

TO INVESTIGATE THE CONTRIBUTION OF VISUAL ARTS TO THE CURRICULUM OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION SCHOOLS

Shikha Rani (Research Scholar)

Dr. Mridula Tyagi (Guide)

Department of Drawing & Painting

Malwanchal University, Indore Index City, Nh-59a, Nemawar Rd, Madhya Pradesh

ABSTRACT

This research delves into the effects of visual arts education on preschoolers, revealing how it helps them express themselves emotionally, creatively, and imaginatively. This research made use of research methodologies that combine quantitative and qualitative approaches. The research sheds insight on the demographic characteristics that impact pre-school instructors' evaluations of the visual arts and its significance for the development of cognitive and social abilities. To round out its picture of the present and future of visual arts in ECE, it delves into the practical elements of art education, such as managing a classroom and allocating resources. Lastly, the importance of visual arts in early childhood education is more understood thanks to this study. It stresses the need of educational policies and funding that are conducive to learning in order to improve classroom conditions.

Keywords: Drawing, Visual Literacy, Early Childhood and Education

INTRODUCTION

Incorporating the arts into our everyday lives is necessary since they enhance our experiences and shape our perceptions of the world. A child's education and holistic development may greatly benefit from exposure to the arts, particularly in the formative years. Children gain agency, find a safe space to express themselves, and find significance in their work via artistic activities. Their involvement in educational programs needs to mirror their actual experiences, stimulating their perceptions and emotions via firsthand encounters. Consequently, it is encouraged to think creatively, imaginatively, reflectively, and with an eye toward observation.

Kindergarten teachers believe that introducing visual arts to young children helps them develop in many ways, including their ability to express themselves, their ability to communicate with others, their confidence, and their ability to handle challenging tasks. They also believe that it helps them become "culturally and visually literate". For early childhood educators, the students' entire development is greatly enhanced by exposure to visual arts. They give students more leeway or use different resources for the creative process based on their ages and interests while teaching visual arts. Teachers' convictions on the significance of visual arts in the classroom demonstrate the vitality of their instruction and the development of a robust learning environment.

Teaching children about the visual arts encompasses many pursuits, including but not limited to creating art, constructing structures, and investigating different materials, all with the goal of nurturing their imagination and creativity. In doing so, we uncover a depth to the ways in which we internalize and interpret our environment. Participation in creative processes and an appreciation of art both improve communication and help people see things from other people's points of view. This method goes beyond just art education. Improving one's cognitive abilities has far-reaching effects on one's perspective and thought processes and opens up many avenues for creative expression. Lastly, while working with young children in the visual arts, Teachers must have a deep understanding and empathy for students' ethnic

backgrounds and socioeconomic distinctions. Acknowledging these distinctions enhances instruction and permits flexible methods of incorporating youngsters into the complex realm of the arts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Whitelaw, Jessica. (2017). Conceptually understanding the meaning of "arts-based" in relation to several areas of K-12 education has gotten less attention than the growing interest in arts-based as a research technique grounded on aesthetic principles. This qualitative research acknowledges the need of investigating long-term strategies for incorporating art into English language instruction in order to clarify and explain the impact of art on literacy development. In this paper, I propose a narrative framework for understanding art's pivotal function in the English classroom, where it may both spark student interest and provide the raw materials for critical analysis.

Deetsch, Mike et.al. (2018). The results of a research that looked at how visual literacy interventions affected pre-literacy development are presented in this article. The Toledo Public Schools (TPS) and the Toledo Museum of Art (TMA) collaborated to conduct the research. In light of the constant reading failures shown by TPS K-3 students on the state report card, the two groups worked together to develop a curriculum to enhance the second-level vocabulary acquisition of preschoolers. Art museums are great resources for learning both in and out of the classroom; the article details how TPS classes use curricular interventions, such as frequent field trips to the TMA, into their lessons.

Lopatovska, Irene. (2016). The ability to understand and work within visual media is known as visual literacy. Despite the many advantages that may be gained by teaching programs that teach visual literacy to elementary-aged kids are few and few between. For the purpose of fostering the growth of young children's visual literacy skills, we investigated potential strategies for including artworks into such programs. visual literacy programs. Preliminary research results and suggestions are included in our publication, along with directions for further investigation.

Lima, Elvira et.al. (2020). Drawing as a Practice in Preschool and Kindergarten. In this work, we consider the significance of sketching in ECE curriculum by relying on some neuroscience results. We consider drawing as a skill that develops as humans progress through the evolutionary tree, we talk about how kids are hardwired to trace the four basic shapes—circle, point, line, and angle—and how this skill builds alongside the emergence of visual storytelling during the early years of schooling. Finally, we take a look at the educational treatments that help kids develop their visual storytelling skills to their fullest potential. To ensure that children have the right environment and time to consistently practice drawing in order to develop their creativity and establish new memories, we stress the need of incorporating neuroscience-based techniques into teacher education programs.

Arabacı, Nalan et.al. (2021). The "art" concept in preschool and kindergarten must be understood via a multi-faceted lens and to expand it. Art education may aid children of all races and origins in assimilating into their community and in developing healthy communication skills. Reason being that many cultural traditions place art at the center. Children at risk and those experiencing difficulties in the classroom may benefit greatly from exposure to art, as shown in this case study. There are significant chances for students from diverse backgrounds to acquire a feeling of belonging and pride when art is integrated into school and when other cultural traditions are brought to the classroom.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research aims to accomplish two things. Finding out how kindergarten teachers feel about the key to a successful visual arts curriculum for elementary school students' goal of this study. Kindergarten educators from a range of Piraeus neighbourhoods participated in the study. The study technique for

gathering data from the mixed-type survey was an improvised questionnaire. It had 21 closed statements and 16 open-type questions, with 5 open-type questions. When relevant, the research data was input and examined with the use of SPSS 21, a social science statistical program. The kindergarten teachers' responses to the open-ended questions were mapped onto the axes, and an attempt was made to thematically analyze them word for word.

RESULT

The study's overarching goal was to learn how early childhood educators saw the significance of art and visual learning for their young students. Table 1 provides a thorough breakdown of the participants' demographics. A total of sixty-five people were polled. Of the total survey takers, women made up 81.5% (n = 53), with males accounting for 18.5% (n = 12) ... Since most early childhood educators are female, the findings are not surprising. The age distribution of the participants was as follows: 38.5% (n = 25) were in the 33–42-year-old bracket, followed by 36.9% (n = 24) in the 23–32-year-old bracket, 16.9% (n = 11) in the 53–64-year-old bracket, and 7.7% (n = 5) in the 43–52-year-old bracket. Regarding the level of education, 70.8% of the participants (n = 46) have a bachelor's degree or above, 27.7% have a master's degree or above (n = 18), and 1.5% have a doctorate (n = 1). Of the total participants, 53.8% (n = 35) had between one and five years of experience, which is the highest proportion. After that, there was a statistically significant difference between the groups based on the number of years of service: 16.9% for 6-10 years (n = 11), 12.3% for 11-15 years (n = 8), 10.8% for 20 years or more (n = 7), and 6.2% for 16-20 years (n = 4). Based on the data collected, it is evident that a large majority of participants do not possess any formal training in the visual arts (89.2%, n = 58), whereas a small minority of 10.8%, n = 7, have.

Table 1

Aggregated Demographics

Demographics	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Men	12	18.5
Women	53	81.5
Age		
23-32	24	36.9
33-42	25	38.5
43-52	5	7.7
53-64	11	16.9
Education level		
Graduation degree	46	70.8
Post-graduation degree	18	27.7
PhD degree	1	1.5
Experience		
1-5	35	53.8
6-10	11	16.9
11-15	8	12.3
16-20	4	6.2
work experience > 20	7	1.8
Specific training		
Not have any training	58	89.2
Have some training	7	10.8

Note. *N* = 65.

Perceptions and the significance of visual arts in early life are addressed in statements 6–14 in the B portion of the survey. Here we have some open-ended questions in statements 7 and 9, and some closed-ended questions in statements 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14. The results of the closed-ended questions are shown in Table 2.

The sixth statement sought to ascertain the relative importance of the visual arts to preschool curricula. Most people think that visual arts play an important part in preschool education, and a large portion of that group holds this view. 56.92% of the sample ($n = 37$) highly agree, 30.77 % of the sample ($n = 20$) agree, 6.15 % of the sample ($n = 4$) disagree, 4.62 % of the sample ($n = 3$) agree, and 1.54 % of the sample ($n = 1$) severely disagree.

Participation in the visual arts is believed to have an effect on the development of pre-schoolers, according to the eighth question. It was an open-ended inquiry. The majority of the responses (89.2%, $n = 58$) provided detailed descriptions of the ways in which visual arts influence the development of pre-school children, particularly in areas such as imagination, creativity, and motor skills, while a small percentage (10.8%, $n = 7$) provided positive responses using one-word phrases. It seems from the responses that dealing with the visual arts is crucial for the development of pre-school children.

Participation in the visual arts by pre-schoolers is believed to influence their development, according to the seventh statement of the study. The inquiry aimed to determine if art activities are effective for toddlers.

With 56.9% (n = 37) highly agreeing, 26.2% (n = 17) agreeing, 13.8% (n = 9) neither agreeing nor disagreeing, and 3.1% (n = 2) strongly disagreeing, the findings showed that most participants felt positively about this statement. It would indicate that, generally speaking, art activities are well-received by toddlers. This demonstrates the participants' opinions on the effectiveness of art activities for toddlers, revealing that the majority of them think these activities are beneficial.

Asking a free-form question nine: What, if any, positive effects on children's development have you seen from their participation in the visual arts? Thus, they sank to the ground along the three primary axes. A greater number of responses indicated developmental advantages when asked what respondents had noticed about creativity and expressiveness; 46.1% (n = 30) strongly agreed. Then, 21.5% (n = 14) of them strongly agreed that developing social skills and self-confidence are key benefits. The next topic is the improvement of mobility and other abilities; 16.9% of respondents (n = 11) agree, 4.6% (n = 3) disagree, and 10.7% (n = 7) are unsure. Other advantages mentioned include happiness, intellect, contentment, and enjoyment. Children who participate in the visual arts have several educational advantages, as seen in these responses.

The eleventh statement inquired as to whether or not respondents thought it was vital to study the influence of the visual arts on the intellectual development of youngsters. Of the total respondents, 53.8% (n = 35) gave their enthusiastic approval to this assertion. In addition, 1.5% of the sample disagreed, 9.2% were unsure, and 35.4% of the sample agreed (n = 23; see Table 2).

The results show that, when asked whether art activities encourage children to engage with one another, 41.5% (n = 27) highly agree, 40% (n = 26) agree, 16.9% (n = 11) neither agreed nor disagreed, and 1.5% (n = 1) strongly disagree. This brings us to statement 11. Assuming, of course, that engaging in creative pursuits encourages people to mingle, it seems that there is no downside (see Table 2).

Table 2

Summary of Statements 11 to 14 Responses

Response	SA		A		NA/ND		D		SD	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Statement. 6: The role of visual arts in early childhood education is crucial	37	56.6	20	30.77	4	6.15	3	4.6	1	1.5
Statement. 8: Toddlers generally respond well to art activities	37	56.6	17	26.2	9	13.8	-	-	2	3.1
Statement. 10: The influence of the visual arts on the intellectual development of children is very important	35	53.8	23	35.4	6	9.2	1	1.5	-	-
Statement. 11: Art activities promote social interaction between children	27	41.5	26	40	11	16.9	-	-	1	1.5
Statement. 12: Art activities promote the expression of children's emotions	44	67.7	15	23.1	6	9.2	-	-	-	-
Statement. 13: Cooperation in group art activities contributes to the	39	60	22	33.8	3	4.6	-	-	1	1.5

development of children’s social skills										
Statement. 14: The visual arts contribute to the development of children’s creativity	48	73.8	15	23.1	1	1.5	-	-	1	1.5

Take note that SA denotes strong agreement, A denotes agree, NA/ND denotes neither agree nor disagree, D denotes disagree, and DA denotes heavily disagree. There are 65 of them.

Findings about participants' opinions on encouraging children to express their emotions may be found in statement 12. With 67.7% (n = 44) strongly agreeing, the biggest proportion perceives a major improvement. With 23.1% (n = 15) agreeing and 9.2% (n = 6) neither agreeing nor disagreeing, the other factors had a less substantial impact. On the whole, it appears that engaging in creative pursuits encourages the expression of feelings.

The thirteenth claim is that kids' social skills are enhanced when they work together in art projects. The question on the promotion of social skills is answered by the participants. With 60% (n = 39) highly agreeing, 33.8% (n = 22) agreeing, 4.6% (n = 3) unsure, and 1.5% (n = 1) strongly disagreeing, the order is as follows.

It seems from the following remark that, generally speaking, participants think that kids' social skills are aided by working together in group art projects. With 73.8% (n = 48) strongly agreeing and 23.1% (n = 15) agreeing, it's clear that the majority of instructors feel this way. Among those who strongly objected, only 1.5% (n = 1) did not agree. The majority of participants agree that the visual arts play a crucial role in inspiring originality.

In the C portion of the questionnaire, statements 15 through 18 deal with lesson plans and pedagogical approaches. Unlike assertions 15, 17, and 18, question 16 does not have a predetermined answer. Table 3 displays the results of the closed-ended questions.

Statement 15 inquired as to whether or not the visual arts are adequately included in the present day's preschool curricula. We want to know whether the visual arts are a part of the present curriculum from the participants. Out of the total number of teachers surveyed, 41.5% (n = 27) were in strong agreement, 27.7% (n = 18) were in agreement, 21.5% (n = 14) were unsure, and 9.2% (n = 6) were in strong disagreement. On the whole, it looks that the participants are happy with how the visual arts are now integrated.

The sixteenth statement did not provide a conclusion. The traits that were most mentioned in the written comments were used to distribute the responses. The purpose of this study was to identify the most successful ways that pre-primary teachers approach teaching visual arts to children of this age. No cost

Table 3

Summary of Statements 15 and 18 Responses

Response	SA		A		NA/ND		D	SD		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Statement. 15: Visual arts are well integrated into the current curriculum for pre-school children	27	41.5	18	27.7	14	21.5	-	-	6	9.2

Statement. 18: Providing positive feedback when performing artistic activities encourage children’s participation	31	47.7	26	40	7	10.8	-	-	1	1.5
---	----	------	----	----	---	------	---	---	---	-----

Take note that SA denotes strong agreement, A denotes agree, NA/ND denotes neither agree nor disagree, D denotes disagree, and DA denotes heavily disagree. There are 65 of them.

method was the most often mentioned strategy, appearing in 33.1% of the replies (n = 22). After that, there's a sizable chunk of data in the remaining 30.7% (n = 20) that pertains to the responses that included certain instruments and methods, such theater, brushes, recyclable materials, and messy play.

The system of reward and competition first emerged at this stage. Thirteen percent (n = 10) said they utilize a guided approach, fifteen percent (n = 10) said they use a group-teaching style, and four percent (n = 4) said they didn't know. While there is a wide range of opinions and suggestions, the most popular approaches were group instruction and various forms of discovery help (e.g. guided approach).

The following percentages of respondents were questioned about statement 18: 47.7% (n = 31) highly agree, 40% (n = 26) agree, 10.8% (n = 7) neither agree nor disagree, and 1.5% (n = 1) strongly disagree that giving positive comments while participating in art activities promotes youngsters to be more involved. On balance, it seems that offering constructive criticism is crucial.

Question 19, in Part D, questions 19–21: How would art instructors gauge students' engagement and enthusiasm as they work on projects? High accounts for 53.8% (n = 35), very high for 23.1% (n = 15), moderate for 20% (n = 13), and low and very low for 1.5 and 1.5%, respectively. Everyone involved seems to think the student's enthusiasm for creative pursuits is great. The statistics on the children's interest and engagement during the art activities are clearly shown in Table 4, as described:

Table 4
Children’s Level of Interest and Participation in Art Activities

Level of interest and participation	n	%
Very high	15	23.1
High	35	53.8
Moderate	13	20.0
Low	1	1.5
Very low	1	1.5

Note. N = 65.

Concerning the difficulties of instructing young children in the visual arts, Question 20 was left open-ended. The replies were categorized according to the main feature of each one. Accordingly, 86.1% (n = 56) of respondents cited the difficulty of managing children as the most significant obstacle. 10.7 percent (n = 7) said that things beyond their control, such school, time constraints, and parental ignorance, are the biggest obstacles. Lastly, 3.1% (n = 2) expressed uncertainty. As for the question, how exactly do you face such difficulties? Can you provide any instances of tactics or solutions that you have implemented? A classification has been established according to the presence or absence of a proposal. Therefore, 93.9%

(n = 61) of respondents noted both problems and solutions, whereas 6.1% (n = 4) indicated ignorance. Each child's creativity has to be nurtured with distinct drive and patience, according to the replies. Some examples include showing methods online and boosting self-confidence via praise and recognition. Another popular suggestion was to give the kids specific tasks to do and to keep their attention by playing games. Furthermore, it was suggested that a range of tools and strategies be made available to kids in order to foster teamwork, which would in turn boost their creative growth and feeling of belonging. The significance of encouraging creativity and self-expression, being open to many approaches to instruction, and providing ongoing feedback were all emphasized in the shared conclusion. In general, the results show how important it is to tailor lessons to the interests and requirements of individual students while creating a safe space for creative expression.

CONCLUSION

Several important points about the importance of visual arts in kindergarten education and the difficulties pre-school teachers have when trying to include visual arts into their lessons are illuminated by the results. Teachers' views on the value of visual arts in preschool and kindergarten are unaffected by gender, age, education level, or area of specialty, according to the study's first finding. This shows that teachers from many walks of life agree that visual arts education is important. Even while everyone agrees that visual arts should be a part of every curriculum, there are still many obstacles that instructors must overcome. According to the findings, kindergarten educators have a very optimistic view of the role that the arts play in the early years of a child's development. The importance of visual arts in fostering children's imagination, creativity, and intellectual growth is widely acknowledged by educators. Consistent with other studies, these results emphasize the importance of visual arts in preschool and kindergarten curricula.

REFERENCES

1. Whitelaw, Jessica. (2017). Arts-Based Literacy Learning Like “New School”: (Re)Framing the Arts in and of Students’ Lives as Story. *English Education*. 50. 42-71. 10.58680/ee201729319.
2. Lopatovska, Irene & Carcamo, Tiffany & Dease, Nicholas & Jonas, Elijah & Kot, Simen & Pamperien, Grace & Volpe, Anthony & Yalcin, Kurt. (2018). Not just a pretty picture part two: Testing a visual literacy program for young children. *Journal of Documentation*. 74. 10.1108/JD-08-2017-0119.
3. Huilcapi-Collantes, Catalina & Ramos, Juan & Martín, Azucena. (2023). Visual Literacy for Education Professionals. 10.52917/ivlatbsr.2023.017.
4. Deetsch, Mike & Glass, Rachel & Jankowski, Regina & Mylander, Evelyn & Roth, Peggy & Wharton, Elisabeth. (2018). Visual Literacy and Its Impact on Pre-literacy Development. *Journal of Museum Education*. 43. 148-158. 10.1080/10598650.2018.1426332.
5. Lopatovska, Irene & Hatoum, Sarah & Waterstraut, Saebra & Novak, Lisa & Sheer, Sara. (2016). Not just a pretty picture: visual literacy education through art for young children. *Journal of Documentation*. 72. 1197-1227. 10.1108/JD-02-2016-0017.
6. Lopatovska, Irene. (2016). Engaging young children in visual literacy instruction. *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology*. 53. 1-5. 10.1002/pra2.2016.14505301101.
7. Vasilaki, Vasiliki. (2024). Pre-School Teachers’ Views on the Impact of Visual Arts Education on Early Childhood Education. *Innovare Journal of Education*. 1-9. 10.22159/ijoe.2024v12i4.51710.
8. Lima, Elvira & Guimaraes Lima, Marcelo. (2020). The Act of Drawing in Early Childhood Education.

9. McMaster, Scott. (2015). Visual Literacy and Art Education: Review of the Literature. 10.13140/RG.2.1.4331.2482.
10. Valachova, Daniela. (2023). Integrating Visual Literacy in Art Education. *Studia Scientifica Facultatis Paedagogicae Universitas Catholica Ružomberok*. 22. 9-13. 10.54937/ssf.2023.22.3.9-13.
11. Krauze-Sikorska, Hanna. (2021). Education Through Visual Arts in the Process of Preparing a Child in Middle and Late Childhood to Be Visually Competent. *Prima Educatione*. 5. 215-227. 10.17951/pe.2021.5.215-227.
12. Krauze-Sikorska, Hanna. (2021). Education Through Visual Arts in the Process of Preparing a Child in Middle and Late Childhood to Be Visually Competent. *Prima Educatione*. 5. 215-227. 10.17951/pe.2021.5.215-227.
13. Soozandehfar, Seyyed Mohammad Ali & Souzandehfar, Marzieh. (2020). The Meaning-Making of the Children's Drawings as a Manifestation of their Visual Literacy Competence.
14. Alford, Christine. (2015). Drawing. The universal language of children. *Teachers' Work*. 12. 45-62. 10.24135/teacherswork. v12i1.46.
15. Taverna, Livia & Tremolada, Marta & Sabbattini, Francesca. (2020). Drawing and Writing. Learning of Graphical Representational Systems in Early Childhood. 10.1007/978-3-030-41018-6_20.