s developmental objectives and students’ individual circumstances.

They oversee curriculum development and teaching management, ensuring systematic and consistent instructional delivery. In curriculum development, these educators will integrate the latest advancements in the arts alongside students’ interests and needs, continually updating and refining course content to enhance its relevance and practical application. Regarding teaching administration, they will establish standardised instructional procedures and assessment criteria, strengthen quality monitoring throughout the teaching process, and promptly identify and resolve any emerging issues<sup>[14]</sup>. The recruitment of full-time teaching staff will elevate the ensemble’s pedagogical standards and management efficiency, providing robust faculty support for its ongoing development.

### **3.3.2. Teacher training programme**

The teacher training programme serves as a vital avenue for enhancing educators’ pedagogical capabilities and professional expertise. Each year, selected staff participate in specialised training modules such as “Innovation in Higher Education Arts Teaching” and “Stage Performance Techniques”, enabling them to engage with cutting-edge educational philosophies and advanced teaching methodologies. Within the “Innovation in Higher

Education Arts Teaching” programme, participants gain insights into the latest trends and developments in arts education across domestic and international institutions, learning innovative teaching models and curriculum design approaches to revitalise their own teaching practice.

The ‘Stage Performance Techniques’ programme, meanwhile, enables educators to refine their own stage practice and performance skills, thereby better guiding students in theatrical presentation. Through participation in these specialised courses, teaching staff continually broaden their knowledge base and professional horizons, elevating both their instructional standards and expertise. Concurrently, they apply acquired knowledge and skills directly to classroom practice, enhancing teaching quality and outcomes. The implementation of this teacher training initiative contributes significantly to cultivating a highly qualified, professional teaching cohort, providing robust support for the development of the arts ensemble <sup>[10]</sup>.

### **3.4. Improve the activity facilities for the arts group**

#### **3.4.1. Site expansion**

Venues form the fundamental basis for the arts troupe’s activities. Securing institutional backing to construct a new 500-square-metre multi-purpose rehearsal hall holds significant importance for the troupe’s development. Existing rehearsal spaces may suffer from cramped dimensions and outdated facilities, failing to meet the troupe’s growing rehearsal demands. The new comprehensive rehearsal hall will provide a more spacious and comfortable environment, allowing performers to fully express their talents during rehearsals without spatial constraints.

Equipping the space with professional sound and lighting systems is crucial for enhancing rehearsal effectiveness and performance quality. Professional sound equipment accurately reproduces vocal nuances and tonal textures, enabling performers to better grasp musical rhythms and emotional expression. Lighting systems, meanwhile, create diverse stage atmospheres, enhancing visual impact. Within the new hall, strategically positioned and calibrated sound and lighting systems—tailored to various art forms and performance requirements—will provide performers with a rehearsal environment approximating actual stage conditions. This will heighten their stage adaptability and elevate their performance standards. Through these venue expansions and equipment upgrades, the troupe’s rehearsal conditions will be significantly improved, establishing robust physical infrastructure to support its artistic development.

#### **3.4.2. Equipment renewal**

Establishing a dedicated fund for the arts troupe (100,000 yuan annually) to facilitate the regular renewal of instruments, costumes, and props is a crucial measure to safeguard the quality of the troupe’s performances. Instruments serve as the core tools for musical performances; over time and with increased usage, they may suffer wear and tear or deterioration, adversely affecting performance outcomes. Regular instrument renewal ensures optimal tonal quality and performance capabilities, thereby providing superior acoustic support for musical presentations.

Costumes and props constitute vital elements of stage performances, enhancing visual impact while evoking specific historical settings and atmospheres. Outdated attire and props not only diminish overall aesthetic appeal but may also pose safety hazards. Utilising dedicated funds for periodic renewal enables the selection of appropriate costumes and props tailored to diverse performance themes and artistic styles, thereby elevating the artistic calibre and spectator experience. Concurrently, a well-structured equipment renewal programme prevents resource wastage and underutilisation, thereby improving the efficiency of fund utilisation. Such updates provide robust material support for the troupe’s performances, elevating its public image and societal influence.

### **3.5. Strengthen the organisational management of the arts troupe and actively promote a collaborative mechanism between the school and external partners**

#### **3.5.1. Campus-wide coordination**

Campus collaboration serves as a vital means of integrating institutional resources and enhancing the overall capabilities of the arts ensemble. Partnerships with the Conservatory of Music and the School of Dance facilitate the sharing of teaching staff and curriculum resources. These faculties possess specialised teaching teams and extensive course offerings; jointly organising workshops with them provides ensemble members with more professional and in-depth learning opportunities.

During these workshops, members can engage with specialist teaching staff and students from the Music and Dance Faculties, absorbing advanced artistic concepts and techniques. Simultaneously, collaborative course delivery exposes ensemble members to knowledge and skills across diverse artistic disciplines, broadening their artistic horizons. Campus-wide collaboration also fosters cultural exchange and integration across faculties, cultivating a vibrant campus arts environment and creating a more conducive internal setting for the arts group's development.

#### **3.5.2. External partnerships**

Extracurricular partnerships serve as vital avenues for expanding the artistic ensemble's development scope and enhancing its societal influence. Establishing practice bases with local cultural centres and artistic organisations provides ensemble members with greater practical opportunities and performance platforms. These institutions possess extensive resources and expertise within the arts sector; collaboration enables ensemble members to participate in actual artistic projects, thereby accumulating practical experience.

Organising two to three off-campus performances annually enables the ensemble to step beyond the campus boundaries and present its artistic achievements to the wider community. Through these external engagements, members encounter diverse audiences and cultural backgrounds, thereby enhancing their stage adaptability and communication skills. Simultaneously, these performances elevate the ensemble's social visibility and influence, attracting greater societal resources to support its development. Collaboration with external institutions also facilitates the ensemble's engagement with society, enabling it to understand public demand and expectations for the arts, thereby informing its developmental direction. By actively advancing this internal-external linkage mechanism, broader developmental horizons are opened for the ensemble, propelling its continuous progress.

## **4. Conclusion**

This study, taking Yibin University as a case example, systematically analyses existing issues in the management of arts ensembles within higher vocational institutions and proposes improvement pathways including institutional optimisation, faculty enhancement, and internal-external collaboration. A series of interconnected and mutually reinforcing measures, refining management systems, cultivating core artistic talent, stabilising and strengthening teaching resources, improving activity facilities, and enhancing organisational management while advancing internal-external linkage mechanisms, collectively form a robust driving force for ensemble development. Practice demonstrates that systematic reforms can significantly enhance the management efficacy of art troupes, fostering students' artistic literacy and teamwork capabilities. Future research may further explore management differences among art troupes in various types of higher vocational institutions (such as science and engineering-oriented or teacher-training institutions), providing theoretical support for refined reforms.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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