

A Cross-cultural Perspective of Art Professional Background and Social Class in the Art Education Industry

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ABSTRACT

With globalization, art education's practice and impact across cultures has gained attention. Our paper, "Cross-cultural Investigation of Art Career Background and Social Class in Art Education," explores how art career background and social level affect art education opportunities and equity, shaping career choices, resource access, and development. It reviews social stratification, sociological perspectives on art, and cross-cultural contrast frameworks. Based on art industry participation data, it discusses multi-dimensional factors' effects on art careers and analyzes societal resource differences. Case studies compare art education industries, focusing on government support and social structure. It explores international exchange programs' role in cultural diversity and arts education collaboration. The paper proposes strategies to optimize art education resources, emphasizing diversity and difference respect. Findings enhance understanding and provide policy insights.

KEYWORDS

Art Career Background; Social Class; Art Education; Cross-cultural Perspective; Equal Opportunities; Policy Intervention; Resource Allocation; International Exchange.

1. INTRODUCTION

Under the background of deepening globalization, art education, which carries the key mission of cultural exchange and dissemination, is encountering unprecedented opportunities and difficulties. On the one hand, globalization actively promotes intercultural dialogue and integration, and provides a broader knowledge treasure house and multi-dimensional thinking perspective for art education. On the other hand, it also reveals the inequality that exists in the art education industry in the background of art profession and social class. Art career background and social class not only determine whether individuals can enter the art field, but also profoundly affect their growth and development in this field. Families with lower social classes often lack adequate financial support and educational resources, making it more difficult for their children to obtain quality art education opportunities, which in turn limits their potential to become artists in the future. Conversely, families from higher social classes are often able to provide more resources and support, making it easier for children to access the arts and choose related career paths. Therefore, understanding the relationship between artistic professional background and social class is essential for formulating fair and reasonable arts education policies [1]. In addition, with the increasingly frequent international cultural exchanges, the differences between different countries and regions in art education have gradually emerged. Through the cross-cultural perspective of art education practices in various countries, we can not only deepen our understanding of their respective systems, but also draw useful lessons from them to improve and perfect their own art education systems. This is not only an important topic of academic research, but also a practical need to promote the development of global art education.

Scholars have studied art professional background and social class, mostly in Western developed countries. Their focus includes: social stratification theory's application in analyzing art education obstacles for different social classes; sociological characteristics within artist groups impacting careers; and cross-cultural comparisons of art education's development and social class structure.

In spite of this, there are relatively few researches on this topic in China, especially when discussing the background of art profession and social class in combination with China's national conditions, the existing literature is insufficient. In recent years, with the rapid development of China's economy and society, the culture and art industry has also shown a rapid rise. The academic community has been paying more and more attention to this field, but there are still many unexplored areas to be further explored. In the field of art education, the problems caused by social class differences are reflected in many dimensions. The inequality of access to educational resources is very large, and family members from higher social classes are more likely to have access to quality arts education opportunities, such as participation in private classes or international art competitions, while families from lower social classes are less able to enjoy the same opportunities due to economic constraints. The problem of bias in curriculum design should not be ignored. The content of art courses provided by some schools and training institutions may be more suited to the needs of certain social classes, while ignoring the interests and development direction of other groups. The allocation of teachers is unbalanced. The inconsistency of policy support and the differences in the degree of support received by different types of arts and cultural projects sometimes even inadvertently aggravate the gap between social classes.

2. SOCIAL STRATIFICATION, OCCUPATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND CROSS-CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN ART EDUCATION

2.1. Social Stratification Theory

Social Stratification divides society into hierarchies based on criteria like resources, power[2], and prestige, reflecting social structure and arrangements. It's universal in human society and can be classified by economic status, education, occupation, race, gender, etc., with economic status being the most common. Classical theories include Marx's focus on production means ownership, Weber's three-factor model (economy, power, prestige), and Parsons' functionalist perspective..

Social stratification directly affects the opportunities and equality of different groups in obtaining art education resources. Families of high social class are usually able to provide more material support and cultural capital, making it easier for children to access quality arts education; Low social class families often because of economic constraints, it is difficult to bear the high cost of art training or participate in international exchange activities. In addition, social stratification is reflected in the quality of arts education provided by schools and communities, with schools in urban centers likely to have richer faculty and facilities than those in remote areas.

2.2. A Sociological Perspective of the Art Profession

Artistic Occupations refer to occupations engaged in creative and expressive work, including but not limited to painters, musicians, dancers, designers, etc. This type of occupation has the following characteristics: creativity, artists need to have high creativity, able to express unique thoughts and emotions in their works; A non-standardized work environment in which artists have flexible working hours and locations, often in studios, theatres or outdoors; Highly personalized, each artist has his or her own unique style and technique, and therefore a different career path; Relatively low career stability, due to the fluctuation of market demand, the income and employment opportunities of art occupations are not as stable as those of traditional industries.

Although careers in the arts are considered a noble and passionate career choice, in reality their social status and financial rewards are not always proportional. Many artists face livelihood issues, especially at the beginning of their careers, where they often need to support themselves through part-time work or other means. [3] However, once famous or recognized, some of the top artists can achieve extremely high financial returns and social prestige. This polarization reflects the uncertainty and competition in the art market. For people from different social classes, there are clear differences in the path to an artistic career. High-class families can help their children build the necessary skills and networks by providing early arts nurturing and support; Families of lower social classes face more challenges, such as lack of art education resources, information asymmetry and social prejudice. In order to overcome these obstacles, some countries and regions have implemented art support policies specifically targeting vulnerable groups, such as scholarship programs and public art projects.

2.3. Cross-cultural Comparison Theory

Cross-cultural Research aims to explore the similarities and differences in people's behavior patterns, values, and social structures in different cultural contexts. Its core lies in understanding and explaining the impact of cultural differences on individuals and societies, rather than simply applying the standards of one culture to another [4]. In order to achieve this goal, cross-cultural research follows the following basic principles: cultural relativity, respect for the uniqueness of each culture, and avoid using the values of a particular culture as the sole criterion for judging other cultures; Multidimensional analysis, considering that culture is a complex system, including multiple levels of factors, such as language, beliefs, customs, etc., so it needs to be analyzed from multiple perspectives; Supported by empirical data, we collect first-hand data through quantitative and qualitative research methods to ensure that the research conclusions are based on reliable data.

The art education system and social class structure of different countries and regions are influenced by their respective historical and cultural backgrounds. For example, in western developed countries, art education is often regarded as part of elite education, focusing on cultivating students' creativity and personal expression ability; In some developing countries, art education may pay more attention to the inheritance of traditional culture and the construction of national identity [5]. In addition, governments of different countries have great differences in their support for art education, which is directly related to the status of the art industry in society and its economic benefits. With the help of comparative study from a cross-cultural perspective, we can gain a deeper insight into these differences and draw valuable enlightenment from them.

3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ARTISTIC PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AND SOCIAL CLASS

3.1. The Participation of Different Social Classes in the Arts Profession

The research reveals that children from families of higher social class are more inclined to choose art as their career path, which is mainly due to their earlier artistic enlightenment experience, stronger family economic support and richer social capital accumulation. In the United States, for example, a survey shows that students from high-income backgrounds are more likely to pursue arts majors than students from low-income backgrounds. According to 2018 statistics from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), about 15 percent of students from families earning more than \$100,000 a year chose art as their major. Among households earning less than \$40,000 a year, the figure is only about 7 percent. The key factors causing the above phenomenon are not limited to the economic status, but also the parents' occupational attributes and social relationship network have a profound impact on their children's artistic career inclination. Children of artist parents are often more susceptible to the influence of the family environment, and have been influenced by art since childhood, forming strong interests and hobbies.

In order to further understand the reasons for the difference in the proportion of people from different social classes engaged in art careers, the following key factors should be considered: family education, families of high social class usually attach importance to the all-round development of children, and are willing to invest more resources in art training and interest cultivation; Social network: Families with a wide social circle can provide their children with more internship opportunities, work display platforms and recommendation letters within the industry, all of which are difficult for families of low social class to reach; Economic conditions, the high cost of art training, the cost of purchasing Musical Instruments or materials, and the travel expenses required to participate in competitions make it difficult for children from low social classes to pursue their artistic dreams continuously.

3.2. The Influence of Artistic Career Background on Personal Development

Art education policies reflect governments' focus and reveal local class structures. In developed countries, it tends to serve middle- to upper-income families. In the US, despite legal protection, low-income children face obstacles due to unequal resources. France, however, ensures broad and equal access through strong policies, narrowing social class gaps. Japan emphasizes participation for all, improving art education with special funds and mobile teachers.

Although children from artistic families may have certain innate advantages, this does not mean that they will necessarily outperform others in the arts industry. In fact, people from non-artistic families can also achieve excellence through hard work. However, there are some differences between the two: in the initial stage, people from artistic families tend to adapt to industry rules more quickly and find their own development direction; Those from non-artistic families spend more time exploring and learning. Resource acquisition ability: the former is easier to obtain high-quality educational resources and interpersonal relationships, while the latter is more dependent on personal struggle and social opportunities; With different psychological expectations, people from artistic families may face higher expectations and pressure, while the latter cherish every chance to succeed more and show stronger resilience and creativity.

3.3. Social Class and Access to Art Education Resources

Children from high social class families do have an obvious advantage in accessing high-quality art education resources. These advantages are reflected in several levels: First, school choice: high social class families tend to send their children to private schools or key public schools that offer rich arts programs, such schools usually have excellent teachers and advanced teaching facilities. Second, extracurricular tutoring: They are also willing to sign up for their children to participate in various professional training courses to supplement the lack of education in school. Third, international exchanges: families of high social class are more qualified to send their children abroad for further study or to participate in international art competitions, broadening their horizons and enhancing their competitiveness.

In contrast, families of low social class face many challenges in the acquisition of art education resources: on the one hand, the economic burden cannot provide enough art learning opportunities for children. The second is information asymmetry: due to the lack of effective information channels, many valuable opportunities are missed. Third, geographical restrictions: children living in remote areas or rural areas are difficult to access the rich art education resources in the city, resulting in their artistic talent is not fully developed. In order to help low social class families overcome these obstacles, the government and all sectors of society need to take a series of measures: the policy tilt, the formulation of art education support policies for poor students, to reduce the family economic pressure; Public investment, increase investment in the construction of cultural and artistic facilities at the grassroots level, and ensure that every child can enjoy basic arts education services; Community cooperation encourages community organizations to establish cooperative relationships with art

institutions, and jointly carry out art training projects of a public interest nature, so as to benefit more people.

4. CROSS-CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN THE ART EDUCATION INDUSTRY

Arts education policies in various countries reflect their social values and strategies. In the US, federal and state governments ensure basic art education for all children via laws like ESSA, which mandates art education in school curricula and local budgets. NGOs raise private funds to supplement public funding. France considers art education a national strategy priority, implementing a unified curriculum and funding various projects. It emphasizes cross-disciplinary integration and learning to enhance students' comprehensive abilities. Japan's Ministry of Education formulates national art education guidelines, with local committees tailoring plans. Japan focuses on special groups' needs and encourages multi-party cooperation. South Africa aims to address apartheid-era inequalities through fair arts education principles in the NCS. It provides necessary facilities and trains teachers in underdeveloped areas, while engaging in international cultural interactions.

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In developing countries, more attention is paid to universality and inclusiveness, and strive to make every child can enjoy the fun of art. For example, in South Africa, the government has prioritized the needs of arts education in poor areas and ethnic minorities through policy preferences. This approach not only promotes social equity, but also lays a solid foundation for building a harmonious and diverse social environment.

5. CONCRETE MEASURES TO PROMOTE CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

To strengthen global art museum educational cooperation, organize international exchange programs like teacher visits, student exchanges, and seminars to share educational ideas and methods across cultures, promoting theory-practice integration. Support artist, scholar, and educator visits to explore new educational models. Utilize digital platforms for online courses and remote collaborations, ensuring global access to quality education. Build an open, inclusive learning community for professionals and the public, especially youth, using social media, VR, and other tools for cross-cultural dialogue. Develop a multilingual art education app with rich multimedia content. Organize cross-border student art competitions to foster cultural interest, creativity, and teamwork. Create virtual exhibition halls for global art treasures, enhancing public engagement and cultural understanding.

Through thematic exhibitions, lectures, etc., diverse cultural and artistic elements are integrated to create locally rooted yet universally appealing educational experiences. Examples include the World Culture Day series highlighting unique histories, traditions, and modern art of different countries/regions, enhancing cross-cultural understanding. Special exhibitions or flash mobs during festivals/anniversaries attract specific groups, boosting audience interest and participation. Interactive methods like storytelling and role-playing deepen understanding of artwork's cultural significance. Art museums should also develop unique educational experiences tailored to local characteristics, such as Chinese calligraphy, painting, and ceramic workshops at the Palace Museum, or Japanese tea

ceremony and flower art displays at the Tokyo National Museum, promoting cultural exchange and understanding.

With the acceleration of globalization, art museum staff must have good intercultural communication skills. To this end, systematic intercultural training courses should be provided for staff to improve their cognition of different cultures, avoid misunderstanding or offense caused by ignorance, and enhance their awareness of service. In order to serve international visitors more effectively and provide a barrier-free communication environment, the mastery of one or more foreign languages becomes a necessity. By simulating the cross-cultural communication situation in actual work, the operational skills and service level of employees can be greatly improved. Active participation in international academic conferences and seminars not only provides access to the latest developments in the industry, but also enables gallery practitioners to be exposed to cutting-edge educational ideas and technology applications around the world, while expanding professional networks and making friends, paving the way for potential collaboration opportunities. By adopting these strategies, the museum can not only strengthen its educational mission, but also promote the exchange and interaction between culture and art on the international stage, and promote understanding and respect among different cultural backgrounds.

6. CONCLUSION

Despite progress in global sustainable development, many countries face challenges like resource overexploitation, ecosystem destruction, pollution, climate change, and biodiversity loss, threatening humanity. Marine and air pollution are major health concerns. Policies face obstacles like lack of mechanisms and legal support, and government coordination issues. The global wealth gap hinders equitable resource distribution, affecting vulnerable groups and SDGs. Governments must optimize policies, strengthen supervision, establish evaluation mechanisms, and encourage public participation in policymaking to address these challenges.

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