

Elementary School Teachers' Perceptions Of Visual Art And Its Impact On Children Development

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Abstract

This research paper aims to present teachers' perceptions of the impact that visual art has on their students, including academic achievements, self-esteem, thinking, and problem-solving, and to understand whether teachers are facing difficulties while teaching the art subjects. Visual art is an influential subject in elementary education. It is another path toward children's development.

The current research paper is a quantitative research method, while the instruments used produce cross-sectional data. Based on the obtained results regarding the first question, one-way ANOVA test results reveal that there are significant differences between teachers' perceptions and children's achievement $F(4,69) = 8.210$, $p = .001$. Significant differences are reported even between teachers' perceptions about the impact of visual art and children's self-esteem $F(4,69) = 12.541$, $p = .001$, as per one-way ANOVA. Even the third question is about the teacher's perception of the subject of virtual arts and this subject helping children to develop their thinking and problem-solving is statistically significant. Teachers encounter challenges in teaching virtual arts, indicating notable barriers to their perceptions of the subject.

Keyword: Elementary school, teachers, perception, visual art, children

1. INTRODUCTION

Art and virtual art are a beautiful form of expression in various visible forms, our inner state, our thinking, and our criticism. They are everywhere around us and have a cardinal means for children's integral and educational development (Vasilaki, 2024). Even when we analyze the remains from the age of history, at least 35.000 years ago, there are portable art and paintings (Milbrath et al., 2015). Traditionally, art is considered a discipline related to leisure (Morales-Caruncho et al., 2022), or in other worse cases, the subject of art was always under the shadow of sciences (Cornelia, 2022).

Furthermore, for elementary school teachers who teach all the subjects, according to the curriculum a student should follow, from grade 1 to grade 5, the subject of virtual art can be a rewarding and challenging experience. The changes in curricula are also the responsibility of teachers and policymakers (Bresler, 2010). In primary schools, art is related to a curriculum that is about enhancing fine motor skills, cultural awareness of art and society, and emotional development (Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, 2018).

Meanwhile, art is about talent; therefore, it can be considered a challenge. In different educational systems, virtual art can be approached and organized in various ways. Some schools employ a specialized teacher for virtual art, while others have a solo teacher who covers all subjects for grades one to six. Despite that, the school expects to develop children in all developing fields, and this is a challenge to embrace. Even according to Zigler and Bishop-Josef (2006) concluded that children should be developed as a whole, and to advance this whole child approach is under the responsibility of teachers, parents, and policymakers. But this is a bit confusing.

Involvement of art in the education process, especially as a sub-curricular connection is prolific for children. Guhn, Emerson, and Gouzouasis (2020) concluded that children who attend visual art classes were more successful even in other school subjects. While talking about the teaching process, to be an effective one, there should be a combination of visual arts subjects and teaching methods (Tomljenovic, 2018). Teachers must provide constructive feedback for students and approach teaching methods (Saif, 2023).

On the other hand, confidence is another element that an art teacher should have to orient children toward creativity, self-expression, and critical thinking. When Coskun (2022, p. 137) analysed the perceptions of teachers in Turkey and America about the impact of art on children, no differences were between those two groups, teachers from America and those from Turkey affirmed that “art activities improve creativity”. In other words, teachers should feel confident while giving art lessons to children. A research study conducted by Hennessy et al. (2001) concluded that the confidence of teachers is related to their prior experience and the quality of that experience. However, when we think about it more deeply, in cases where there is a solo teacher who teaches all subjects to students, including virtual art, the low level of confidence can be accepted as a normal process. Therefore, in such circumstances, the development of teachers' capacities is mandatory. It is the responsibility of the school board to anticipate support and professional development for teachers (Bowell, 2010).

The purpose of this research paper is to explore various correlations related to teachers' perceptions of the impact visual art has on their students. Specifically, the paper strives to examine how visual art affects students' academic achievements, self-esteem, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Additionally, it seeks to identify any challenges that teachers encounter while teaching art subjects.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Artistic expression as a way of self-expression

Artistic expression means the presentation of the inner state of a person, in this research paper, as a way of self-expression. Through art and self-expression, children will be adept at improving their skills and expressing their state in cognitive sites (Kaleja-Gasparovica, 2021). On the other hand, artistic expression is another way to facilitate students' verbal or non-verbal expression. Via artistic expression, children can be mature in various ways, including communication, feelings, and experiences (Eyubova & Laskarova-Ivanova, 2024). Art itself is considered a therapy as well (Withrow, 2011).

Bearing in mind that art is an individual expression that is only understandable through the visual sense, it is an outstanding and orienting way for children. Through art, children are tempered to cooperate and to become contributors. Therefore, teachers can guide their students to participate in the community through different artistic projects, gain new knowledge and experiences, and create relationships with contrasting communities (Bowell, 2015). Furthermore, art can be exhibited variously, and children should be attracted to art from a very early age. Educational institutions that children attend provide and demonstrate forms of learning by integrating art. In that case, they are doing art-based exposure that will help children understand art even in the future (Kisida et al., 2018).

Children should be aware of their contribution and responsibility to communities and express their contribution gracefully, they will have to teach cooperation and integration. The art and visual art is a way of contributing. Through art, children will create social networks and learn cultural and citizenship responsibility (Peppler et al., 2022).

2.2 Visual art is only about gifted children!

The momentous dilemma is not art in the classroom but the student's abilities to make art. We have several teachers who focus on students who have talent in art and leave other students aside. Inclusion is an unavoidable act for teachers. Teachers must build trust among children and make children believe in their artistic abilities (Podobnik and Selan, 2021). In other words, children's self-esteem will expand, and teachers should be well prepared, have a solid plan, and guide children effectively. Despite the dilemmas about the impact of art on children's self-esteem, teachers should promote art, provide practices, and improve children's self-esteem (Mark & Fancourt, 2019). It is not about gifted children; it is about motivated and appreciated children.

Furthermore, talent is not ample if not properly used. Virtual art cannot stand alone and must also focus on the students' thinking skills (Bastaban, 2023). So, at this point, we can say that art is not always about giftedness since it is a method to help children develop. Based on the research study of Brown et al. (2010), children who attended art programs before starting primary school have shown a higher receptive vocabulary, meaning that art is worthwhile despite their talent. Its multidimensionality is even in students' language art (Dumais, 2006). However, practicing helps to develop, and nonpracticing will pale the talent. Therefore, when children practice

virtual art, they can be developed in three dimensions art education, artistic talent, and creativity development (Rostan, 2011). Also, the idea of integrating

different ways of art give the children an opportunity to adopt new ways of learning and facilitate understanding (The Oregon Community Foundation, 2017).

2.3 Art is an instrument teacher can use for children's development

Art can be manifested in abundant forms to help children develop and understand themselves. Teachers can use art to understand and make children develop. Since art interprets children's inner state, psychologists use art to understand the child and assess their personality (Beiley et al., 2019). At this point, the teacher must understand themselves and their abilities for doing virtual art subjects with the children. Teachers should have a clear perception of their professional identity and professional activities to align with the policies of the institution. (Milbrandt & Klein, 2008).

Visual expression can convey a person's experiences, making it crucial to accurately interpret visual artwork (Vass, 2012). Within this specter, we have to elaborate on the emotional development aspect of the children. Emotions and emotional regulations are domains of individual stability. Based on the conclusions provided by Brown and Sax (2013), the emotional aspect is associated with art activities and children's social-emotional readiness. Even according to Bowen and Kisida (2023) art is a form that provides children with emotional and social learning environments, as well as enhancing students' approach to school. While doing art, the visual art should evoke children's emotional aspect (Herzog & Duh, 2016).

The physical aspect is another domain of children that should be developed while at school and is also the teachers' responsibility. By practicing art, children will exercise their fine motor, the fine muscles that need to be developed by exercising (Crawford & Weber, 2013). Painting and doodling are superior ways to flourish motor skills and hand-eye coordination (Bai et al., 2022).

As per responsibility, teachers carry on teaching virtual art, Richard and Terreni (2022) provided proposals about potent visual arts among children, so according to them, there should be a connection between art learning at home and educational institutions, engaging children with different illustrative books, visiting art galleries, collaborative art making among children, to extent the vocabulary of children while talking about art, as well as making children discuss and explain their artwork. Teachers should understand that integrating art facilitates their work with children in the class, and they should feel free while learning this subject. In other researchers, teachers were apprehensive when asked about art subjects or art in education, even though the results indicated that female teachers had a higher art in education perspective compared to male teachers (Ahmed & Sharma, 2020).

Visual art not only enhances children's creativity but also has a significant impact on their understanding of science. Hall (2022) suggests that the connection between visual art and science is profound. For example, when children learn about sculpture, they also explore the materials used to create that sculpture. This engagement allows them to understand the content of those materials, which serves as a pathway to learning scientific concepts. Throughout history, humanity's development has been shaped by art and science and influenced by culture and nature (Leite et al., 2024).

Currently, how hard is it for teachers to face the work equipment necessary for artwork? Teachers can face those difficulties since art can integrate many tools that suit the topic they are teaching. According to the research study by Fahlen (2020) in Sweden, since school teachers are working with consumable materials, they are concurrently struggling with teaching visual art, even because of the limited resources or work materials. Ditto, teachers may face a dilemma about what is proper for the children they are teaching, especially in school when it is the teacher's responsibility to teach the children all subjects. Even in the research study provided by Denee and Cherrington (2023) in New Zealand, they found that teachers were confused about how to take an active role during learning and practicing with children's virtual art, whether to leave children alone to express themselves or to interfere children during their art working.

3. METHODOLOGY

The method of this research paper is a quantitative one, while the instruments that are used produce cross-sectorial data. The present paper aims to present teachers' perception of the impact that visual art has on their students, including academic achievements, self-esteem, thinking, and problem-solving, as well as to understand if teachers are facing difficulties while teaching the art subjects.

3.1 Research questions

The research questions of this paper are as follows: According to teachers' perceptions, does art education enhance children's academic achievement? Do teachers believe that virtual art education boosts children's self-esteem? Additionally, do teachers feel that engaging in the arts helps children develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills? Do teachers face difficulties while realizing the hour of art subject?

3.2 Instrument

The first part of the questionnaire lists demographic data related to the teachers' gender, the number of students working with them, the length of experience of the teacher, their living place, the education level of the teacher, and the grade of the children they are working with. Also, to obtain the data, this research paper used a combination of two questionnaires, one is from Oreck (2000), titled 'Teaching with the Arts Survey' and Bufarsan (2000), titled 'Curriculum Analysis in Teacher Preparation Programs at the College of Basic Education in Kuwait. The reliability test of the questionnaires is also reported because of the content of the questions, the first reliability test is conducted with seven items, and the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is $\alpha=.562$, while the other content questions analysis is of 6 items, and the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is $\alpha=.837$.

3.3 Participants

Participants of this research are primary education teachers (N=74) who fulfilled the questionnaire in person. Participants are from two cities in Kosovo, Mitrovica and Drenas. Before filling out the questionnaire, teachers were informed about the content of the questionnaire and the purpose of it. To protect their identity the questionnaire was conducted anonymously. Detailed demographic data obtained from the questionnaire is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic data of the participants

	N	%		N	%
Gender			Work experience		
Male	8	89.2	0 - 10	21	28.4
Female	74	10.8	11 - 20	24	32.4
			21 - 30	29	39.2
Number of children in class			Education level		
0 - 15	3	4.1	Bachelor	52	70.3
16 - 25	0	0	Master	22	29.7
26 - 30	30	40.5			
31 and more	41	55.4			

4. RESULTS

In the current research paper, several statistical analyses were streamlined. The initial analysis focuses on teachers' perceptions of children's achievements in the subject of art, the impact of virtual art on children's self-esteem, and whether engaging in art activities enhances children's thinking and problem-solving skills. The data is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Teachers' perceptions and study variables

	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Children's achievement	197.33	4	49.33	8.210	.001
	414.63	69	6.00		

Children self-esteem	257.61	4	64.403	12.541	.001
	354.34	69	5.135		
Children’s thinking and problem-solving	71.15	2	35.580	4.671	.012
	540.80	71	7.617		

According to one-way ANOVA test results, teachers’ perceptions about the impact of visual art and children’s achievement are significant $F(4,69) = 8.210, p = .001$. Also, based on the descriptive analysis, a huge number of teachers agreed ($M = 23.47, SD = 2.95$) that art affects children's achievement, then comes teachers who agreed with this statement ($M = 26.82, SD = 1.66$), while only two teachers disagreed with this statement ($M = 25.50, SD = 3.53$). Nevertheless, there are significant differences between teachers’ perceptions about the impact of visual art and children’s self-esteem $F(4,69) = 12.541, p = .001$, as per one-way ANOVA. Although, as per descriptive data, most teachers agreed with this statement ($M = 26.94, SD = 1.47$), while there are a few teachers ($N = 3$) who disagreed ($M = 27, SD = 1.51$) or disagreed ($N = 3$) that art has an impact in children self-esteem ($M = 25.33, SD = 1.91$). The Bonferroni table presents multiple comparisons of teachers' perceptions regarding the influence of art on children's self-evaluation. Notably, teachers who agree and absolutely agree, perceive a significantly prominent impact of arts on children's self-esteem compared with teachers who disagree. These findings suggest a stronger belief in the positive effects of arts is associated with a substantial shift in perception. However, other comparisons, including those involving "Neutral" responses, do not show significant differences, indicating that the division in opinions primarily exists between those who actively support arts education and those who remain sceptical.

One-way ANOVA results for teachers’ perception of the influence visual art has on children’s thinking and problem-solving have resulted in significant differences $F(2,71) = 4.671, p = .012$. Nonetheless, according to descriptive data, teachers who absolutely agreed reported the highest perception ($M = 26.50, SD = 2.75$), followed by teachers who gave a neutral answer ($M = 25.13, SD = 2.86$). Based on the Bonferroni analyses teachers' perceptions of how visual arts impact children's thinking and problem-solving abilities. The only statistically significant difference is between teachers who agree and those who absolutely Agree, with a mean difference of -2.600 , indicating that the first group of teachers perceive a significantly more robust optimistic impact than the second ones.

Teachers are also asked about their perception of the difficulties while realizing the hours of art. The obtained data are shown in Table 3. As per one-way ANOVA test results, the teacher perceives that there are difficulties in realizing the hour of art with children, which means this is a significant difference $F(4,69) = 9.817, p = .001$. Based on the descriptive data, teachers who agreed reported the highest perception ($M = 27.00, SD = 1.18$) compared to teachers who absolutely disagreed and reported the lowest perception ($M = 21.80, SD = 1.54$). Meanwhile, the Bonferroni table examines teachers' perceptions of difficulties in conducting art classes. Significant differences exist between teachers who absolutely disagree and multiple other groups, including teachers who disagree (-4.733), agree (-2.867), and absolutely agree (-5.200), indicating that teachers who strongly disagree with facing difficulties perceive significantly fewer challenges compared to those who experience them. These findings suggest that perceptions of hurdles vary widely, with a vigorous contrast between those who do not perceive challenges and those who do, highlighting a divide in teachers' experiences with art class implementation.

Table 3: Teachers' perception of difficulties faced during art hours

	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Difficulties in realizing virtual art	221.95	4	55.49	9.817	.001
	390.00	69	5.652		

Linear regression is another analysis. Based on the teacher's perception, children benefit from virtual art mostly in school achievement ($M = 4.30, SD = .80$), followed by self-esteem ($M = 4.19, SD = 1.00$), and the lowest benefit is on thinking and children's ability for problem-solving ($M = 3.86, SD = .84$) However, the results of the regression

indicated the three predictors explained 16.7 % of the variance ($R^2=.167$, $F(3,70)=4.692$, $p=.005$). It is endowed that virtual art has an impact on children’s school achievement ($\beta=.969$, $p<.017$) and self-esteem ($\beta=.725$, $p<.021$) but not on the children’s thinking and problem-solving development ($\beta=.715$, $p>.060$). The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Perception of teachers for children benefits by virtual art

Variable	B	SE(B)	β	t	Sig. (p)
Children achievement	.96	.39	.27	2.455	.017
Children self-esteem	.72	.30	.25	2.364	.021
Children's thinking and problem-solving	.71	.37	.21	1.910	.060

Furthermore, the correlation analysis reveals several significant relationships between artistic education and various developmental aspects. Notably, artistic education helping in the development and increasing creativity of children, in general, showed a strong positive correlation with children's ability to understand themselves ($r = 0.697$, $p < .01$) and with the subject of visual art establishing knowledge and understanding of society ($r = 0.356$, $p < .01$). This suggests that engaging in artistic education significantly enhances both self-awareness and societal comprehension. Moreover, the subject of art aiding children in understanding themselves also showed significant positive correlations with developing children's thinking and problem-solving skills ($r = 0.285$, $p < .05$) and establishing knowledge and understanding of society ($r = 0.290$, $p < .05$). These findings support the notion that artistic education provides cognitive and reflective benefits beyond mere creativity.

Interestingly, artistic education promoting individual achievement of children had a weaker correlation with other variables, with only a marginally significant relationship with societal understanding ($r = 0.271$, $p < .05$). This might indicate that while artistic education supports broader cognitive and social development, its direct impact on individual achievement may require additional factors including reviewed curricular documents, new learning methods, and techniques, as well as motivation.

Overall, these results emphasize the positive role of artistic education in fostering cognitive, creative, and societal growth among children. Future studies could explore additional mediating variables, such as the role of teaching methods or student engagement, to further understand these relationships.

Another principal issue is teachers' experience and their perception of children’s achievement due to their involvement in virtual art. The chi-square (χ^2) test was used to examine the relationship between teachers' experience and key study variables, including individual achievement, self-esteem, and thinking and problem-solving. The results indicate that there is no statistically significant relationship between individual achievement ($\chi^2 = 9.735$, $df = 8$, $p = .284$) and thinking and problem-solving ($\chi^2 = 9.011$, $df = 4$, $p = .061$). However, a positive correlation was found for self-esteem ($\chi^2 = 19.335$, $df = 8$, $p = .013$), suggesting a significant association. This finding implies that teachers' experience may have a meaningful impact on students' self-esteem, while it does not significantly affect individual achievement or thinking and problem-solving skills. The data are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Teacher’s work experience and study variables

	Value	df	Sig.
Individual achievement	9.735	8	.284
Self-esteem	19.335	8	.013
Thinking and problem-solving	9.011	4	.061

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that the majority of teachers recognize the positive influence of visual arts on children’s academic achievement. Most educators expressed agreement with this perspective, with a substantial proportion demonstrating strong agreement. Conversely, only a small number of participants expressed skepticism regarding the impact of visual art on students’ achievement. Supporting this view, Annet (2024) found that engagement in the arts plays a significant role in children’s development by fostering creativity, engagement, and cognitive growth. Consequently, it becomes essential to integrate art effectively into classroom practice, as it supports the

holistic development of students (Gibson & Larson, 2007) and has the potential to enhance overall academic performance (Ishiguro et al., 2023).

A similar trend is observed concerning the effect of visual arts on children's self-esteem. A significant proportion of teachers strongly endorsed the belief that visual art contributes to greater self-confidence among students. Analysis of the responses suggests that educators who advocate for arts education tend to perceive a stronger relationship between artistic engagement and children's psychological well-being. This aligns with Mak and Fancourt (2019), who reported that participation in the arts positively affects self-esteem. Likewise, Ke (2024) emphasized the substantial psychological value of visual art in children's development. Thus, the consensus among most teachers reinforces the argument that the integration of visual arts is vital not only for academic achievement but also for personal development. Nevertheless, the existence of differing opinions, although limited, highlights the necessity for further investigation into the underlying factors shaping these perceptions. Regarding the impact of visual arts on children's thinking and problem-solving abilities, teachers' perceptions varied. Those who strongly believed in the benefits reported the highest level of agreement, followed by teachers with neutral responses. This distribution suggests that most teachers hold a generally positive view of the role of visual arts in cognitive development. The distinction between moderate and strong support among teachers implies that those who are deeply committed to arts education perceive a clearer connection between artistic activities and the development of children's cognitive skills. Consistent with this, Liu (2023) found evidence of a pragmatic association between arts education and both cognitive development and academic achievement. These insights underscore the importance of continued dialogue and research to better understand the factors shaping teachers' perceptions and to identify strategies for more effective integration of arts education into curricular practice.

When examining teachers' views on the challenges of conducting virtual art classes, a clear division emerged between those who perceived significant obstacles and those who did not. Reported challenges included insufficient materials, a lack of technical and financial support, the need for ongoing practice (Tusiime et al., 2020), and the absence of supportive curricula (James et al., 2024). Differences were also observed between teachers with neutral opinions and those.

In summary, teachers play a central role in the successful integration of visual art into educational settings. It is critical for educators to acknowledge the positive contributions of visual art to students' cognitive, emotional, and academic development, making its inclusion in teaching practices indispensable. At the same time, teachers must critically assess their pedagogical methods and motivational strategies to effectively inspire and engage learners. Each instructional approach should be intentionally designed to cultivate curiosity, creativity, and enthusiasm for learning, thereby enhancing students' overall educational experiences. Further research is recommended to explore the contextual and systemic factors that shape teachers' perceptions and practices regarding visual arts education.

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