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The Development of an Instructor Competency Model for Music Instructors in Guizhou Province, China

Han YiFang[1] and Poonpilas Asavisanu[2]

[1]Conservatory of Music, Guizhou University, China

[2]Educational Administration and Leadership, Assumption University, Thailand

[1]Corresponding author e-mail: hanyifang2@qq.com, ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0009-0003-2740-8751

[2]E-mail: poonpilasasv@au.edu, ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4035-3877

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Abstract

Background and Aims: Instructor competence is especially critical for instructors at the university level as they often teach already skilled students, and there is the expectation of a more rigorous and in-depth educational experience. This study sought to develop a music instructor competency model for higher education instructors in Guizhou, China. The study objectives were: (1) To determine the desired knowledge and competencies for music instructors in higher education; (2) To measure the current and desired music instructors' knowledge and competencies in universities in Guizhou Province, China, (3) To find the gap between the current and desired music instructors' levels of knowledge and competencies in universities in Guizhou Province, China, and (4) To develop a proposed competency model for music instructors in Guizhou Province, China.

Methodology: An exploratory sequential mixed methods instrument development design was used. Music instructors from six normal universities and eight comprehensive universities were the population for the study. The sample size was 429 music instructors. Gap analysis using the PNI modified method.

Results: The priority needs ranked from highest to lowest were music instructor self-image, skill, technological knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, attitude, and content knowledge. A model was proposed and subsequently validated by experts. The model is intended to be used as a guide for music instructor evaluation and identifying areas for professional development and growth.

Conclusion: the key priorities for music instructors were highlighted by the study, which placed a strong emphasis on knowledge, talent, and self-image. The study concluded with the validation of a model intended to improve evaluation and promote professional development in the industry.

Keywords: Development; Instructor Competency; Music Instructors

Introduction

Higher education faculty are facing an increasingly complex and competitive landscape in the 21st century, which makes it more important than ever for them to be excellent in their teaching. According to Huanyuan (2022), music education and quality should go together; however, many colleges and universities need to pay attention to the quality of instruction as teaching goals may need to be clarified and instructors' quality varies. Of those instructors available, some have yet to be well trained or prepared to teach or need to gain knowledge of teaching methods or pedagogy. According to Basilotta-Gomez-Pablos et al. (2022), digital competencies are considered one of the key competencies needed for today's instructors. Blended learning has become the new normal in education (Dziuban et al., 2018). In the case of music instructors, in addition to technological competencies, they should have music theory and performance, music pedagogy, instrumental or vocal technique competencies, music technology integration, and cultural sensitivity. At the undergraduate level, music pedagogy should be

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aimed at educating the "whole musician" (Don et al., 2009: 81). This study aimed to create a model of instructor competencies for music instructors in Guizhou, China. The model provides a framework for understanding the essential knowledge, skills, and competencies that music instructors need to be effective in their roles.

Research Objectives

1. To determine the desired knowledge and competencies for music instructors in higher education.
2. To measure the current and desired music instructors' knowledge and competencies in universities in Guizhou Province, China.
3. To find the gap between the current and desired music instructors' levels of knowledge and competencies in universities in Guizhou Province, China.
4. To develop a proposed music instructor competency model for music instructors in Guizhou Province, China.

Literature Review

China has proposed several educational reforms over the past two decades to increase the quality of its educational system in the hopes that it can produce students who will become successful and productive future citizens. Music education reform at the university level has also been included in these reforms, as music education is an important aspect of holistic student development (Law & Ho, 2009). Nonetheless, the reforms and their implementation have not been without concern and problems. Issues related to curriculum, textbooks, music instructor preparation, instructor teaching methods, and the limited use of technology for music teaching have been raised (Chen, 2021; Yong, 2021; Shi, 2021). As music instructors play a pivotal role in the success of music instruction, it is important to ensure that they have the necessary competencies to teach. These competencies may include knowledge of music theory and performance, pedagogical knowledge, instrumental or vocal technique, technological integration, communication skills, and the positive attitudes needed to be a music instructor. Additionally, research on music instructor competencies has been very limited, indicating a need for more research in this area (Zhao et al., 2011).

This study is grounded in TPACK theory and the Competency Model. The first theory provides the concepts related to the type of knowledge music instructors need, including technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge. The second theory, the Competency Model, will provide the additional concepts that will develop the instructor competency model: musical competencies and skills, attitudes, and self-image of music instructors.

The Technical Pedagogical and Content Knowledge Theory, or TPACK, was introduced by Koehler and Mishra (2009). They integrated technical knowledge into instructors' traditional knowledge structure, which is comprised of Content (C), Pedagogical (P), and Technological (T) knowledge. These three types of knowledge intersect with PCK, TCK, and TPK. TPACK includes the knowledge of subject content and teaching methods necessary for teaching but also integrates technology.

McClelland (1998) first introduced the concept of competency-based assessment in the 1970s. His competency model was based on research showing that traditional measures of intelligence, such as IQ, are ineffective predictors of job performance. According to McClelland, more effective measures of job performance are based on competencies, or the skills, knowledge, and personal qualities needed to

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perform a job effectively. The model divides the competencies into four categories: skills, knowledge, attitudes, and self-image. Skills are the specific competencies and techniques individuals need to perform their job or role effectively, such as technical or communication skills. Knowledge refers to the information and understanding the individuals need to perform their job, such as subject matter knowledge. Attitudes are individuals' positive or negative feelings or opinions towards their jobs or organizations. Self-image refers to people's perception of themselves and their competency, such as confidence or self-esteem.

Conceptual Framework

This study uses TPACK and the Competency Model to determine the variables for music instructor effectiveness. Content analysis, instrument development, and needs assessment are used in this research. Figure 1 is the conceptual framework that shows the theories, knowledge, and competencies, the process, and the final output of this study shown Keywords: Instructor competencies, music instructors, China.

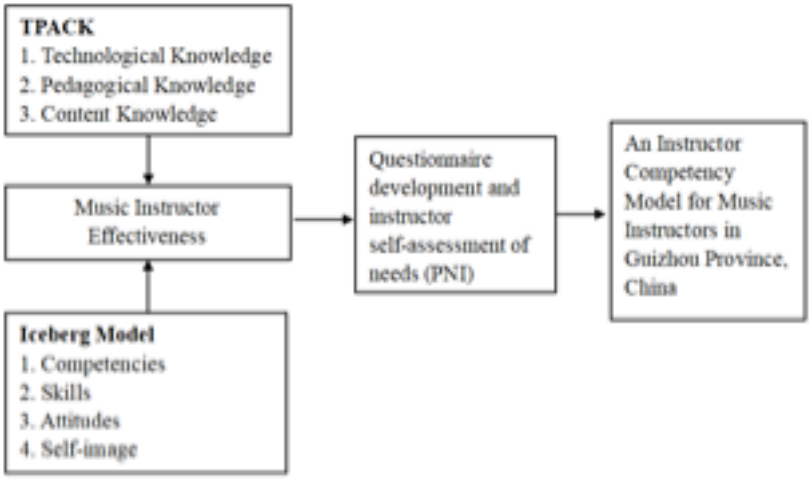

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Methods

This study used an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design. Firstly, qualitative methods, including content analysis and semi-structured interviews, were used to determine the knowledge and competencies needed. A questionnaire was developed, validated, and tested for reliability—the population of this study is music instructors from eight comprehensive universities and six normal universities in Guizhou Province. A proportional stratified random sampling method yielded a sample size of 429 instructors. Statistical methods (frequencies, percentages, means) were determined from the data. Finally, needs analysis was done using the PNImodified method. The priority needs index (PNI modified) method was developed by Viratchai and Wongwanich (Siririn, 2021). Based on the respondents' perspectives, the PNI illustrates the importance of discrepancies to prioritize the needs for appropriate development. The PNI-modified formula follows: I (Importance) refers to the desired state, and D (Degree of Success) refers to the current state.

PNImodified= (I - D)/D

A low level of PNI modified or mean demonstrates that the current state is weak or needs improvement or attention to that particular state. Therefore, improvement needs to be made in that area.

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The results allowed the researcher to rank the needs representing importance from the highest to the lowest.

Findings

There were major findings under the below:

Demographic Findings. There were demographic matters in the research as the Table 1:

Table 1 Shows the Demographic Information of Participants in the Study

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender (n=429)		
Male	258	60.1
Female	171	39.9
Professional Titles (n=429)		
Lecturers and teaching assistant	231	49.7
Associate Professor	142	33.1
Professor	74	17.2
Work Experience(n=429)		
Within five years	99	23.1
6-15 years	196	45.7
15-30 years	134	31.2

Research Objective One. Three types of music instructor knowledge were obtained: music content, pedagogical, and technological knowledge. Music content knowledge refers to the music instructors' knowledge of music theory, music history, musical instruments, the ability to read and notate music, and knowledge of performance practices. In short, the basic knowledge required to teach the content of music. Music pedagogical knowledge is related to the knowledge and understanding of how to teach music effectively. This includes understanding music teaching pedagogy, effective design of music instruction, music assessment practices, classroom management, and differentiated music instruction. Music technological knowledge refers to the knowledge related to technology and music instruction. For instructors, it includes their ability to utilize music software, electronic music arrangement, recording software, musical digital interfaces, music hardware, and digital music libraries.

The findings for the second part of objective one refer to the competencies needed for music instruction. A total of three were categorized from the content analysis. They were music instructor skills, music instructor attitude, and music instructor self-image. Music instructor skills include those skills that music instructors need to teach effectively, such as technical skills and communication skills. Music instructor attitudes are those beliefs and understanding values that music instructors hold about their career, students, and their role as music teachers. This is displayed by their passion for music, dedication to teaching, openness to feedback, and growth mindset. Finally, music instructors' self-image relates to how they perceive themselves and their competencies as music teachers. This is embodied in their confidence, self-efficacy, professionalism, and self-reflection.

Research Objective Two. As the second objective sought to measure the current and desired levels of knowledge and competencies, the researcher developed and validated an instrument for this purpose that was based on the findings from the first objective. In the area of knowledge, all three types of

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knowledge, content, pedagogical, and technological, were rated as high for the desired levels. For the current levels, music instructors rated their content knowledge at a moderate level, their pedagogical knowledge at a moderate level, and their technological knowledge at a moderate level. Therefore, in comparing the desired and current states, the music instructors agreed that the three types of knowledge were important and that they rated themselves in the moderate range in terms of that knowledge. For skills, attitude, and self-image the instructors rated their skills, attitude, and self-image as moderate. Similar to the three types of knowledge, the desired levels were rated as high. Therefore, there is a gap in comparing the desired and current states.

Research Objective Three. Table 2 shows the results of the priority needs index (PNI modified) of the Desired and Current Knowledge and Competencies of music instructors. According to the ranking, music instructors self-image has a PNImodified value of .365, music instructor's skill has a PNImodified value of .353, music technological knowledge has a PNImodified value of .340, music pedagogical knowledge has a PNImodified value of .314, music instructors attitude has a PNImodified value of .313 and music content knowledge has a PNImodified value of .286. According to the analysis, the six types of competencies ranked from most to least in need of development were self-image, skill, technological knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, attitude, and content knowledge.

Table 2 Summary of the PNI Values and Ranking of Needs

Items (Music Instructor)	**Mean Score (X)**		**PNI $_{modified}$**	**Ranking**
	Desired (I)	**Current (D)**	**(I-D)/D**	
Instructors' Self-image	4.07	2.98	.365	1
Instructor's Skill	4.10	3.03	.353	2
Technological Knowledge	4.09	3.05	.340	3
Pedagogical Knowledge	4.06	3.09	.314	4
Instructors' Attitude	3.94	3.00	.313	5
Content Knowledge	4.13	3.21	.286	6
Overall	4.06	3.06	.328	

Research Objective Four. For the last objective, the study sought to develop and validate a model of music instructor competencies. For this objective, the findings from all previous objectives were used to develop the model. The model incorporates all six competencies, ranking from the highest priority to be improved to the lowest. Additionally, the model includes recommendations on improving those competencies from the experts who validated the model. They include recommendations obtained from the semi-structured interviews for music instructors to participate in music competitions to improve their skills and for the music program leaders to offer policy support regarding funding for training, academic exchange, and continuing professional education. Figure 2 shows the final validated model.

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Conclusion and Discussion

From the content analysis findings, it can be seen that for instructors to teach well, the competencies needed are wider than the knowledge of the music instructors. Effective teaching involves not only what to teach but also knowing how to teach, having a positive attitude about oneself, and the decision to make teaching a career. Research has shown that having specific knowledge, such as technological knowledge, does not mean that teachers are always effective (Backfisch et al., 2020). Motivational beliefs and attitudes also contribute to teachers' effectiveness. Teachers' motivational beliefs and attitudes toward teaching affect their professional competence.

The findings of this study showed that music content was the lowest ranked according to needs development. According to Conway (2020), most music instruction follows a linear model of teaching where the instructor develops course goals or objectives, plans how and what to teach based on textbooks, designs the activities, and then creates assessments. Conway states that this linear model focuses on the content of the course and what the teacher needs to do to deliver the content. This linear model is only sometimes effective for music teaching and focuses on what the teacher does instead of what the student should learn. Many university instructors have extensive content knowledge but may need more pedagogical or technological knowledge. This is common as many universities often prioritize subject expertise or the degree from which the faculty member has graduated when hiring faculty. This can lead to recruiting experts in their discipline who may need formal education or instructional methods training. As music instruction requires specific musical content knowledge and musical ability, not everyone can teach it. Typically, music instructors are hired because they have music degrees. This is also the same for Chinese universities. Therefore, the findings of this study that content knowledge is the least priority area that needs to be improved is not surprising as the music instructors feel that they have the requisite content knowledge to be music instructors in the first place.

Music instructors ' self-image was the competency that ranked highest regarding the need for development. Music instructors ' self-image refers to the individual's perception that they have self-efficacy and competency and are effective as educators. Self-image is an important aspect of an instructor's professional identity and can influence their teaching practice. Research shows that self-efficacy beliefs can impact teaching practices (Wray et al., 2022; Huang, 2015). In their systematic literature review of teacher self-efficacy, Gordon et al. (2023) found that teacher self-efficacy also impacts successful education reform. The study concluded that universities and schools should work together to provide teachers with experiences that increase their self-efficacy. This is an important aspect as one of the intents of developing this model is to provide information for enhancing and reforming music programs in a specific context. Suppose a focus on music instructors' self-image, including self-efficacy, positively contributes to change. In that case, universities in Guizhou should embrace activities that increase the self-image of music instructors to enhance the music programs successfully.

The primary objective of this research was to develop a comprehensive model of music instructor competencies. The developed model aims to include the essential knowledge and competencies for effective teaching in music education. Implementing the model can be done in several ways and benefit various music program stakeholders. For administrators of music programs, knowing the composition and ranking of the competencies needed for improvement can help the programs target those competencies that need immediate or more improvement. The model shows that all six competencies are important. Therefore, the overall policy or strategy for improving the quality of instructors and

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instruction must address improving and assessing all six competencies. However, if limited resources or time exist, concentration on the competencies that need the most immediate attention can be purposely addressed. It is common in most universities and for most university instructors that resources related to finances and time are often scarce or very precious. This model helps administrators use financial resources more effectively by providing opportunities for professional development to enhance the instructors' self-image. It can also save time for the instructors by having targeted development opportunities.

Additionally, the model can guide the recruitment and hiring of music instructors as it can be used as a criterion for evaluating the knowledge and skills of the candidates, including the attitudes they may have toward teaching music as a career. It can also be used as a guide for performance evaluations. By comparing the instructor's skills and behaviors with the model, the universities can identify the areas of strength and areas that need improvement.

For instructors, this model can also be used as an overall guide to looking at the competencies required for effective music teaching. As most music instructors are hired based on the content knowledge they could demonstrate from their education, it is not surprising that this is the least priority according to the model. However, the other competencies are also important, such as the knowledge of how to teach and acquiring technological skills that are very important and interesting to students nowadays. Similarly, skills and attitudes are also important for effective music teaching. Music instructors can use the model for self-assessment and self-improvement. Instructors can identify their weaknesses and seek professional development to improve them. Additionally, the model can facilitate peer learning and mentorship among music instructors. Those instructors with high levels of certain competencies can help or mentor their colleagues, fostering collaboration and an environment of continuous learning.

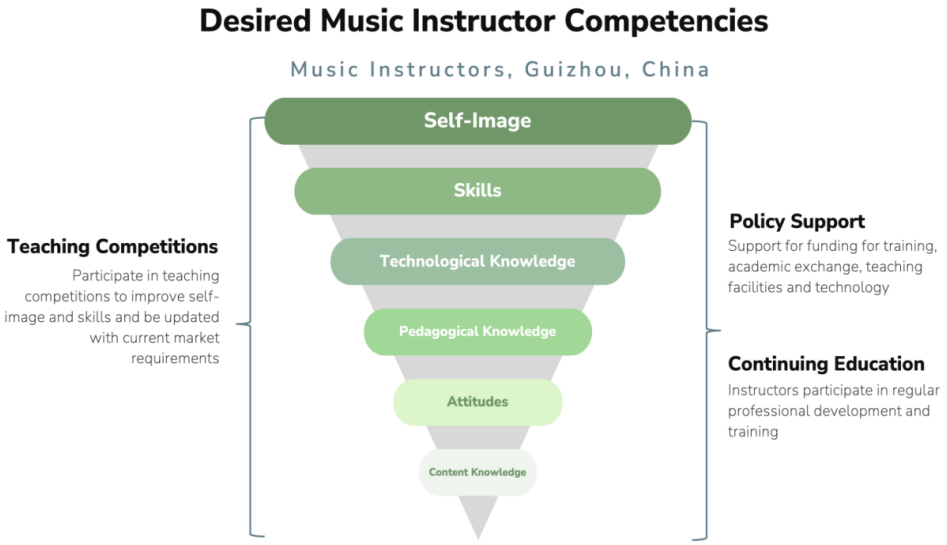

Figure 2 An Instructor Competency Model for Music Instructors in Guizhou, China

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Recommendations

The policy recommendations are suggested for the administrative level, the music program directors, music department chairs, and other administrators who may be able to influence policy that can benefit the music programs in general. The model identified six competencies that resulted from the priority needs index and ranked them according to priority from highest to lowest: self-image, skills, technological knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, attitudes, and content knowledge. To say that any one of these competencies is less important than the other would not be fair. All the competencies need to be present. By being aware of these necessary competencies, music program administrators can develop the following policies:

1. Ensure that these competencies are included in the criteria and evaluated for hiring music instructors. This policy could be implemented by the human resources department, which might require potential music instructor applicants to demonstrate that they have the requisite competencies. Given the current music teaching environment in Guizhou, it may not be feasible to require that all music instructors have high levels of all the competencies at the outset. This may make hiring very difficult or even impossible. Thus, it would also be possible to hire instructors who may have low levels of competencies should have at least some level.

2. Given that new and current music instructors in the context of Guizhou may have varying levels of these competencies and given that levels of competencies are not static and can both increase and decrease, a good policy or strategy to ensure instructor effectiveness would be to ensure continuous professional development of the music instructors. At the university level, music programs should adopt a policy that emphasizes these competencies and strategically plan professional development opportunities to enhance them. This should include providing support for training and professional development. Similarly, professional development and training should be offered and supported through various formats such as seminars and workshops, academic exchanges, conferences, continuing education, and online learning. At the individual level, the university should offer financial support and give instructors opportunities to take leave for training or reward or acknowledge music instructors who actively try to improve themselves. Special benefits for this instructor, such as vacation time, bonuses, organizational acknowledgment, and rewards, can be introduced to act as incentives for music instructors to improve their competencies.

3. The university can focus on music instructors' pedagogical and technological knowledge. As stated in the discussion section, many university instructors come to their careers based mainly on their discipline knowledge, and they have yet to have specific pedagogical training or be taught how to teach effectively. Many university instructors teach how they were taught, which may or may need to be more effective. Similarly, given how important technology has influenced education and teaching, it is important to focus on keeping up with technological developments in music and apply them to music teaching. To do this, university policy should support specific pedagogical training. This might be done by allowing music instructors to observe other instructors teach. Technological support can be done through training and by making available the latest music-related technology for instructors and students alike to teach and learn from. The university cannot expect its students to become creative and innovative when it does not provide the essential tools to elevate those attributes in the 21st century. Similarly, music instructors need to be able to have and use those tools themselves before they can impart the knowledge to their students.

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