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THE ANALYSIS OF SELF-CONCEPT, ACHIEVEMENT  
GOALS AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT ON  
STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AMONG FINE  
ART UNDERGRADUATES IN  
SHANDONG, CHINA



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SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY  
2025



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LEARNING ENVIRONMENT ON STUDENTS' MOTIVATION  
AMONG FINE ART UNDERGRADUATES  
IN SHANDONG, CHINA

SHANG LIYAN

THESIS PRESENTED TO QUALIFY FOR A DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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## **ANALISIS PENGARUH KONSEP DIRI, MATLAMAT PENCAPAIAN DAN PERSEKITARAN PEMBELAJARAN TERHADAP MOTIVASI PELAJAR DALAM KALANGAN MAHASISWA SENI HALUS DI SHANDONG, CHINA**

### **ABSTRAK**

Kajian ini mengkaji hubungan antara konsep diri, matlamat pencapaian, dan persekitaran pembelajaran terhadap motivasi dalam kalangan pelajar seni halus di Shandong, China. Kajian ini mengisi jurang penyelidikan dengan meneliti bagaimana konstruk-konstruk tersebut saling berinteraksi dalam konteks seni halus, yang kurang mendapat tumpuan empirikal dan praktikal serta aplikasi khusus kurikulum seni halus. Konsep diri, merangkumi persepsi diri dan efikasi diri, diukur untuk menilai pengaruhnya terhadap motivasi. Matlamat pencapaian seperti penguasaan dan prestasi dinilai berkenaan kesannya terhadap ketekunan dan keterlibatan pelajar dalam tugas artistik. Faktor persekitaran pembelajaran, termasuk iklim kelas dan ketersediaan sumber, dianalisis bagi melihat bagaimana ia menyokong atau menghalang motivasi. Reka bentuk kaedah campuran menggunakan soal selidik dengan 373 responden untuk analisis kuantitatif, temu bual separa berstruktur dengan 20 responden. Soal selidik dijalankan antara Januari dan Mac 2025, temu bual dikod dalam NVivo, dan kawalan statistik ke atas umur serta jantina digunakan. Keputusan kuantitatif menunjukkan korelasi ketara antara matlamat penguasaan dan persekitaran positif dengan skor motivasi lebih tinggi. Data kualitatif mendedahkan matlamat prestasi mencetuskan kebimbangan dan tekanan, berbeza dengan naratif responden yang menekankan orientasi pertumbuhan. Penemuan ini menunjukkan kepelbagaian interaksi antara orientasi matlamat dan konteks pembelajaran, menyediakan bukti asli untuk strategi pendidikan disesuaikan. Matlamat penguasaan dan sokongan persekitaran muncul sebagai pemangkin utama, manakala fokus prestasi boleh menjejaskan motivasi. Penyelidikan ini menyumbang bukti empirikal baru kepada pendidikan seni halus dengan menjelaskan bagaimana konstruk ini saling berkaitan dan membimbing strategi untuk meningkatkan motivasi pelajar.





**THE ANALYSIS OF SELF-CONCEPT, ACHIEVEMENT GOALS AND  
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT ON STUDENTS' MOTIVATION  
AMONG FINE ART UNDERGRADUATES  
IN SHANDONG, CHINA**

**ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the relationship between self-concept, achievement goals, and learning environment on motivation among fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China. It fills an identified gap by exploring how self-concept, achievement goals, and learning environment interact to shape motivation in fine art contexts academically, which has received limited empirical and practical focus. Self-concept, comprising self-perception and self-efficacy, was measured to assess its influence on motivation. Achievement goals, which included mastery and performance, were evaluated for their effects on persistence and engagement in artistic tasks. Learning environment factors, including classroom climate and resource availability, were analyzed for their support or hindrance of motivation. The mixed-methods design utilized surveys with 373 respondents for quantitative correlations and semi-structured interviews with 20 respondents. The surveys were administered between January and March 2025, interviews were coded in NVivo, and statistical controls for age and gender were applied. Quantitative results showed strong associations of mastery goals and positive environment with higher motivation scores. Rich qualitative data revealed that performance goals generated anxiety and tension, contrasting with interviewee narratives emphasizing growth orientation. Findings demonstrate nuance in how goal orientation and context interact, offering original evidence for tailored educational strategies. Mastery goals and supportive contexts emerged as key drivers, while performance focus risked undermining motivation. This research contributes novel empirical evidence to fine art education by clarifying how these constructs interrelate and informing strategies to enhance students' motivation.



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION



#### 1.1 Introduction

The educational development of Shandong China's undergraduate population shows art instruction to be crucial for developing creative competence and judgmental aptitude resulting in full individual advancement (Chen, 2020; Liu & Wang, 2021). The study evaluates self-concept together with achievement goals and learning environments to understand their effects on fine art undergraduate motivated behaviors. This introduction gives a summary of the study's background followed by a discussion of its research importance before describing the contents of Chapter 1 which covers the study background alongside its problem statement and research objectives and research questions and theoretical framework. Art education





encompasses various forms of artistic expression, such as fine arts, oil painting, illustration, fashion design, and graphic design, each contributing uniquely to the cognitive and emotional growth of students (Sdiq & Qadir, 2023). Engaging in the arts can enhance cognitive abilities like problem-solving, critical thinking, and spatial reasoning, while also supporting emotional development through creative expression (Malytska et al., 2022; Stolar, 2018). The role of art education in personal development is significant as it helps in forming self-concept and identity, especially during the formative years of schooling (Bi & Zhang, 2018). Art education fosters a deeper understanding of cultural heritage and promotes social cohesion, allowing students to appreciate diverse perspectives and histories through different art forms (Halverson & Sawyer, 2022).



Due to Shandong's distinct cultural and educational environment the principles of art education maintain special importance in this Chinese region. Traditional Chinese art merges with modern educational approaches in Shandong schools to deliver students dynamic instructional programs that connect traditional with contemporary methods (Chen, 2019; Liu & Wang, 2021). Research on how self-concept relates to achievement goals in specific learning environments guides educational strategy development. Student learning stays driven by their self-concept which affects their academic goals alongside mastery and performance goals that maintain study engagement (Liu & Wang, 2021; Zhang et al., 2020). Educational psychology serves as the academic foundation for this research because its learning process analysis also includes instructional methods and teaching principles. Motivation stands as a central educational psychological concept that directly influences academic results and total student achievement (Albrecht & Karabenick,





2018; Arkhipova et al., 2019). The research examines motivation elements in fine art undergraduate students using theoretical frameworks from Self-Determination Theory (SDT) along with Achievement Goal Theory. According to SDT people seek motivation through personal autonomy combined with competence expectations and a desire for interpersonal connections (Ballesteros et al., 2023; Liem, 2021). At the same time Achievement Goal Theory differentiates between student motivation types with mastery goals focusing on knowledge acquisition versus performance goals seeking social competition (Ballesteros et al., 2023).

This chapter starts with the background of the study, highlighting the significance of art education in cognitive and emotional development, cultural heritage appreciation, and social cohesion (Chen, 2023; Stolar, 2018). It then addresses the problem statement, identifying the variability in how self-concept affects different students, the challenge in consistently measuring the impact of self-concept on motivation, and the role of educational environments in shaping self-concept and motivation (Yeung & Han, 2018; Wang & Yu, 2023; Cayubit, 2021). The problem statement underscores the need for tailored interventions that consider cultural, gender, and socio-economic factors influencing student motivation. The research objectives (ROs) and questions (RQs) are clearly defined to guide the study. The objectives include determining the impact of self-perception, self-efficacy, self-description, mastery goals, performance goals, classroom climate, and access to resources on motivation among fine art undergraduates in Shandong (Chen, 2019; Liu & Wang, 2021). The research questions correspond to these objectives, aiming to explore the specific influences of each factor on student motivation. The theoretical framework integrates SDT and Achievement Goal Theory to provide a





comprehensive understanding of how self-concept, achievement goals, and the learning environment interact to influence motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Elliot & Church, 1997). Self-perception, self-efficacy, and self-description are examined under SDT, emphasizing the fulfillment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs. Achievement goals are analyzed through the lens of mastery and performance goals, highlighting their impact on intrinsic motivation and academic outcomes (Bardach et al., 2020; Senko, 2019).

This research aims to provide valuable insights into the motivational dynamics of fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China. By understanding the factors that influence motivation, the study seeks to support the development of effective educational strategies and policies that enhance student motivation and academic success. The introduction sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration of these themes in subsequent chapters, beginning with a detailed examination of the background, problem statement, objectives, and theoretical framework in Chapter 1.

## 1.2 Background of research

Art education holds a significant place in the educational landscape, shaping individuals' creative abilities, critical thinking skills, and overall personal development. It encompasses various forms of artistic expression such as fine arts, oil painting, illustration, fashion design, and graphic design, each contributing uniquely to the cognitive and emotional growth of students (Sdiq & Qadir, 2023). Art education is not just about nurturing creativity but also about fostering a deeper





understanding of cultural heritage and promoting social cohesion (Chen, 2023). This integration of cognitive and emotional learning provides students with a holistic educational experience. Studies have shown that engaging in the arts can enhance cognitive abilities such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and spatial reasoning (Malytska et al., 2022). Additionally, art education supports emotional development by allowing students to express their emotions and experiences through creative outlets (Stolar, 2018). This dual impact on cognitive and emotional development underscores the importance of incorporating arts into educational curricula. The role of art education in personal development cannot be overstated. It helps in the formation of self-concept and identity, especially during the formative years of schooling. Art provides a platform for students to explore their interests and talents, which can lead to improved self-esteem and confidence (Bi & Zhang, 2018).

Moreover, art education encourages empathy and cultural awareness, as students learn to appreciate diverse perspectives and histories through different art forms (Halverson & Sawyer, 2022). The development of self-concept through art education is crucial, as it allows students to build a strong sense of identity and self-worth. This is particularly important during adolescence, a period characterized by significant emotional and psychological growth.

Art education also plays a crucial role in societal development. It contributes to the cultural and economic vitality of communities by fostering creative industries and promoting cultural tourism (Papavasileiou et al., 2020). Furthermore, art education can drive social change by addressing contemporary issues and encouraging civic engagement. For instance, environmental education through art can raise awareness about sustainability and inspire action (Bushati, 2018). The ability of





art education to address social issues makes it a powerful tool for fostering community resilience and social cohesion. By engaging with current issues through art, students learn to think critically about their world and their place within it. The impact of art education extends to various educational outcomes. Research indicates that students who participate in arts education are more likely to excel academically. They tend to have higher grades, better attendance, and lower dropout rates compared to their peers who do not engage in the arts (Aziz, 2023). Art education also enhances students' motivation and engagement, as it provides a dynamic and enjoyable learning environment that contrasts with traditional didactic methods (Feng, 2018). This engagement is critical for sustaining students' interest in learning and promoting long-term educational success.



In the context of fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China, these principles of art education are particularly relevant. The unique cultural and educational environment in Shandong provides a rich backdrop for exploring how art education influences self-concept, achievement goals, learning environment on motivation. The integration of traditional Chinese art forms with contemporary educational practices offers students a diverse and enriching learning experience. This blend of tradition and modernity in art education not only preserves cultural heritage but also prepares students for the globalized world. Understanding the relationship between self-concept, achievement goals, and learning environment is essential for developing effective educational strategies. Self-concept influences students' academic aspirations and their motivation to achieve (Chen, 2019). Achievement goals, which include mastery and performance goals, drive students' engagement and persistence in their studies (Liu & Wang, 2021). The learning environment, encompassing both the





physical and psychological aspects of the classroom, plays a crucial role in shaping students' educational experiences (Zhang et al., 2020). A supportive and stimulating learning environment can enhance students' motivation and foster a positive attitude towards learning.

Art education fosters a range of skills that are essential for the 21st century where these include creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking (Brustureanu, 2022). In an increasingly complex and interconnected world, these skills are invaluable for personal and professional success. Art education prepares students to navigate and contribute to a rapidly changing global landscape by equipping them with the ability to think creatively and adapt to new challenges. Creativity, for instance, allows individuals to generate novel ideas and solutions, while collaboration and communication enable effective teamwork and the exchange of ideas. Critical thinking empowers students to analyze information critically and make informed decisions. Incorporating art education into the curriculum requires thoughtful planning and support from educational policymakers. It is essential to provide adequate resources, professional development for teachers, and a supportive learning environment to ensure the effective delivery of art education (Tarakanova, 2021). Adequate resources might include access to art materials, technology, and spaces conducive to creative work. Professional development ensures that teachers are equipped with the latest pedagogical strategies and knowledge to effectively teach art. A supportive learning environment encourages students to experiment and express themselves without fear of judgment or failure. Additionally, integrating art education with other subjects can create interdisciplinary learning experiences that enrich students' understanding and appreciation of both the arts and other academic





disciplines (Hernández et al., 2022). For example, integrating art with science can help students visualize complex scientific concepts, while combining art with history can bring historical events and cultures to life. This interdisciplinary approach not only makes learning more engaging but also helps students develop a more holistic understanding of the world.

The development of early childhood depends heavily on art education. Young children experience brain stimulation which then leads to developmental improvement of motor skills followed by increased social abilities through artistic engagement during early childhood according to Yeni and Dilfa (2019). Drawing together with painting and music production helps students develop their manual dexterity as well as their coordination between eyes and hands. Through collaborative art activities children learn essential interpersonal skills that include sharing efforts and developing cooperation abilities together with understanding and empathy for others. Art education programs in early childhood create enduring arts abilities while developing interest in artistic pursuits that exist throughout life (Bautista et al., 2018). The higher education system keeps art education central to its mission. The creative industry training combined with educational enhancement results from participating in this program. At the university level art education establishes analysis-driven study alongside visionary thinking to empower students for innovative approaches toward fresh artistic principles (Naydenova & Bukatova, 2020). Through education students build essential skills including adaptability alongside resilience together with emotional intelligence due to Lutfi (2019) findings. Workers need adaptability combined with a lifelong learning mentality because today's changing job market demands these abilities as fundamental elements of success. Arts education continues





to gain research evidence which validates its numerous benefits to students. Available research demonstrates how arts education enhances both student academic performance and collaborative abilities as well as enhances personal wellness (Chen, 2023; Malytska et al., 2022). The participation in arts programs leads students to reach superior marks with improved registration patterns. Through its uniquely purposeful approach art education creates spaces to handle modern-day issues while building an inclusive society according to Stolar (2018). Students utilizing art as a medium can investigate social issues while sharing their ideas about inequality and human rights and climate change thus building a populace that is socially aware and animate.

In the context of fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China, these principles of art education are particularly relevant. The unique cultural and educational environment in Shandong provides a rich backdrop for exploring how art education influences self-concept, achievement goals, and learning environment on motivation. Understanding the relationship between self-concept, achievement goals, and learning environment is essential for developing effective educational strategies. Self-concept influences students' academic aspirations and their motivation to achieve (Chen, 2019). Achievement goals, which include mastery and performance goals, drive students' engagement and persistence in their studies (Liu & Wang, 2021). The learning environment, encompassing both the physical and psychological aspects of the classroom, plays a crucial role in shaping students' educational experiences (Zhang et al., 2020). A supportive and stimulating learning environment can enhance students' motivation and foster a positive attitude towards learning.





Humans' learning behavior in educational contexts with teaching psychology and evaluation effectiveness form the core areas of study in educational psychology (Albrecht & Karabenick, 2018). This field explores different subjects such as cognitive development learning theories and instructional strategies while also understanding assessment methods. Motivation represents a fundamental educational psychological concept which serves as a decisive force for student academic achievement and classroom participation while driving complete success (Arkipova et al., 2019). Educational psychology studies motivation through different theoretical approaches that both describe what drives student learning participation and how students maintain their learning commitment throughout time. Motivation consists of two major distinct types which align as intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Self-driven participants connect with activities directly for the sense of reward they provide and right of personal satisfaction which differ from reviewers who pursue activities to gain outside recognition and avoid detrimental consequences (McInerney, 2019). Research by Badridduja et al. (2022) and Kalita (2023) revealed students with an intrinsic drive to learn achieve better educational outcomes along with more persistence than extrinsically motivated students. The Self-Deterministic Theory in educational psychology describes motivation as arising from three basic needs of autonomy competence and relatedness according to Ballesteros et al. (2023). Within SDT's framework students receive intrinsic motivation and improved academic results when their psychological requirements are satisfied. Research shows that developing a supportive classroom which meets students' needs results in stronger motivation as well as improved learning achievements (Asanova & Gagova, 2019; Zhuravleva et al., 2022). Teachers create autonomous learning environments by letting students choose their work activities and encourage competence through positive feedback and





develop classroom community to build relatedness.

The Achievement Goal Theory stands as a key framework that separates students into two goal types: mastery goals and performance goals (Liem, 2021). According to the Achievement Goal Theory mastery goals promote students' understanding and learning yet performance goals prioritize showcasing ability in comparison with peers. The evidence shows mastery goals produce profound understanding and internal student motivation yet performance goals into nervousness and naive learning methods (Beymenov et al., 2020; Vasiuk et al., 2022). The aim to shift students towards mastery goals requires teachers to emphasize their students' continuous learning efforts and their self-development rather than peer competition. The integration of these motivational theories into educational practices can have profound implications for teaching and learning. For instance, educators can design curricula and instructional strategies that support students' intrinsic motivation by aligning learning activities with their interests and providing meaningful challenges. Moreover, creating an assessment system that values mastery and personal growth over competition can help students focus on their learning processes rather than just outcomes.

Motivation functions as an overlapping element with psychological constructs including self-concept along with achievement goals. An individual's internal views about their skills and value work as a fundamental influence on how they behave academically and how they become motivated (Chen, 2019). Because positive self-concept gives students confidence about their abilities students become more intrinsically motivated. Students who develop negative self-feedbacks tend to lose





their motivation resulting in disengagement from study tasks. The strategies students employ for learning depend on their achievement goals between task mastery and outperforming classmates. Students who focus on mastery learning will adopt deep learning methods and handle difficulties with strength whereas performance-oriented students might choose surface methods but experience higher anxieties (Liem, 2021). Mastery orientation development in students happens through instructor-provided chances where they can monitor their learning paths while defining personal targets alongside their accomplishment analysis. The motivation development of Shandong China's fine art undergraduate students requires comprehensive understanding of the interactions between self-concept and achievement goals and learning environments. Higher education art programs prepare creative industry professionals and they improve academic experiences by boosting critical thinking and creative ideas (Naydenova & Bukatova, 2020). The development of learning spaces which satisfy students' psychological requirements leads to substantial improvements in study motivation and participation.

According to Expectancy-Value Theory motivation develops from the combination of personable success predictions and identified task value (Ruiz-Fuster, 2019). Students motivated by this theory increase their participation in academic activities whenever they perceive success possibilities and find value in their learning tasks. According to this theory educators must focus on developing their students' beliefs regarding their capabilities and the educational content value because perception and belief-shaping are essential educational roles (Bietenbeck, 2020; Efremova & Huseynova, 2020). Through clear instruction and affording positive feedback as well as developing support systems which build student autonomy





teachers will foster student success expectations. Alongside these fundamental theories educational psychology benefits greatly from Albert Bandura's concept of self-efficacy (Liem, 2021). An individual's belief that they will succeed in particular tasks is properly described as self-efficacy. People who hold strong self-belief demonstrate higher motivation because they both establish demanding educational targets and keep going through challenging situations to reach better educational outcomes (Pechenkina & Petrov, 2021; Křeménková, 2019). Students who have high mathematics self-efficacy tend to take on advanced problems while continuing to work through even difficult math tasks. When self-efficacy stands low students tend to avoid complex tasks and develop a habit of premature surrender that disrupts academic development.



Educational interventions aimed at enhancing motivation often involve strategies such as goal setting, providing feedback, and creating engaging and relevant learning activities (Kalita, 2023; McInerney, 2019). For example, goal-setting interventions help students to set specific, measurable, and achievable goals, which can increase their motivation and commitment to learning tasks (Albrecht & Karabenick, 2018; Arkhipova et al., 2019). When students have clear and attainable goals, they can better focus their efforts and monitor their progress, leading to increased motivation and academic success. Additionally, feedback that is constructive and focused on effort rather than ability can also boost students' motivation by fostering a growth mindset (Liem, 2021; Ruiz-Fuster, 2019). Feedback that emphasizes the importance of effort and strategies over inherent ability encourages students to view challenges as opportunities for growth rather than as insurmountable obstacles. The role of teachers in fostering student motivation is





crucial. Effective teachers are those who can create a positive classroom climate, provide support and encouragement, and adapt their teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of students (Ballesteros et al., 2023; Asanova & Gagova, 2019). A positive classroom climate, characterized by mutual respect and trust, can enhance students' motivation and engagement. For instance, teachers who show genuine interest in their students' well-being and learning can build strong, supportive relationships that motivate students to engage more deeply with the material. Moreover, teachers who use a variety of instructional strategies and differentiate their teaching to cater to individual learning styles can help all students feel capable and motivated.

Student learning motivation together with class engagement becomes highly enhanced through teacher-student relationships based on trust as well as respect (Zhuravleva et al., 2022; Beymenov et al., 2020). Students who experience teacher-care and teacher-successful interest show enhanced classroom involvement and assignment completion levels. Students who experience this supportive bond with their educators will build positive self-identities while their motivation receives considerable growth. Student motivation receives important influences from peers. Through social support and shared learning efforts between peers motivation levels get stronger according to Bietenbeck (2020) along with Efremova and Huseynova (2020). Students gain better comprehension while becoming more motivated through educational activities that combine group work and peer tutoring since they interact with diverse perspectives. Some negative behaviors among peers including bullying or unnecessary social competition create environments which weaken student motivation to remain involved in learning activities (Pechenkina & Petrov, 2021;





Křeménková, 2019). A hostile learning environment arises from negative peer interactions to create anxiety and demotivation among students while simultaneously harming academic performance levels and student overall well-being.

The digital era brings both fresh obstacles alongside new prospects for student education motivation. Online learning spaces expect students to practice self-direction because these environments provide limited direct classroom supervision and comprehensive curricular organization (McInerney, 2019; Vasiuk et al., 2022). The transition to electronic education demands students must learn to properly regulate themselves to handle coursework time commitments and remain dedicated to assignments. Digital teaching tools combined with personalized learning resources motivated individuals more effectively than before (Albrecht & Karabenick, 2018; Ruiz-Fuster, 2019) through their interactive software. Digital educational tools automatically adjust based on personal learning characteristics and speed yet provide immediate performance feedback and numerous multimedia content types that improve student interest and accessibility. Human motivation stands strongly influenced by the surrounding cultural environment. Student motivation together with their perceptions of educational success are affected by diverse cultural environments (Badridduja et al., 2022; Kalita, 2023). Certain cultures prefer to prioritize group objectives and familial demands instead of personal achievement achievements. Some Asian cultures hold educational excellence as a symbol of family prestige which students pursue using their own interests as secondary to meeting both family demands and societal norms (Liem, 2021; Ballesteros et al., 2023). When designing motivational strategies teachers need to be aware of cultural variations because this knowledge helps them create approaches which accommodate students' beliefs and





experiences. Educational policymakers and teachers need to recognize these cultural dimensions to develop learning environments which match students' priorities and motivations.

Self-concept describes how individuals understand themselves through their mental perceptions which include beliefs regarding abilities together with emotional attitudes toward personal characteristics. Students' perceptions of their academic abilities in education create substantial effects on their academic outcomes (Villarroel, 2021; Aziz et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2021) According to Villarroel (2021) Academic self-concept serves as an intersection between students and education (Aziz et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2021). Academic interventions alongside educational outcomes benefit heavily from knowledge about the interaction between students' perceived sense of self and their academic achievement results. The research of Wu et al. (2021) demonstrates that academic self-concept exhibits a powerful positive link to academic achievement results. The academic success of students demonstrates clear links to their academic self-concept level (Möller et al., 2020). Students experience improved academic performance from maintaining positive self-concept in addition to receiving enhanced self-concept from achieving better grades (Alkhateeb et al., 2022). Wu et al. (2021) performed a meta-analysis which showed academic self-concept effectively predicts academic achievement while academic achievement similarly predicts academic self-concept based on reciprocal effects model findings. Students' academic performance develops through an ongoing relationship with their personal beliefs about themselves. Positive academic self-concepts form at the initial stages of a student's education experience.





Students with strong self-concept perform better at primary school and their success continues through secondary school and higher education (Carrillo-López et al., 2022; Hosová, 2019). The academic self-confidence students hold about their intellectual knowledge serves as crucial for determining academic achievement success (Carrillo-López et al., 2022). When schools actively promote higher academic self-concept their students demonstrate better academic outcomes. The combination of student encouragement and recognition alongside supportive connections between teachers and students leads to major improvements in learner self-concept and study drive. To understand students' motives toward education it is crucial to investigate their achievement goals patterns. The Achievement Goal Theory establishes mastery goals as separate from the category of performance goals according to Liem (2021). Learning and understanding drive students who set mastery goals whereas students with performance goals seek to prove their competence against others. Studies demonstrate that students who pursue mastery goals develop better mastery and intrinsic motivation and avoid performance goals which create anxiety and surface level learning methods (Beymenov et al., 2020; Vasiuk et al., 2022). Student engagement with course material increases alongside their development of mastery goals which fuels lasting learning interests.

Teaching methods built to boost student motivation incorporate goal planning with feedback provision and activity design that keeps students actively engaged (Kalita, 2023; McInerney, 2019). Achieving mastery of learning assignments with enhanced motivation and performance levels becomes possible through goal-setting interventions that use Albrecht and Karabenick (2018) and Arkhipova et al (2019) methods. Students who have specific learning targets achieve greater focus and track





their educational development better which results in higher academic achievement and stronger motivation. Students' motivation grows when they receive useful instruction that shows progress based on effort rather than natural talent (Liem, 2021; Ruiz-Fuster, 2019). When educators provide feedback which stresses efforts and strategies students develop a perspective that sees academic challenges as potential for personal growth rather than unmanageable hurdles. Teachers lead student motivation development through their capability to build positive classroom climates along with their ability to support and motivate learners and adjust instructional techniques to student differences (Ballesteros et al., 2023; Asanova & Gagova, 2019). When students experience a respectful learning environment where trust exists between them and their teachers both motivation and engagement improve. When teachers demonstrate substantive student care and classroom involvement it enables them to build strong bonds which drives students toward stronger subject understanding. Utilizing diverse instructional methods combined with teaching modifications based on learner styles will help every student develop confidence alongside motivation.

Higher education shows a substantial relationship between how students view themselves and their academic success. University students who hold strong academic self-concept tend to score better academically with higher grades and better study completion rates (Leon, 2023; Batool et al., 2023). Researchers use the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale to evaluate student self-concept dimensions while measuring academic outcomes. Leon (2023) discovered that self-concept generates a positive relationship with academic performance results among university students thus demonstrating its vital impact on university success. Self-concept research using a





longitudinal approach shows how fluctuations in personal belief systems influence educational achievement among students. Research following student groups throughout primary and secondary education discovered that academic self-concept falls during the move from primary to secondary education thus affecting educational achievement (Postigo et al., 2022). Research indicates that many students experience decreased academic self-concept because of the expanded educational and social hurdles which develop during this major transition. Through understanding these changing developmental patterns teachers can create intervention programs to maintain or strengthen student self-concept in essential educational transition periods. The psychological framework of self-concept maintains kinship with both personality models and emotional intelligence dimensions. Research finds students with stronger emotional intelligence tend to demonstrate superior academic self-concept leading to better academic success (Herrera et al., 2020). Role interactions imply academic success needs comprehensive treatment of psychological components for success. The ability to recognize and manage your emotions alongside tracking others' emotions through emotional intelligence guides students toward academic success while preserving a strong psychological image of themselves.

Academic attitudes function as intermediaries which translate self-concept into academic achievement results. Student academic self-concept improves with positive school-related attitudes and teacher perceptions which results in better educational performance (Veas et al., 2019). According to Veas et al. (2019) academic self-concept functions as a middle factor between academic attitudes and achievement demonstrating why schools must prioritize both attributes. Students perceive improved academic results when they see positive teachers combined with a





favorable school environment that develops strong academic self-concept. Educational environments that include strategies to boost self-concept produce major positive outcomes. Student self-concept enhancements result from implementing mentoring programs alongside personalized feedback and giving students independent educational choices. The combination of students with older peers and adult mentors through mentoring programs generates effective academic self-concept growth (Liem, 2021). Feedback built around individual development alongside effort measurement over peer comparison enables students to build stronger self-concept by experiencing meaningful value and capability strengthening. Student autonomy through learning activity choice opportunities helps to build positive self-concept by letting students manage their educational experience. Educational interventions must analyze cultural elements which influence both self-concept development and academic results. The influence of collective goals and family expectations on student self-concept formation appears stronger in cultures studied by Badridduja et al. (2022). Educational interventions become more effective by incorporating lessons from cultural influences through educator-led design. By properly engaging families with educational processes and understanding community values schools improve students' academic self-concept and motivation levels.

Throughout academic activities students establish objectives that define their educational accomplishments. The educational objectives affect students both mentally and behaviorally through their motivational frameworks and academic strategy selection and performance outcomes (Bardach et al., 2020; Senko, 2019). Knowledge of achievement goals provides educators important insights to create teaching methods which improve their students' academic achievements.





Achievement Goal Theory serves as the predominant theoretical construct which investigates achievement goals. It categorizes goals into two primary types: mastery goals and performance goals (Daumiller et al., 2019; Miller et al., 2021). The learning process for development of personal understanding through competence advancement aligns with mastery goals yet performance goals emphasize outperforming other students in competence demonstration. Two subtypes existed in performance goals: performance-approach goals referred to beating others while performance-avoidance goals indicated a desire to steer clear of underperformance (Bardach et al., 2020; Senko, 2019). Research shows mastery goals yield positive academic effects which include deep learning along with persistent behavior and intrinsic motivation (Boden et al., 2020; Jaitner et al., 2019). Student achievement in mastery goals-driven approaches leads them toward self-managed study methods while encouraging them to ask for support and maintain perseverance when facing obstacles (Senko, 2019; Daumiller et al., 2019). Research shows that mastery-focused educational spaces produce positive results for academic outcomes thus demanding focused attention on promoting such environments in educational institutions (Miller et al., 2021; Bardach et al., 2020).

When people pursue performance-approach objectives their outcomes tend to be beneficial although these goals sometimes produce conflicting responses. Performance-approach goals drive goal competition which leads students to achieve better performance in their studies while boosting their drive alongside educational results. These types of goals create additional anxiety levels and produce stress in students according to Senko (2019) and Daumiller et al. (2019). Students who set performance-avoidance goals to prevent worse outcomes than others experience





mainly negative effects that include anxiety and fear of failure and lower academic achievement results (Bardach et al., 2020; Miller et al., 2021). Different achievement goal situations influence how successful they become in helping students achieve their goals. The objective structures teachers establish within classrooms strongly shape which goals students choose to adopt according to Boden et al. (2020) and Jaitner et al. (2019). A classroom environment built with mastery goals combined with supportive feedback encourages students to use matching goals that drives improved academic success according to Senko (2019) and Daumiller et al. (2019). Lochbaum et al. (2023) investigated how achievement goals function both in complexes as well as in isolation. The  $3 \times 2$  achievement goal framework contains six types of goals including task-approach and task-avoidance along with self-approach and self-avoidance along with other-approach and other-avoidance goals. By defining achievement goals with greater specificity this conceptual framework enhances scholars' understanding about student motivations which affect their academic outcomes (Lochbaum et al., 2023). Research indicates that students who adopt task-approach and self-approach goals develop beneficial learning strategies and improved motivation yet avoidance goal orientations regularly result in unfavorable results (Lochbaum et al., 2023).

Students' academic performance depends heavily on how achievement goals interact with psychological elements including self-concept as well as self-efficacy. According to Miller et al. (2021) and Bardach et al. (2020) students who demonstrate high academic self-concept and strong self-efficacy beliefs tend to choose mastery goals and display resilient learning behaviors. Students with inferior levels of self-concept and self-efficacy develop performance-avoidance goals that turn into reduced





academic success (Senko, 2019; Jaitner et al., 2019). Students' achievement goals develop based on their individual characteristics and their experience with school culture along with classroom practices and peer influence dynamics. Students within schools prioritizing mastery-oriented cultures which value learning over competing demonstrate increased adoption of adaptive achievement goals (Daumiller et al., 2019; Bardach et al., 2020). Educational environments that foster learning growth develop when teachers implement assessment methods which provide developmental feedback against traditional scoring approaches (Liem, 2021). Through their research Lochbaum et al. (2023) have shown how the  $3 \times 2$  achievement goal model measures several dimensions of achievement goals including task-approach, task-avoidance, self-approach, self-avoidance, other-approach and other-avoidance goals. A thorough evaluation of students' motivational patterns discovers more detailed understanding regarding their performance effects in schoolwork. Task-approach and self-approach goals lead to positive learning strategies and motivational outcomes, yet avoidance goals result in negative academic results (Lochbaum et al., 2023).

The relationship between achievement goals combines with psychological elements such as self-concept and self-efficacy produces considerable effects on students' educational accomplishments. Students expressing strong beliefs about their academic competencies and self-feelings tend to choose mastery goals and display resilient educational behaviors (Miller et al., 2021; Bardach et al., 2020). Students with weak self-concept and self-efficacy exhibit higher tendencies to select performance-avoidance goals therefore they exhibit inferior academic progress (Senko, 2019; Jaitner et al., 2019). In addition to individual factors, contextual factors such as school culture, classroom practices, and peer influences also shape students'





achievement goals. Schools that emphasize a mastery-oriented culture, where learning and improvement are valued over competition, tend to have students who adopt more adaptive achievement goals (Daumiller et al., 2019; Bardach et al., 2020). Teachers can cultivate such an environment by using assessment practices that focus on formative feedback and growth rather than summative evaluation and comparison (Liem, 2021). The role of cultural context in achievement goals has also been investigated. Hofverberg & Winberg (2018) comparing achievement goals across different cultures suggests that cultural values and educational practices can influence how students adopt and pursue these goals. For example, in collectivist cultures, where group harmony and collective success are emphasized, students may be more likely to adopt performance-approach goals (Hofverberg & Winberg, 2018). The impact of achievement goals extends beyond academic performance to include psychological well-being and social behaviors. Students with mastery goals tend to exhibit higher levels of psychological well-being, lower levels of anxiety, and more prosocial behaviors (Boden et al., 2020; Jaitner et al., 2019). Conversely, performance-avoidance goals are often associated with increased stress and negative social behaviors (Daumiller et al., 2019; Miller et al., 2021).

Student achievement goals shape in fundamental ways through teacher-omics practices and feedback methods as described by Boden et al. (2020) and Daumiller et al. (2019). When teachers prioritize mastery goals combined with specific types of feedback they aid student development of growth mindset abilities that boost classroom resilience along with learning motivation (Senko, 2019; Miller et al., 2021). Performance-based teaching methods lead to heightened student worry about failure together with fear of judgment (Boden et al., 2020; Daumiller et al., 2019). The





adoption of achievement goals is heavily influenced by the impact peers have on each other. The research demonstrates that students' achievement goals develop through peer goal contagion as documented by King & Mendoza (2020). Research shows that when the majority of classroom students prioritize mastery goals the individual students tend to adopt matching goals which combines to enhance collaborative learning partnerships (King & Mendoza, 2020). Achievement goals demonstrate complex relationships with psychological frameworks that combine with self-efficacy and resilience theory. People who believe in their ability to succeed past obstacles tend to choose mastery goals (Najafzadeh et al., 2018). Mastery goals demonstrate positive relationships with both academic success and the ability of students to recover from failures according to Najafzadeh et al. (2018).



Achievement goals maintain their crucial influence on student academic pursuit of success and engagement throughout higher education (Miller et al., 2021). University students exhibiting mastery goals show improved adaptive learning practices through reflective habits and enhanced faculty relationships while using advanced intellectual techniques (Miller et al., 2021). Students who use Performance-approach goals as academic goals often experience positive performance outcomes but their approach also creates competitive educational spaces which become stressful (Daumiller et al., 2019). The nature of achievement goals shifts through time because students respond to their education experiences together with feedback students receive. Research using long-term methods shows that students' academic goal motives undergo changes as they advance through different levels of education when facing diverse academic workload (Postigo et al., 2022). The identification of these dynamics helps researchers create interventions that sustain students' adaptive





achievement goals until the completion of their education (Postigo et al., 2022).

The learning environment encompasses various elements such as the physical setting, the social context, and the psychological atmosphere of educational spaces. These factors collectively impact students' motivation, engagement, and overall academic performance. Research has consistently demonstrated the profound influence of the learning environment on student outcomes (Kurniawan et al., 2023; Cayubit, 2021; Nurdin, 2020). A conducive learning environment significantly enhances students' academic motivation. According to Cayubit (2021), the physical, pedagogical, and psychosocial dimensions of the learning environment positively correlate with college students' academic motivation, choice of learning strategies, and engagement. Researchers measured academic motivation and student engagement with 1002 college students and discovered that supportive educational environments enhance both motivation and academic achievements. Studies conducted by Kurniawan et al. (2023) established how supportive student environments create positive effects on both learning motivation and values formation and personality transformation. The impact of the learning environment serves to build student character development in meaningful ways. Nurdin (2020) conducted research into how junior high school students develop their character by studying three essential environments: family dynamics and schools along with community systems. The research results demonstrate that student character development remains positively and significantly linked to these environments. Students who experience supportive high-quality learning conditions tend to develop improved self-quality which results in better behavioral and academic results. Holistic learning environments stand vital because they bridge academic development with personal development needs.





Classroom infrastructure stands as a vital factor that produces changes in student educational perspectives about their subjects. Kapici et al. (2020) investigated middle school students' science attitudes through studying conventional hands-on labs versus virtual laboratory exposure. Laboratory learning experiences using both physical tasks and digital platforms produce substantial benefits regarding students' perception of science as a subject. The choice of physical learning environment directly improves student interest and academic engagement towards their coursework. Research carried out at an Australian Faculty of Business and Economics by Closs et al. (2021) demonstrated that students' educational experiences are shaped by continuous interactions between physical elements and pedagogical and psychosocial factors of the learning environment thus showing the importance of integrated educational space design.



Teaching-learning environments within universities also play a pivotal role in student learning. Entwistle (2018) discussed how various aspects of the university context, including curriculum structure, course organization, and assessment systems, influence student learning. A well-structured and supportive teaching-learning environment can promote deep learning approaches and improve the overall quality of student learning. This idea is further supported by Bonem et al. (2020), who found that autonomy-supportive learning environments significantly enhance students' basic psychological needs satisfaction, motivation, and academic performance. The research demonstrates the need to create educational settings which promote student autonomy while promoting their engagement. Educational settings produce significant influences upon student behavioral patterns as well as their educational





outcomes. Arifin et al. (2018) demonstrated that the joint components of beliefs and customs and behaviors exist in social environments that determine student behavioral outcomes. A positive school environment enhances student academic results while promoting better student conduct according to the study. Kazeka and Usman (2021) discovered how students' learning difficulties get strongly affected by their family environment as well as their school environment and peer relationships. Research findings reveal that social settings function as powerful factors which determine how students act and receive knowledge.

Student learning interest depends strongly on their educational environment. Muzakki and Efendi (2021) studied how educational settings influence students' interest in science education at junior high school level. Analysis results generated through their study demonstrated a positive correlation that proves why educational spaces must be engaging and supportive for student learning interest development. According to Pargito's (2019) research students' learning interest alongside their academic results heavily depends on the accessibility and cleanliness and noise levels found in their learning environments. The learning outcomes for students gravitate differently based on the diverse classroom environments they encounter. This research investigated four distinct classroom learning environments encompassing assessment-centered face-to-face delivery and online or hybrid setups according to Khatimah (2021). Students achieve better learning results when their classroom environment creates both comfort and motivation. According to Annastasya (2023) research suggests that family and campus and community factors produce meaningful positive outcomes for student achievement in economic education programs.





The school environment functions as an essential learning resource which affects students' outcomes in cognitive learning and affective learning and psychomotor learning. Research conducted by Aprilla et al. (2021) shows that school environment benefits improve learning outcomes in cognitive and affective and psychomotor learning domains. Second languages taught to Chinese students succeed most effectively through an environment that prioritizes affective learning according to Qi (2023). Research reveals that the learning environment creates extensive effects on different dimensions of student development and educational progress. Student academic performance gets substantially impacted by the circumstances they find in their family environment. Secondary school students in China experience variations in academic performance which Huang et al. (2023) linked to their family environment. Student academic success relies heavily on family relations and household financial stability together with parental educational approaches according to research findings. Afdal et al. (2020) found similar results by proving students achieve better academic outcomes through supportive learning environments at home and at school.

Furthermore, Pargito (2019) noted that environmental factors such as accessibility, cleanliness, and noise levels significantly impact students' learning interest and outcomes. These findings indicate that a well-maintained and accessible learning environment can significantly enhance students' engagement and academic performance. Similarly, Khatimah (2021) discussed the positive effects of various classroom environments, including assessment-centered, face-to-face, online, and hybrid environments. The study concluded that a positive classroom environment promotes comfort and motivation, thereby improving learning outcomes. Annastasya





(2023) provided additional evidence by demonstrating that the collective impact of family, campus, and community environments positively influences student achievement. These findings underscore the importance of a holistic approach to creating supportive educational environments that encompass various aspects of students' lives.

Shandong art education in China undergoes multiple contextual influences which create unique parameters for both student education and instructor practice. The development of art education in Shandong China depends heavily on four elemental influences such as cultural heritage together with educational policies and socioeconomic factors and traditional versus contemporary art integration. Art education needs to consider existing contextual elements to develop effective teaching programs which promote student creativity and critical thought and cultural engagement. Visual arts education in Shandong faces major challenges due to the region's tremendous cultural historic background. With a heritage that extends throughout time Shandong preserves its historical and cultural traditions which determine both the topics and teaching practices of art education. By incorporating traditional Chinese art techniques like calligraphy and painting and folk art into the curriculum students access their cultural heritage while deepening their understanding of art values (Chen, 2020). Educational institutions prioritize traditional cultural values through their efforts to integrate local cultural heritage into art education programs which builds student identity (Ma, 2022).

Shandong Province's art education system undergoes essential change because of the implementing policies in place. Quality education alongside contemporary





educational reform initiatives which the Chinese government supports continue to transform how art education is shaped. The "Art Teaching Guide" has changed art education philosophy by adopting Western educational principles and advanced practices (Li, 2021). These educational initiatives work to strengthen fundamental qualities in students while advancing their total educational growth in direct alignment with national educational transformations. Socioeconomic conditions in Shandong influence access to and the quality of art education. Differences in artistic educational access stem from economic gaps across urban regions and rural allocations which impact resource availability and teaching facilities and learning opportunities (Nurdin, 2020). Students who live in cities typically benefit from superior art studios while holding experienced instructors in addition to extracurricular arts programming unavailable in rural settings. The attainment of equitable quality art education for all students throughout the region demands direct attention to these inequality patterns.

The integration of traditional and contemporary art forms is another important contextual factor. While traditional art forms are deeply valued, there is also a growing recognition of contemporary art practices and their relevance today (Chen, 2020). This dual approach helps students develop a comprehensive understanding of art, combining historical perspectives with modern expressions. Programs that encourage students to explore both traditional and contemporary art forms can foster creativity and innovation (Chen, 2020). Teacher training and professional development are critical for the success of art education programs. Effective art education requires teachers who are knowledgeable about both traditional and contemporary art forms and who can inspire and engage students (Wei, 2020).





Professional development programs that focus on enhancing teachers' pedagogical skills and their understanding of art education theories are essential. Such programs can help teachers implement innovative teaching methods and create dynamic learning environments (Wei, 2020).

Cultural exchange and international collaboration also influence art education in Shandong. Exposure to diverse art forms and educational practices from around the world enriches the learning experience and broadens students' artistic perspectives (Yin, 2023). Collaborative projects with international institutions and participation in global art competitions can provide students with valuable opportunities to showcase their talents and learn from different cultural contexts (Yin, 2023). The physical environment and infrastructure of schools play a vital role in supporting art education.

Well-designed art studios, adequate materials, and access to digital tools are necessary for effective teaching and learning (Kapici et al., 2020). Schools that invest in creating conducive environments for art education can enhance students' engagement and motivation, leading to better learning outcomes (Kapici et al., 2020). Community involvement and support are also crucial for the success of art education programs. Engaging local artists, parents, and community members in art projects and exhibitions can create a supportive network that enriches the educational experience (Chen, 2020). Community-based initiatives that celebrate local art and culture can foster a sense of belonging and encourage students to actively participate in cultural preservation and promotion (Chen, 2020).

The role of technology in art education is becoming increasingly important. Digital tools and online platforms provide new opportunities for teaching, learning,





and creating art (Bonem et al., 2020). Integrating technology into art education can enhance students' technical skills and open new avenues for artistic expression. Programs that incorporate digital art, animation, and multimedia projects can engage students and prepare them for future careers in the creative industries (Bonem et al., 2020). Societal attitudes towards art education also influence its development. In some contexts, art education may be undervalued compared to other academic subjects, leading to a lack of support and resources (Qiu, 2023). Raising awareness about the importance of art education and its benefits for cognitive and emotional development is essential for garnering support from stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, and parents (Qiu, 2023).

The curriculum and assessment methods used in art education programs are critical for achieving educational goals. A well-designed curriculum that balances theoretical knowledge with practical skills can provide a comprehensive art education (Wei, 2020). Assessment methods that recognize creativity, originality, and artistic expression, rather than rote memorization, can encourage students to develop their unique artistic voices (Wei, 2020). The influence of cultural heritage on art education is evident in efforts to preserve and promote traditional art forms through educational programs. Initiatives that focus on teaching traditional techniques, such as ink painting and calligraphy, help students appreciate their cultural heritage and develop a deep understanding of traditional art (Chen, 2020). These programs often include field trips to cultural sites, workshops with master artists, and participation in traditional festivals (Chen, 2020). The integration of interdisciplinary approaches in art education can enhance students' learning experiences. Programs that combine art with subjects such as history, literature, and science can provide a holistic education





that fosters critical thinking and creativity (Moffett, 2021). Interdisciplinary projects that encourage students to explore connections between art and other fields can enrich their understanding and appreciation of both art and the broader world (Moffett, 2021).

### 1.3 Problem statement

Rapid shifts in China's higher-education landscape have magnified the long-standing puzzle of how self-concept, achievement goals, and the learning environment combine to shape motivation. Over the past five years Shandong's fine-art enrolments have jumped by almost a third, forcing programmes to stretch studio space, share equipment and run hybrid critiques. Such conditions expose the "one-size-fits-all" weakness that Yeung and Han (2018) and Wang and Yu (2023) flagged when they showed that cultural norms, gender expectations and socio-economic status channel self-concept in divergent ways. In a typical first-year painting class today, a rural-born student whose family sells calligraphy scrolls alongside vegetables sits beside an urban peer who grew up visiting galleries in Beijing; both arrive with markedly different academic self-images, validating Yeung and Han's conclusion that uniform interventions rarely reach all sub-groups.

The measurement question remains equally stubborn. Studio tutors often rely on informal sketchbook reviews and end-of-semester exhibitions, yet Howard et al. (2021) warned that intrinsic and extrinsic motivators respond differently to subtle shifts in self-concept and that coarse metrics blur these nuances. A





printmaking lecturer may observe surface “enthusiasm” during critique week, but survey items can reveal wide variance in underlying reasons for staying late or experimenting with new media. Until those differences are isolated, designing effective, data-driven supports for motivation is problematic.

Cayubit (2021) and Kurniawan et al. (2023) confirm that the physical, social and psychological dimensions of the learning environment matter, yet Shandong colleges still display stark contrasts. One provincial campus renovated its figure-drawing studio into a bright, ventilated space that now doubles as a digital-sculpting lab; another continues to stage critiques in a converted dormitory corridor. These extremes mean that the same curriculum can either amplify or erode student enthusiasm, mirroring Kurniawan et al.’s finding that resource gaps translate directly into motivational disparities. Adiyah et al. (2020) further showed how self-efficacy interventions such as concept-mapping workshops spill over into self-concept and drive curiosity—yet those workshops are typically delivered only where funding exists, underscoring an under-tested need for fine-art-specific strategies that go beyond generic academic prescriptions.

Parental and peer dynamics deepen the tangle. A 2024 informal survey at a coastal academy revealed that nearly half the cohort commute from family homes to save money; parental expectations often tilt toward commercial design careers, aligning with Umami et al.’s (2021) observation that parental support and self-concept act jointly on motivation. Meanwhile studio crit sessions, designed to build critique culture, can amplify peer comparison pressures akin to the patterns Ningsih et al. (2022) documented, illustrating how democratic versus authoritarian





feedback climates shift motivational tone. Transition points intensify the challenge as orientation week routinely triggers “culture shock,” echoing Kundhare and Ghoti (2019), with freshmen showcasing portfolios to secure space in competitive material labs; without scaffolding, many retreat from risk-taking and undervalue their creative voice, eroding self-concept exactly when foundational habits set in.

Digital expansion compounds the equity puzzle. Since 2022, some studios adopted VR painting modules and AI-assisted colour-script tools, advancing Bonem et al.’s (2020) vision of engaging digital environments, yet licence fees mean rural students must book evening slots weeks ahead, replicating the “digital divide” featured in Bonem’s cautionary note. Sharma and Sharma (2018) already detected gender gaps in motivation; if advanced tools remain scarce for specific groups, new inequities will likely surface, revealing a conspicuous gap in understanding how blended physical–digital studio ecologies influence the triad of self-concept, achievement goals and motivation.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides the conceptual glue, proposing that autonomy, competence and relatedness feed motivation (Howard et al., 2021). Fine-art critiques promise autonomy through open-ended briefs, but competence cues can be ambiguous when grading originality. Achievement-Goal Theory adds another layer: mastery goals foster experimentation, yet performance norms dominate public exhibitions. Bardach et al. (2020) and Steinmayr et al. (2019) show mastery-performance splits in outcomes; current studios, however, seldom calibrate tasks to reinforce mastery language, leaving achievement-goal profiles to drift and





signalling that the alignment between studio-goal structures and students' preferred achievement goals remains under-documented across foundation-to-graduation milestones.

Measurement of goal effects adds complexity. Juned et al. (2019) found performance goals boost grades yet not motivation, hinting that fine-art award structures might mask underlying disengagement. Lou and Li (2023) observed that socioecological mobility alters cost-benefit calculations of mastery goals; within Shandong, first-generation college-goers may view mastery pursuits as luxuries compared with job-ready skill badges, complicating blanket recommendations. Abdulrahman et al. (2023) linked learning engagement to self-efficacy, but isolating self-concept's share of that effect is empirically elusive. Cho and Kim (2019) remind us that middle-school trajectories seed high-school goals, yet fine-art university entrants arrive from widely different art-track exposures; some enjoyed specialist art middle schools with dedicated ateliers, whereas others converted from science streams, echoing Sides and Cuevas (2020) who noted goal-setting interventions suffer when prior goal language is missing.

Another layer is the learning environment's heterogeneity. Open-plan ateliers allow peer feedback but also amplify competition, paralleling Susanti et al.'s (2020) evidence that supportive climates aid motivation. Cayubit (2021) showed that flexible workspace hours doubled strategy use, yet Shandong's curfew rules often close studios at nine, limiting exploration. Physical design matters too: Abe and Hayashi (2023) demonstrated that light-rich creative spaces correlate with higher learning drive, yet many county-level colleges still rely on basement print





rooms with poor ventilation, mirroring Ramadhanty and Usman (2019). The psychological climate also hinges on critique ethos; Dautkalieva and Ormanova (2020) found student voice essential for intrinsic motivation, but some faculties continue hierarchical “chalk-and-talk” demos. Simbolon et al. (2023) linked teacher quality to motivation, yet part-time studio tutors in design agencies may lack pedagogy training, leaving unanswered which physical, social and instructional components most powerfully shift self-concept and achievement goals concurrently.

Family and community influences remain potent. Havidz and Mujakiah (2023) emphasised that home support predicts persistence. In Shandong coastal fishing towns, students often help family businesses on weekends, truncating studio practice hours and echoing work–study strains that depress motivation. Out-of-school experiences—gallery residencies, nature sketch-trips—boost motivation (Yildirim, 2020), yet transportation costs exclude many. The satisfaction link elaborated by Ibrahim et al. (2023) magnifies the stakes: even well-equipped campuses fail if students feel alienated, a concern that grew during pandemic recovery when exhibition cancellations eroded public-recognition rituals students rely on.

Simultaneously, the digital turn accelerates. Anwar (2019) predicted educational-technology gains; Shandong’s 2024 rollout of an AI colour-palette adviser raised engagement in one cohort but remained unreachable in another due to limited tablets, intensifying inequality and paralleling Howard et al.’s (2021) SDT co-occurrence findings. Evidence on how to balance traditional craftsmanship with new media therefore remains scarce, leaving educators without concrete guidance.





The interconnected challenges—cultural diversity, uneven resources, shifting digital tools and theoretical ambiguities—underscore a pressing need for empirical clarity. Warsiki and Mardiana (2019) reported that self-concept alone explains half of motivation variance, yet unexplained variance remains large. Until fine-art-specific, culturally sensitive interventions are validated, Shandong institutions risk widening motivational divides precisely when creative industries demand agile, self-driven graduates. This study therefore positions itself to close these gaps by investigating how self-concept, achievement goals and the learning environment jointly sculpt motivation across Shandong's heterogeneous fine-art programmes, guided by Self-Determination Theory and Achievement-Goal Theory, and by delivering evidence that can be scaled from studio policy to provincial art-education reform.



#### 1.4 Purpose of the study

The primary purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of self-concept, achievement goals, and learning environment on the motivation of fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China. Understanding these relationships is essential to develop effective educational strategies and interventions that can enhance student motivation and academic performance. By examining how these factors interact, the study aims to provide insights into the specific needs of art students and suggest ways to create more supportive and motivating educational environments.

Firstly, the study seeks to explore the role of self-concept in influencing student motivation. Self-concept, defined as an individual's perception of their own





abilities and characteristics, is a critical factor in academic motivation. It shapes how students perceive their potential for success and their overall engagement in learning activities. For art students, who often face unique challenges related to creativity and self-expression, a positive self-concept can significantly enhance their motivation to pursue artistic endeavors. This study aims to identify the specific aspects of self-concept that most strongly impact motivation among fine art undergraduates and how these aspects can be nurtured within the educational framework.

Secondly, the study aims to investigate the influence of achievement goals on student motivation. Achievement goals refer to the goals students set for their academic work, which can be broadly categorized into mastery and performance goals. Mastery goals focus on learning and personal growth, while performance goals emphasize demonstrating competence relative to others. Understanding which type of achievement goals are more prevalent among art students and how these goals affect their motivation can help educators tailor their teaching strategies to better support student needs. This aspect of the study will explore whether art students are more motivated by personal improvement and creative mastery or by external validation and competition.

The third major focus of the study is the impact of the learning environment on student motivation. The learning environment encompasses the physical, social, and psychological aspects of the educational setting. For art students, factors such as access to art materials, studio space, supportive peer interactions, and encouraging teacher feedback are crucial components of a motivating learning environment. This study aims to assess how different elements of the learning environment contribute to





or detract from student motivation. It will examine both the physical resources available to students and the broader educational culture in which they are immersed.

By integrating these three areas which are self-concept, achievement goals, and learning environment where the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of what drives motivation among fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China. The findings are expected to offer valuable insights for educators, administrators, and policymakers to develop targeted interventions that enhance student motivation and academic success. This research will also contribute to the broader field of educational psychology by highlighting the unique motivational dynamics of art students, which may differ from those in other academic disciplines. Ultimately, the study aims to foster an educational environment where art students in Shandong can thrive, both academically and creatively. By identifying the key factors that influence their motivation, the research seeks to support the development of more effective teaching practices and learning environments that align with the specific needs and aspirations of art students. Thus, this can lead to improved educational outcomes and a more vibrant, innovative art community.

### 1.5 Objectives of the study

The research objectives of this study are developed as follows:

RO1: To determine the impact of self-concept on the motivation of fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China.

RO2: To investigate the influence of achievement goals on the motivation of fine art





undergraduates in Shandong, China.

RO3: To analyze the effects of the learning environment on the motivation of fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China.

## 1.6 Research questions

The research questions were formulated in to achieve the research objectives. The research questions are as follows:

RQ1: What is the impact of self-concept on the motivation of fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China?

RQ2: How do achievement goals impact the motivation of fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China?

RQ3: Which aspects of the learning environment impact the motivation of fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China?

## 1.7 Research hypothesis

H1: Self-concept has a significant positive impact on the motivation of fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China.

H2: Achievement goals have a significant positive impact on the motivation of fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China.

H3: The learning environment has a significant positive impact on the motivation of fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China.

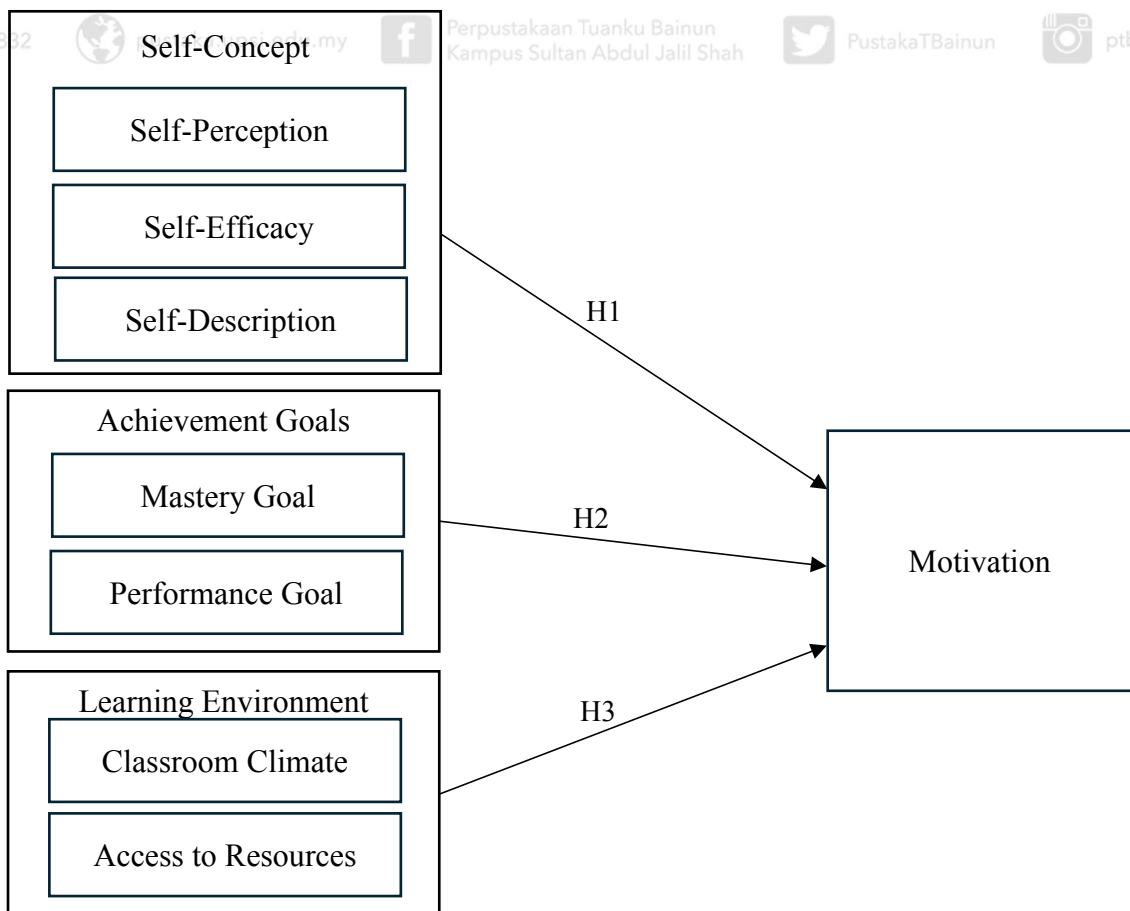


## 1.8 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 1.1 serves as a comprehensive model for understanding the factors influencing motivation among fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China. This framework is structured around three primary constructs: Self-Concept, Achievement Goals, and Learning Environment, each hypothesized to impact student motivation in distinct but interrelated ways. The hypotheses (H1 to H3) establish the specific relationships between these constructs and motivation, forming the foundation for the study's investigative approach.

**Figure 1.1**

*Conceptual Framework*





Self-Concept is the first construct within the framework, comprising three key components: Self-Perception, Self-Efficacy, and Self-Description. Self-Perception refers to how students view their own abilities and characteristics, influencing their sense of competence (Ryan & Deci, 2020). A positive self-perception is likely to enhance students' intrinsic motivation, as they feel more capable and confident in their abilities. In Hypothesis H1, it has been determined that self-perception positively influences motivation, suggesting that students who view themselves positively are more motivated to engage in academic and artistic activities. Self-efficacy is related to the students' beliefs in their ability to succeed in specific tasks. According to Bandura (1997), higher self-efficacy can lead to greater motivation, as individuals are more likely to set challenging goals and persist in the face of obstacles. Hypothesis H21 also asserts that self-efficacy has a positive effect on motivation. This means that students who believe in their capabilities are more likely to be motivated to achieve their academic and artistic goals. Self-description involves how students articulate their identity and attributes, often reflecting their sense of relatedness and belonging within the educational context (Ryan & Deci, 2020). A positive self-description can enhance motivation by fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance. Hypothesis H1 had suggested that self-description positively impacts motivation, implying that students who have a clear and positive self-identity are more likely to be motivated in their studies.

Achievement goals form the second construct and are divided into Mastery Goals and Performance Goals. Mastery Goals, also known as learning goals, focus on the development of competence and understanding (Bardach et al., 2020). Students with mastery goals strive to improve their skills and knowledge, which is generally





associated with higher levels of intrinsic motivation and positive educational outcomes. Hypothesis H2 posits that mastery goals positively influence motivation, indicating that students who aim to master their subjects are more intrinsically motivated. Performance goals are oriented towards demonstrating competence relative to others (Elliot & Church, 1997). These goals are further categorized into performance-approach goals, which involve striving to outperform peers, and performance-avoidance goals, which involve avoiding failure and negative judgments. While performance-approach goals can enhance motivation and performance by encouraging students to seek recognition, they can also increase anxiety and competitiveness. Performance-avoidance goals, however, are often associated with fear of failure and lower academic performance (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). Hypothesis H2 proposes that performance goals have a dual effect on motivation, where performance-approach goals might enhance motivation, while performance-avoidance goals might undermine it.

The learning environment is the third construct, encompassing Classroom Climate and Access to Resources. Classroom Climate refers to the quality of the interactions and relationships within the classroom, including teacher support, peer relationships, and the overall atmosphere conducive to learning and creativity (Wang & Degol, 2018). A positive classroom climate can significantly enhance student motivation by fostering a supportive and engaging environment. Hypothesis H3 posits that classroom climate positively affects motivation, suggesting that a nurturing and well-structured classroom environment boosts students' motivation to learn and engage in academic activities. Access to resources involves the availability and quality of educational materials, technological tools, and other resources necessary for





effective learning. Adequate access to resources can support students' autonomy and competence, thereby enhancing their motivation (Cheng, 2023). Hypothesis H3 suggests that access to resources positively influences motivation, indicating that students who have better access to learning materials and tools are more likely to be motivated in their academic pursuits.

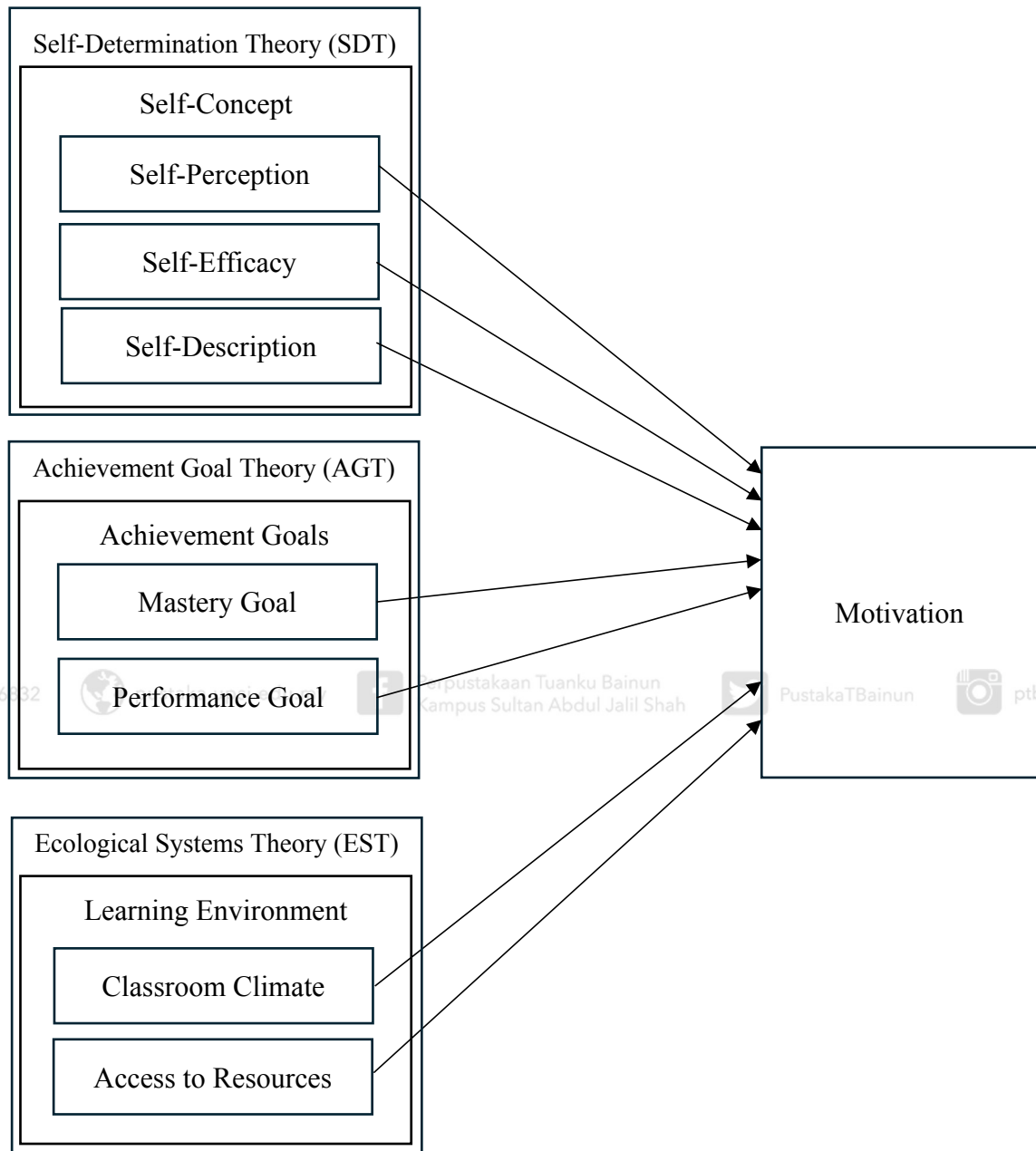
The conceptual framework illustrates a holistic approach to understanding motivation among fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China. By examining the interconnections between self-concept, achievement goals, and learning environment, this framework provides a holistic perspective on the various factors that influence student motivation. The hypotheses (H1 to H3) guide the research in testing these relationships, aiming to provide empirical evidence that can inform educational practices and policies to enhance student motivation and academic success.



## 1.9 Theoretical framework

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the role of self-concept in student motivation, particularly among fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China (Ryan & Deci, 2020). SDT establishes that human motivation is driven by the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These needs are essential for fostering intrinsic motivation and well-being, which are closely linked to an individual's self-concept. This theoretical framework integrates SDT to explore how self-perception, self-efficacy, and self-description influence student motivation.



**Figure 1.2***Theoretical Framework*

Self-concept refers to an individual's perception of their abilities, traits, and characteristics. It encompasses self-perception, self-efficacy, and self-description, each of which plays a critical role in shaping motivation. SDT emphasizes that fulfilling the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness is vital for maintaining a positive self-concept and high levels of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020). These



components of SDT provide a basis for examining how self-concept influences student motivation in the context of art education. Self-perception, or how students view their own abilities and characteristics, is closely tied to the need for competence in SDT. Competence refers to the feeling of being effective and capable in one's activities. When students perceive themselves as competent, they are more likely to be motivated to engage in learning and achieve their goals (Ryan et al., 2019). Research by Mikhailova (2021) supports this notion, demonstrating that students who perceive themselves as competent are more motivated and perform better academically. In the context of fine art undergraduates, a positive self-perception can lead to greater engagement in creative activities and persistence in overcoming challenges. For instance, an art student who perceives themselves as skilled in painting may be more inclined to spend additional hours practicing, experimenting with new techniques, and participating in art exhibitions. This positive self-perception not only enhances their intrinsic motivation but also contributes to their overall academic performance and satisfaction with their educational experience. Conversely, a negative self-perception can hinder motivation, leading to disengagement and reduced academic performance.

Self-efficacy is another critical component of self-concept, which relates to an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in specific tasks. According to SDT, self-efficacy is linked to the need for autonomy, as it involves the belief in one's capability to achieve goals through self-directed actions (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Higher self-efficacy enhances motivation by fostering a sense of control and confidence in one's abilities. A study by Vansteenkiste et al. (2018) highlights the importance of self-efficacy in motivating students to pursue challenging goals and persist despite





setbacks. For fine art undergraduates, self-efficacy is crucial in developing artistic skills and achieving academic success in their creative endeavors. For example, an art student with high self-efficacy might confidently tackle complex projects, believing in their ability to complete them successfully. This belief in their capabilities drives them to put in the necessary effort and overcome obstacles. On the other hand, students with low self-efficacy may avoid challenging tasks, doubting their ability to succeed and thus missing opportunities for growth and learning. Enhancing self-efficacy through positive feedback, skill development, and supportive educational environments can significantly boost students' motivation and academic achievement.

Self-description which involves how students describe their identity and attributes, is connected to the need for relatedness in SDT. Relatedness refers to feeling connected and valued by others. Positive self-description enhances motivation by fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance within the educational community (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Research by Nalipay, King, and Cai (2019) demonstrates that students who feel related and supported are more motivated and engaged in their studies. In the context of art education, self-description can influence how students perceive their role and identity as artists, which in turn affects their motivation to pursue artistic goals. For instance, if art students describe themselves as part of a supportive and vibrant artistic community, they are more likely to feel motivated to contribute to and engage with that community. This sense of relatedness can drive students to participate in collaborative projects, attend art-related events, and seek feedback from peers and mentors. The positive reinforcement and sense of belonging they experience further enhance their intrinsic motivation and commitment to their artistic endeavors.





In contrast, students who struggle with a negative self-description may feel isolated and undervalued, which can diminish their motivation and engagement. For example, if a student perceives themselves as an outsider in the art community, they may be less likely to seek out collaborative opportunities or participate in group activities, leading to decreased motivation and a sense of disconnection from their educational environment. Addressing these issues through inclusive practices, community-building activities, and fostering a supportive educational culture can help improve students' self-description and, consequently, their motivation.

SDT also highlights the interplay between these components of self-concept and the broader educational environment. Educators play a crucial role in supporting students' psychological needs by creating an environment that fosters autonomy, competence, and relatedness. For example, providing opportunities for students to make choices in their learning process can enhance their sense of autonomy. Offering constructive feedback and opportunities for skill development can boost their sense of competence. Creating a supportive and inclusive classroom environment can strengthen their sense of relatedness. In the context of art education, teachers can support autonomy by allowing students to choose their projects or artistic mediums, fostering a sense of ownership over their learning. They can enhance competence by providing targeted feedback that highlights students' strengths and areas for improvement, encouraging a growth mindset. To foster relatedness, educators can facilitate group projects, peer reviews, and community art events that help students build connections and feel valued within the art community. By understanding and applying the principles of SDT, educators can create a learning environment that not only enhances students' self-concept but also fosters higher levels of intrinsic





motivation and academic achievement. This is particularly important for fine art undergraduates, whose educational journey is deeply intertwined with their self-perception and creative identity.

The learning environment plays a crucial role in supporting the basic psychological needs outlined by Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and in shaping students' self-concept. An environment that provides autonomy support, opportunities for competence development, and a sense of relatedness can enhance self-concept and motivation (Ryan et al., 2021). For example, a study by Olafsen and Deci (2020) found that supportive learning environments that promote autonomy and competence are associated with higher levels of intrinsic motivation and better academic outcomes. In art education, creating a supportive environment that encourages self-expression and skill development can significantly boost students' motivation and self-concept. In the context of art education, a supportive learning environment might include studios and classrooms that are well-equipped with a variety of artistic tools and materials, allowing students to explore different mediums and techniques. This setting not only fosters a sense of competence as students develop their skills but also supports autonomy by providing choices in how they approach their projects. Additionally, a collaborative environment where students can share their work and receive constructive feedback from peers and instructors can enhance their sense of relatedness, further boosting their motivation and engagement.

The integration of traditional and contemporary art forms in the curriculum can also impact self-concept and motivation. Traditional art forms can provide a sense of cultural identity and relatedness, while contemporary art practices can offer





opportunities for developing competence and autonomy (Chen, 2020). This dual approach can help students build a well-rounded self-concept that supports their motivation to engage in diverse artistic activities. For instance, learning traditional Chinese painting techniques might help students feel connected to their cultural heritage, while experimenting with modern digital art can foster a sense of innovation and personal achievement. Teacher quality and instructional practices are critical in creating a learning environment that supports the basic psychological needs of students. Effective teachers who provide autonomy support, constructive feedback, and opportunities for skill development can enhance students' self-concept and motivation (Simbolon et al., 2023). A study by Forner et al. (2020) highlights the importance of teachers' roles in fostering autonomy, competence, and relatedness among students, which are essential for maintaining high levels of motivation. In art education, teachers who encourage creative expression and provide supportive guidance can significantly impact students' motivation and self-concept. For example, an art teacher who allows students to choose their own projects and themes can support their sense of autonomy. Providing positive, constructive feedback that highlights students' strengths and offers specific suggestions for improvement can enhance their sense of competence. Additionally, fostering a classroom environment where students feel comfortable sharing their work and collaborating with peers can enhance their sense of relatedness. Such practices not only support students' psychological needs but also contribute to a more engaging and motivating educational experience.

Family and community environments also play a significant role in shaping students' self-concept and motivation. Supportive family environments that value





education and artistic pursuits can enhance students' self-perception, self-efficacy, and self-description, leading to higher motivation (Havidz & Mujakiah, 2023). A study by Lou and Li (2023) found that family support positively influences students' academic motivation and performance, highlighting the importance of a supportive home environment. For art students, community support through local art exhibitions and cultural events can further enhance their self-concept and motivation. For instance, parents who show interest in their children's art projects and provide encouragement can boost their children's confidence and motivation. Participation in local art exhibitions and cultural events can give students a sense of belonging to a broader artistic community, enhancing their self-description as artists and motivating them to pursue their artistic goals. Community programs that offer opportunities for young artists to showcase their work and receive feedback from professionals can also play a crucial role in supporting their development and motivation.



Technological integration in art education can provide new opportunities for fostering self-concept and motivation. Digital tools and online platforms can support autonomy and competence by offering personalized learning experiences and opportunities for creative expression (Anwar, 2019). For example, digital art software allows students to experiment with various techniques and styles at their own pace, fostering a sense of autonomy and competence as they see their skills improve. Online platforms for sharing art can also provide a sense of relatedness as students connect with other artists and receive feedback on their work. However, it is crucial to address the digital divide to ensure equitable access to these resources across different socio-economic groups. A study by Nalipay et al. (2019) emphasizes the need for equal access to technological resources to support all students' motivation and learning





outcomes. Ensuring that all students have access to digital tools and the internet is essential for providing equal opportunities for learning and creative expression. Schools and communities can support this by providing resources and training for students and teachers, ensuring that technology enhances rather than hinders educational equity.

The transition periods in students' educational journeys, such as moving from high school to university, pose specific challenges for maintaining a positive self-concept and high motivation. Supportive learning environments that address the unique needs of students during these transitions are essential (Susanti et al., 2020). Research by Cho and Kim (2019) highlights the importance of providing support during these critical periods to ensure sustained motivation and academic success. For art students, transitions can be particularly challenging due to the need for developing new artistic skills and adapting to different educational expectations. For example, first-year university students might benefit from orientation programs that introduce them to the resources available in their new environment, such as art studios, libraries, and digital tools. Mentorship programs that pair incoming students with upperclassmen can provide social support and practical advice, helping them navigate the challenges of their new academic setting. Additionally, workshops and seminars on time management, stress reduction, and creative problem-solving can equip students with the skills they need to succeed during these transitions.

Achievement Goal Theory (AGT) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how different types of achievement goals influence student motivation. This theory establishes that students adopt different goal orientations such as mastery





goals and performance goals, which in turn affect their motivation, engagement, and academic outcomes. By exploring these relationships, this theoretical framework aims to elucidate the impact of achievement goals on the motivation of fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China. Achievement Goal Theory distinguishes between mastery goals and performance goals. Mastery goals, also known as learning goals, are oriented towards the development of competence and understanding. Students with mastery goals strive to improve their skills and knowledge, emphasizing personal growth and learning for its own sake (Bardach et al., 2020). These students focus on the intrinsic value of learning, seeking to enhance their abilities and knowledge base. In contrast, performance goals focus on demonstrating competence relative to others. Performance-approach goals involve striving to outperform peers, while performance-avoidance goals involve avoiding failure and negative judgments (Howard et al., 2021). This dichotomy in goal orientation significantly influences how students approach their academic and creative endeavours.

Mastery goals are generally associated with positive educational outcomes and high levels of intrinsic motivation. Students who adopt mastery goals are more likely to engage deeply with learning materials, exhibit persistence in the face of challenges, and enjoy the learning process (Liu, 2021). For instance, research by Bardach et al. (2020) highlights that mastery goals foster a learning-oriented environment where students are encouraged to take intellectual risks and view mistakes as opportunities for growth. This type of goal orientation is particularly beneficial for fine art undergraduates, who often need to experiment and take creative risks in their work. The nature of art education, which values originality and innovation, aligns well with mastery goals, as students are motivated to explore new techniques and concepts





without the fear of failure. In contrast, performance goals can yield mixed outcomes depending on whether they are approach or avoidance goals. Performance-approach goals can enhance motivation and performance by encouraging students to strive for excellence and seek recognition for their achievements (Steinmayr et al., 2019). For instance, art students who adopt performance-approach goals may be driven to produce exceptional work to receive praise from instructors or win competitions. However, these goals can also lead to increased anxiety and competitiveness, which may undermine intrinsic motivation. The pressure to constantly outperform peers can create a stressful learning environment, detracting from the joy and satisfaction of the creative process.

Performance-avoidance goals, which focus on avoiding failure and negative judgments, are often associated with negative outcomes such as fear of failure, disengagement, and lower academic performance (Guan et al., 2020). Students who are motivated by performance-avoidance goals may avoid taking creative risks or engaging deeply with challenging tasks, fearing that any mistakes will result in negative evaluations. This avoidance behavior can stifle creativity and hinder artistic development, as students may prioritize safety over innovation. The fear of failure can also lead to procrastination and disengagement, further impacting academic and artistic performance. The impact of achievement goals on motivation can be further understood through the lens of cultural context. In the highly competitive educational environment of China, where academic success is often heavily emphasized, performance goals may be particularly prevalent. This cultural emphasis on achievement can create an environment where students feel pressured to excel and avoid failure at all costs. However, fostering an educational setting that values





mastery goals and personal growth can help mitigate the negative effects of performance-oriented pressure. By encouraging students to focus on their own progress and development, educators can promote a healthier and more sustainable form of motivation.

In art education, it is crucial for educators to recognize the different motivational needs of students and create an environment that supports mastery goals. This can be achieved through various instructional strategies and classroom practices. For example, providing constructive feedback that emphasizes effort and improvement rather than comparison with peers can help students develop a mastery-oriented mindset. Additionally, offering opportunities for self-directed projects and exploration can foster a sense of autonomy and intrinsic motivation. Creating a classroom culture that celebrates creativity, effort, and personal growth can encourage students to adopt mastery goals and engage deeply with their artistic pursuits. Moreover, educators can play a significant role in shaping students' achievement goals by modeling a mastery-oriented approach themselves. When teachers demonstrate a passion for learning and a willingness to take intellectual risks, students are more likely to adopt similar attitudes. Providing a supportive and non-judgmental environment where mistakes are seen as part of the learning process can help students feel safe to explore and innovate. This approach can be particularly beneficial in art education, where the creative process often involves trial and error and where the final product can be highly subjective.

The contextual features of the learning environment play a crucial role in shaping students' achievement goals. According to Achievement Goal Theory (AGT),





the goal structures established by educators and the broader school environment influence the types of goals students adopt (Bardach et al., 2020). For example, classrooms that emphasize mastery goals through supportive teaching practices and a focus on learning and improvement are more likely to foster mastery-oriented goals in students. Conversely, environments that prioritize competition and normative comparison can lead to a greater adoption of performance goals (George & Richardson, 2019). Understanding these contextual influences is essential for designing educational interventions that promote adaptive goal orientations. Classrooms that cultivate a mastery goal structure emphasize individual progress, understanding, and the intrinsic value of learning. These environments encourage students to take intellectual risks, view mistakes as learning opportunities, and persist in the face of challenges. Such an approach is particularly beneficial for art students, who need to experiment and innovate in their creative endeavors. Bardach et al. (2020) argue that a mastery-oriented classroom fosters a positive learning climate that enhances intrinsic motivation and engagement. In contrast, performance-oriented classrooms that emphasize grades, rankings, and outperforming peers can create a competitive atmosphere that may increase anxiety and diminish intrinsic motivation. George and Richardson (2019) highlight that students in these environments may adopt performance-approach or performance-avoidance goals, with varying effects on their motivation and academic outcomes.

Cultural factors also significantly affect the adoption and impact of achievement goals. Research indicates that cultural values and educational practices can shape how students perceive and pursue achievement goals. For example, Liu (2021) found that in Singapore, an incremental mindset where the belief that abilities





can be developed through effort was associated with mastery-approach goals and higher intrinsic motivation in mathematics. This suggests that cultural contexts that value effort and growth can enhance the adoption of mastery goals, which in turn positively impacts motivation. In contrast, cultures that emphasize normative comparison and competition may foster performance goals, with varying effects on motivation and achievement (Hofverberg & Winberg, 2018). Understanding these cultural influences is crucial for developing educational practices that support adaptive goal orientations. Teacher practices and instructional strategies are critical in promoting adaptive achievement goals. Effective teachers who create supportive and mastery-oriented learning environments can enhance students' motivation by fostering mastery goals (Chazan et al., 2021). Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping students' perceptions of their abilities and the value of their efforts. Simbolon et al. (2023) found that high-quality teaching practices that emphasize structure, autonomy support, and relatedness are associated with higher student motivation. This underscores the importance of professional development programs that equip teachers with the skills to create environments conducive to mastery goals. For instance, providing constructive feedback that focuses on effort and improvement, rather than solely on outcomes, can help students develop a growth mindset and mastery orientation.

Parental and community influences also play a significant role in shaping students' achievement goals and motivation. Supportive family environments that emphasize the value of learning and personal growth can encourage the adoption of mastery goals (Roths et al., 2022). Families that foster a positive attitude towards education and support their children's academic and personal development contribute significantly to students' intrinsic motivation and engagement. Conversely, parental





pressure to perform and achieve high grades can lead to a greater focus on performance goals, with potential negative impacts on motivation and well-being (Alamer & Lee, 2019). Understanding these influences is crucial for developing holistic approaches to fostering adaptive achievement goals. For example, educational interventions that engage parents and communities in supporting mastery-oriented goals can enhance students' motivation and academic outcomes. The broader educational system and policy context also influence the adoption of achievement goals. Educational policies that emphasize standardized testing and high-stakes assessments can inadvertently promote performance goals and undermine intrinsic motivation. Alternatively, policies that support diverse assessment methods, personalized learning, and the development of a growth mindset can foster mastery goals and enhance motivation. Policymakers and educators must work together to create educational systems that balance accountability with the need to support intrinsic motivation and personal growth.

Technological integration in education also offers new opportunities to foster adaptive achievement goals. Digital learning platforms and tools can provide personalized learning experiences that support mastery goals. For instance, adaptive learning technologies can tailor educational content to individual students' needs and progress, helping them focus on personal growth and mastery. Additionally, online collaborative projects can promote relatedness and the sharing of knowledge, further enhancing motivation. However, it is essential to address the digital divide to ensure that all students have equitable access to these technologies. The integration of technology in education offers new opportunities for promoting mastery goals and enhancing motivation. Digital tools and online learning platforms can provide





personalized learning experiences that support mastery-oriented goals (Cheng, 2023). For instance, Anwar (2019) highlighted that educational technologies can enhance motivation by offering interactive and engaging learning environments. However, ensuring equitable access to these technologies is essential to avoid exacerbating existing disparities in motivation and achievement. Transition periods in students' educational journeys, such as moving from high school to university, pose specific challenges for maintaining motivation. Research by Cho and Kim (2019) suggests that supportive transitions that emphasize mastery goals can help sustain motivation during these critical periods. For fine art undergraduates, transitions can be particularly challenging due to the need to develop new artistic skills and adapt to different educational expectations. Providing targeted support during these transitions can help maintain high levels of motivation and academic success. The impact of out-of-school learning environments on student motivation is also noteworthy. Yildirim (2020) demonstrated that experiences such as nature trips and museum visits can enhance students' motivation for learning by providing real-world contexts that make learning more engaging and relevant. These experiences can support the development of mastery goals by encouraging curiosity and a love of learning. However, logistical, and financial constraints often limit the availability of such opportunities, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Ecological Systems Theory (EST), developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the influences on student motivation within the learning environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This theory posits that individuals are influenced by different layers of environmental systems that interact with each other, shaping their development and behaviors. In the context





of education, EST can be particularly insightful in examining how the classroom climate and access to resources affect student motivation among fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China.

The classroom climate, an integral component of the microsystem in Bronfenbrenner's EST, encompasses the interactions and relationships between students, teachers, and the physical environment within the classroom. A positive classroom climate is characterized by supportive teacher-student interactions, a sense of community among students, and an environment conducive to learning and creativity (Wang & Degol, 2018). Studies have shown that such an environment can significantly enhance student motivation and academic performance (Rudasill et al., 2018). For instance, a supportive classroom climate where teachers employ constructive feedback and encourage student participation can foster a sense of belonging and motivation. Cipriano et al. (2018) found that students' perceptions of classroom support were significantly associated with their motivation levels. This support includes emotional support from teachers, opportunities for student autonomy, and a positive peer environment, all of which contribute to a more engaging and motivating classroom atmosphere. Furthermore, the physical aspects of the classroom, such as seating arrangements, lighting, and access to learning materials, play a crucial role in shaping the classroom climate. These factors can influence students' comfort and ability to focus, thereby affecting their motivation and engagement in learning activities (Ballew et al., 2019). Ensuring that classrooms are well-equipped and designed to meet students' needs can thus enhance the overall learning environment. For fine art undergraduates, a well-designed classroom that includes spaces for individual and collaborative work, proper lighting for detailed art projects, and easy





access to a variety of art supplies can significantly boost their creative output and motivation.

Beyond the immediate classroom environment, Bronfenbrenner's mesosystem highlights the interactions between different microsystems, such as the relationships between home and school. Positive connections between these environments can reinforce students' motivation and educational outcomes. For example, when parents are involved in their children's education and maintain regular communication with teachers, students often feel more supported and motivated (Fan & Williams, 2018). In the context of art education, parents who attend student exhibitions and encourage artistic pursuits at home contribute to a cohesive support system that spans both the home and school environments, thereby enhancing their children's motivation. The exosystem, another layer of Bronfenbrenner's EST, includes broader social systems that do not directly involve the student but still impact their learning environment. These can include school policies, community resources, and educational programs. For instance, art programs and resources available within the community, such as local art museums, galleries, and community art projects, provide additional opportunities for students to engage with the arts outside of school. These resources can inspire students, provide them with new perspectives, and enhance their motivation to pursue their artistic endeavors (Upitis & Smithrim, 2017). Schools that form partnerships with local art institutions can offer students enriched learning experiences that extend beyond the classroom.

At the broader level of the macrosystem, cultural values, societal norms, and economic conditions can influence students' educational experiences and motivation.





In China, the cultural value placed on education and artistic achievement can drive students to excel in their studies (Zhang & Carrasquillo, 2017). However, societal pressures and expectations can also create stress and impact students' intrinsic motivation. Understanding these cultural and societal influences is crucial for educators in Shandong to create supportive environments that balance high expectations with encouragement and support. The chronosystem encompasses the dimension of time, reflecting the impact of life transitions and historical events on students' development and motivation. Transitions such as moving from high school to university or changes in the educational curriculum can pose challenges that affect students' motivation. Support systems that help students navigate these transitions, such as orientation programs and academic advising, are vital in maintaining motivation and engagement (Ellerbrock et al., 2018). For fine art undergraduates, transitioning to higher education often involves adapting to new artistic standards and expectations, which can be both exciting and daunting. Providing guidance and support during these periods is essential for sustaining their motivation.

The interaction between classroom climate and access to resources is complex. A positive classroom climate can amplify the benefits of resource availability by providing an environment where students feel supported and motivated to utilize those resources effectively. Conversely, a lack of resources can undermine a supportive classroom climate by limiting students' opportunities to engage and succeed (Rudasill et al., 2018). For example, in a study by Kitchen et al. (2019), it was found that both the quality of the classroom environment and the availability of educational resources were crucial for student motivation. Classrooms that provided a supportive atmosphere and adequate resources saw higher levels of student





engagement and motivation compared to those that lacked either element. This finding underscores the importance of addressing both aspects simultaneously to enhance student outcomes.

The influence of cultural and contextual factors on the learning environment cannot be overstated. In Shandong, China, traditional educational values and practices play a crucial role in shaping the classroom climate and the distribution of resources. Understanding these cultural aspects is essential for designing interventions that are culturally sensitive and effective (Lou & Li, 2023). For instance, fostering a classroom climate that respects and integrates local cultural values can enhance students' sense of belonging and motivation. In a region where educational success is highly valued, creating an environment that acknowledges and celebrates cultural heritage can help students feel more connected to their learning experience. Moreover, the role of family and community in supporting students' educational experiences is particularly significant in Chinese culture. Families and communities that value education and provide additional resources and support can positively impact students' motivation and academic success (Havidz & Mujakiah, 2023). This communal support system is deeply embedded in the societal structure of Shandong, where collective well-being often takes precedence over individual achievement. Engaging families and communities in the educational process can strengthen the overall learning environment. Activities such as parent-teacher meetings, community art exhibitions, and cultural festivals can provide platforms for active family and community involvement, thereby reinforcing the importance of education and creating a support network that enhances student motivation.





The integration of technology in the classroom offers new opportunities to enhance the learning environment. Digital tools and online platforms can provide students with access to a wealth of resources and personalized learning experiences (Anwar, 2019). For art students, technology can facilitate the exploration of new media and techniques, broadening their creative horizons and enhancing their motivation to learn. Digital tools such as graphic design software, online art galleries, and virtual reality can allow art students to experiment with different artistic styles and present their work to a global audience. However, ensuring equitable access to technology is a critical challenge. Socioeconomic disparities can result in unequal access to digital resources, exacerbating existing inequities in education. Research by Cheng (2023) highlights the need for policies and initiatives that address the digital divide, ensuring that all students have the tools they need to succeed in a technologically enriched learning environment. Providing adequate technological resources and training for both students and teachers is essential for maximizing the benefits of digital integration in education.

Educational policies and practices play a significant role in shaping the learning environment. Policies that prioritize the allocation of resources and support for creating positive classroom climates can have a profound impact on student motivation and achievement (Simbolon et al., 2023). For example, professional development programs for teachers that emphasize creating supportive and inclusive classrooms can enhance the overall learning environment. These programs can equip teachers with the skills to implement teaching strategies that foster student engagement, such as differentiated instruction, collaborative learning, and formative assessment. Furthermore, policies that address broader systemic issues, such as





funding inequities and resource distribution, are essential for ensuring that all students have access to high-quality education. Ensuring that schools have the necessary resources and support to create positive learning environments is a critical step towards enhancing student motivation and academic success (Rothes et al., 2022). Adequate funding for arts education programs, access to high-quality art supplies, and well-maintained classroom facilities are fundamental components of a supportive learning environment. Additionally, educational policies should promote inclusivity and equity, ensuring that all students, regardless of their background, have equal opportunities to succeed. This includes providing support for students with disabilities, language barriers, or other challenges that may affect their learning experience.



## **1.10 Operational definition**

### **1.10.1 Self-perception**

Grounded in SDT's competence need, self-perception denotes how students judge their artistic abilities and traits. It is operationalized through a self-assessment questionnaire that maps directly onto the five Likert items already listed (e.g., confidence in completing complex art projects), thereby translating the abstract construct into observable scores that quantify perceived competence (Liu, 2021; Simbolon et al., 2023; Lou & Li, 2023). Higher scores indicate a more positive self-perception, which, consistent with Bardach et al. (2020) and Rudasill et al. (2018), is expected to bolster intrinsic motivation in this study's fine-art cohort.





### 1.10.2 Self-efficacy

Rooted in Bandura's efficacy theory but aligned here with SDT's autonomy pathway, self-efficacy reflects students' confidence to master course demands. The six-item scale (e.g., "I can learn the techniques taught in my art classes") links the theoretical belief construct to empirical responses (Anwar, 2019; Johnson et al., 2020; Kitchen et al., 2019). Item scores will be summed to form a self-efficacy index, whose predictive value for motivation is tested via regression, following Howard et al. (2021), Cho & Kim (2019) and Havidz & Mujakiah (2023).

### 1.10.3 Self-description



Self-description captures the narrative aspect of identity. Open-ended prompts and a six-item rating scale such as "Describe how you see yourself as an artist" translate the construct into qualitative themes and quantitative coherence scores (George & Richardson, 2019; Cheng, 2023; Simbolon et al., 2023). These dual metrics allow triangulation when correlating identity clarity with motivation, as suggested by Guan et al. (2020) and Liu (2021).

### 1.10.4 Mastery goals

Drawing from Achievement-Goal Theory, mastery goals emphasise growth. The six listed items such as "I aim to learn as much as possible in my art classes"





operationalize this orientation (Bardach et al., 2020; Howard et al., 2021; Liu, 2021). Aggregate scores will index mastery focus, hypothesized to predict deeper engagement consistent with Chazan et al. (2021), Cho & Kim (2019) and Anwar (2019).

### **1.10.5 Performance goals**

Performance goals, also grounded in Achievement-Goal Theory, stress comparative competence. The six items provided such as “I want to outperform peers” quantify this construct (George & Richardson, 2019; Guan et al., 2020; Liu, 2021). Resulting scores will test whether such goals relate to the mixed motivational patterns found by Cheng (2023), Howard et al. (2021) and Bardach et al. (2020).



### **1.10.6 Classroom climate**

Classroom climate embodies SDT’s relatedness dimension. The six-item survey such as “My teacher encourages me to participate” translates interpersonal and physical atmosphere into measurable perceptions (Rudasill et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2020; Ballew et al., 2019). Composite scores will be correlated with motivation to assess the supportive-climate effect reported by Cipriano et al. (2018), Gain et al. (2020) and Lou & Li (2023).





### 1.10.7 Access to resources

Access to resources reflects structural autonomy support. The six questionnaire items such as the availability of art supplies and studio space operationalize this construct (Partelow, 2018; Havidz & Mujakiah, 2023; Kitchen et al., 2019). Higher scores denote better access, posited to enhance motivation per Rudasill et al. (2018), Johnson et al. (2020) and Anwar (2019).

### 1.11 Study limitations

One of the primary limitations of this study is its cross-sectional design. Cross-sectional studies collect data at a single point in time, which restricts the ability to make causal inferences about the relationships between variables. This design can identify associations but cannot determine causality (Gopalan et al., 2020). For example, while this study may find a significant correlation between self-efficacy and motivation among fine art undergraduates, it cannot conclusively determine whether high self-efficacy leads to increased motivation or if motivated students develop higher self-efficacy over time (Ross & Bibler Zaidi, 2019). The inability to establish temporal precedence is a critical limitation, as educational processes and outcomes often unfold over extended periods (Slater, 2021). Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of this research does not account for potential changes in fine art students' self-perception, self-efficacy, and motivation over time. Longitudinal studies, which follow the same participants over a period, would be more suitable for capturing these dynamic processes and understanding how changes in one variable might influence





changes in another (Halakeri, 2018). Future research could benefit from adopting a longitudinal design to better understand the causal pathways and temporal dynamics involved in student motivation and related constructs.

Another significant limitation is the potential impact of cultural differences on the findings. The study focuses on fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China, a context that has unique cultural, educational, and social characteristics. Cultural factors can influence how students perceive and report their self-concept, achievement goals, and learning environment on motivation (Lou & Li, 2023). For instance, Chinese students might place a higher value on collective achievement and social harmony, which could affect their responses differently compared to students from Western cultures where individualism is more emphasized (Cipriano et al., 2018). Moreover, the educational system in China, with its specific curricular and pedagogical practices, may shape fine art students' learning environments and experiences in ways that are not generalizable to other contexts (Simbolon et al., 2023). Thus, the findings of this study may not be directly applicable to fine art students in other countries or regions. Comparative studies involving multiple cultural contexts could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how cultural factors influence the relationships between self-concept, achievement goals, and learning environment on motivation (Gain et al., 2020).

The study's focus on a limited set of variables—self-perception, self-efficacy, self-description, mastery goals, performance goals, classroom climate, and access to resources—could present another limitation. While these variables are critical to understanding student motivation, they do not capture the full complexity of factors





that can influence educational outcomes. For example, individual differences such as personality traits, cognitive abilities, and emotional intelligence also play significant roles in shaping fine art undergraduates' motivation and achievement (George & Richardson, 2019). Additionally, external factors such as family support, peer influence, and broader socio-economic conditions can significantly impact fine art students' educational experiences and outcomes. By not including these variables, the study may overlook important contextual and individual factors that contribute to motivation (Rudasill et al., 2018). Future research should consider a more comprehensive set of variables to provide a holistic understanding of the factors influencing student motivation in educational settings (Cheng, 2023).

Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported data is a notable limitation where self-reports are subject to various biases, including social desirability bias, where respondents might provide answers they believe are socially acceptable rather than true reflections of their thoughts and feelings (Kitchen et al., 2019). Additionally, fine art undergraduates may lack self-awareness or have difficulty accurately assessing their abilities and motivations, leading to inaccuracies in the data collected (Johnson et al., 2020). Second, the study's sample size and sampling method may limit the generalizability of the findings. If the sample size is small or not representative of the broader population of fine art undergraduates in Shandong, the results may not be widely applicable. Ensuring a sufficiently large and diverse sample is crucial for enhancing the reliability and validity of the study's findings (Partelow, 2018). Third, the measurement tools used to assess the study variables may have inherent limitations. For example, questionnaires and scales must be validated to ensure they accurately measure the constructs of interest. If the tools used in this study have not





been rigorously tested for reliability and validity, the results may be questionable (Havidz & Mujakiah, 2023). Future research should employ well-validated instruments and consider using multiple methods of data collection, such as interviews and observations, to triangulate the findings (Slater, 2021).

Finally, the study's context-specific nature might limit the applicability of the findings to other disciplines or educational levels. While the focus on fine art undergraduates provides valuable insights into this group, the factors influencing motivation in other fields of study or among students at different educational levels such as high school or graduate school may differ (Cipriano et al., 2018). Broadening the scope of future research to include diverse academic disciplines and educational stages could provide a more detailed understanding of student motivation across contexts (Liu, 2021).



## **1.12 Importance of research**

### **1.12.1 Practical importance**

The practical significance of this research lies in its potential to provide actionable insights and recommendations that can enhance educational practices and policies, particularly in the context of art education for undergraduates in Shandong, China. By exploring the variables of self-concept, achievement goals, and learning environment, this study aims to identify key factors that influence student motivation, thereby offering practical strategies to improve educational outcomes.





One of the primary contributions of this research is its focus on the interplay between self-concept and student motivation. Understanding how students perceive their abilities and identity in an academic setting can inform the development of targeted interventions to boost self-esteem and confidence. For instance, if the research finds that positive self-perception significantly enhances motivation, educators can implement practices that help students build a more positive self-image. This might include personalized feedback, encouragement, and opportunities for students to reflect on their progress and achievements (Johnson et al., 2020; Lou & Li, 2023). Furthermore, the study's examination of self-efficacy provides critical insights into how students' beliefs about their capabilities affect their motivation and academic performance. By identifying the specific aspects of self-efficacy that most strongly correlate with motivation, educators can tailor their instructional strategies to reinforce these beliefs. For example, incorporating mastery experiences, providing verbal encouragement, and modeling successful behaviors can help students develop a stronger sense of self-efficacy (Simbolon et al., 2023; George & Richardson, 2019). Such interventions can lead to improved academic performance and greater persistence in the face of challenges.

The research also highlights the importance of achievement goals in shaping student motivation. Differentiating between mastery goals and performance goals allows for a detailed understanding of how different types of goals impact motivation. If the study reveals that mastery goals (focused on personal growth and learning) are more effective in fostering intrinsic motivation than performance goals (focused on outperforming peers), educators can design curricula and assessments that emphasize learning and improvement rather than competition (Bardach et al., 2020; Howard et





al., 2021). This shift can create a more supportive and engaging learning environment that promotes sustained academic interest and effort. Another significant practical implication of this research is its analysis of the learning environment, specifically classroom climate and access to resources. A positive classroom climate, characterized by supportive teacher-student relationships, collaborative peer interactions, and a safe and inclusive atmosphere, is crucial for student motivation (Rudasill et al., 2018). If the study finds that classroom climate has a strong impact on motivation, schools can prioritize professional development for teachers that focuses on creating positive classroom environments. This might include training in social-emotional learning, classroom management, and inclusive teaching practices (Cipriano et al., 2018).



Access to resources is another critical factor that can significantly influence student motivation and academic success. If the research indicates that access to high-quality educational materials, technology, and extracurricular opportunities enhances motivation, policymakers and educational leaders can advocate for equitable resource allocation. This could involve increasing funding for under-resourced schools, providing grants for technology and art supplies, and developing community partnerships to offer additional learning opportunities (Gain et al., 2020; Partelow, 2018). Ensuring that all students have the resources they need to succeed is fundamental to promoting educational equity and excellence. Cultural considerations are also essential in the practical application of this research. Given that the study is situated in Shandong, China, it must consider the unique cultural and educational context of the region.





Cultural values and norms can significantly influence how students perceive their abilities, set goals, and respond to their learning environment (Lou & Li, 2023). By integrating culturally responsive practices, educators can better support the diverse needs of their students. This might include incorporating culturally relevant curriculum content, respecting cultural differences in communication, and learning styles, and fostering an inclusive school culture that values diversity (Cheng, 2023). Moreover, the findings of this research can inform the development of comprehensive educational policies that support student motivation and academic success. Policymakers can use the insights gained from this study to create policies that promote positive self-concept, self-efficacy, and achievement goals, as well as supportive learning environments. For instance, policies that mandate regular assessments of classroom climate and student well-being can help schools identify areas for improvement and implement targeted interventions (Rudasill et al., 2018). Additionally, policies that ensure equitable access to resources can help bridge the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students, fostering a more inclusive and supportive educational system.

### 1.12.2 Theoretical importance

The theoretical significance of this research lies in its potential to contribute to and expand upon existing educational theories, particularly those related to self-concept, achievement goals, and learning environments. By exploring these variables among fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China, the study not only provides empirical evidence to support theoretical constructs but also offers new insights that can refine





and enhance theoretical frameworks in educational psychology and related fields.

One of the key theoretical contributions of this research is its examination of self-concept within the context of art education. Self-concept, which includes self-perception, self-efficacy, and self-description, is a critical factor influencing student motivation and academic achievement. This study operationalizes these components and investigates their distinct impacts on motivation. By doing so, it provides a detailed understanding of how different aspects of self-concept interact with and influence student motivation. This can help refine existing theories of self-concept by highlighting the importance of context-specific factors, such as the unique demands and expectations of art education (Johnson et al., 2020; Lou & Li, 2023).

Furthermore, the research contributes to Achievement Goal Theory (AGT) by examining the differential effects of mastery and performance goals on student motivation. AGT posits that students adopt different types of goals, which in turn influence their motivation and behavior. This study's findings on the specific impacts of mastery and performance goals in the context of art education can provide valuable insights into how these goals function in a creative and skill-based discipline. By identifying which types of goals are most conducive to fostering motivation and engagement among art students, the research can inform refinements to AGT and suggest ways to tailor goal-setting strategies to different educational contexts (Bardach et al., 2020; Howard et al., 2021).

The study also makes significant theoretical contributions through its exploration of the learning environment, particularly the dimensions of classroom





climate and access to resources. Ecological Systems Theory (EST) serves as the theoretical underpinning for this aspect of the research, emphasizing the complex interplay between individual and environmental factors. By investigating how classroom climate and resource availability affect student motivation, the study provides empirical support for EST's assertion that learning environments are crucial to educational outcomes. The findings can help elaborate on EST by detailing how specific elements of the classroom environment, such as teacher-student interactions and resource adequacy, contribute to or hinder student motivation (Rudasill et al., 2018; Simbolon et al., 2023).

Moreover, this research highlights the cultural dimensions of educational theories by focusing on fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China. Cultural factors significantly influence educational processes and outcomes, and this study provides insights into how cultural context shapes self-concept, achievement goals, and learning environments. By incorporating cultural considerations into its analysis, the research can help bridge gaps in existing theories that often overlook the role of cultural context. This can lead to the development of more comprehensive and universally applicable educational theories that account for cultural variability (Gain et al., 2020; Lou & Li, 2023).

Another important theoretical implication of this study is its methodological approach. By employing a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, the research demonstrates the value of mixed methods approaches in educational research. This methodological rigor enhances the reliability and validity of the findings and provides a more holistic understanding of the studied phenomena. The use of mixed





methods can serve as a model for future research, encouraging scholars to integrate diverse methodological approaches to capture the complexity of educational processes (Cipriano et al., 2018; George & Richardson, 2019).

The study's findings on the relationship between self-efficacy and motivation also contribute to Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). SCT posits that self-efficacy influences behavior and motivation by affecting individuals' beliefs in their ability to succeed. This research provides empirical evidence supporting this claim and extends SCT by showing how self-efficacy operates in the specific context of art education. By highlighting the role of self-efficacy in motivating art students, the study suggests potential interventions that can enhance self-efficacy, such as mastery experiences and positive feedback, thereby improving educational outcomes (Anwar, 2019; Johnson et al., 2020). Additionally, the research's focus on access to resources underscores the importance of equity and inclusion in educational theory. By examining how resource availability affects student motivation, the study draws attention to the disparities in educational opportunities and outcomes that arise from unequal resource distribution. This can inform theoretical discussions on educational equity and suggest strategies for ensuring that all students have the necessary resources to succeed. These insights are particularly relevant for policymakers and educators seeking to create more equitable educational environments (Partelow, 2018; Havidz & Mujakiah, 2023).





### 1.13 Summary

In summary, this chapter presented an overview of the study's background, problem statement, research questions, objectives, hypotheses, significance, and limitations. It began by discussing the background, highlighting the importance of self-concept, achievement goals, and learning environment on motivation in the academic achievement of fine art undergraduates. This was followed by the research problem, focusing on the need to investigate the relationship between self-concept, achievement goals, and learning environment on motivation among fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China. The research questions were then outlined to guide the study toward achieving its objectives. The study's objectives included investigating the relationship between self-concept, achievement goals, and learning environment on motivation, and examining differences in these variables among fine art undergraduates in Shandong, China.

The hypotheses of the study were also presented, which were designed to test the relationships between the variables under investigation. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study were also discussed, providing a basis for the study's methodology and analysis. Finally, the chapter concluded by highlighting the importance of the study, including providing insights into the factors that influence academic achievement among fine art undergraduates, informing educational policies and practices, and adding to the existing body of knowledge in the field of educational psychology. The limitations of the study were also presented, acknowledging the potential challenges that may arise during the study.

