

University Students' Opinions about Art and Art Education

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Abstract: Aim of this study is to answer the question “What are university students' opinions about art and art education?” Semi-structured interview forms were designed and used by the researcher to identify the opinions of students at faculty of education regarding art and art education. The semi-structured interview forms were given to 33 students from Rize University Faculty of Education. The interview form was revised in the light of specialists' feedback. The form is comprised of 12 questions to identify student opinions about the subject. The derived data was analyzed by using frequency (f) and percentage (%) distributions. Resulting data was interpreted under themes and placed in tables. As a consequence, awareness level of students at faculty of education about art and art education was found low, they do not know artists and their pieces well and the artistic events they attend mainly include cinema and theater.

Key words: Art • Art education • students' opinions

INTRODUCTION

Art is indispensable for individuals to think freely, meet their spiritual needs, express themselves comfortably and form a contemporary and progressive community. “Art is necessary for human beings' recognizing and changing the world. It is also necessary due to the magic in its nature” [1]. High level of individuals' awareness regarding art is important for modernization of the society. “Human being's developing his wisdom only as an entity of emotions and reason is not sufficient to be full a human being; at the same time he needs emotional values” [2].

Art education can be defined as training of emancipating individuals by means of fine arts in which theory and practice support each other. “It can be said that art, as an art of emotions, is capable of making individuals free and help them acquire artistic awareness by means of art education and education with art” [3]. “Art education pushes the limits of human beings' sensibility and makes it possible to expand the limits even further. Human being can know himself once again from this aspect this time and paves the way more consciously towards being a ‘person’” [4]. Once taken up this understanding, an individual finds the opportunity to know himself and noticing his skills. Identifying university students' about art and art education is important for realizing the current situation and making improvement according to recommendations.

For this study, literature review was carried out. Acil [5] in her study “Visions of The Students of The Anatolian Fine Arts High School Picture Department about Conceptual Art” found out that few students consider conceptual art as an ideal art. Also Kılınc [6] in her study “Student opinions about the reflection of art education movement to the course programmes of the institutions giving fashion design education” addressed effects of contemporary art movements on fashion design education. Toktaş [7], in her study titled “The Evaluation of Views Introduced by Instructors and Students concerning the Course of Basic Art Education/Basic Design in Higher Education Institutions Providing Fine Arts Education”, saw that students rather than instructors find theoretical knowledge transferred throughout the course insufficient.

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Table 1: Distribution of participant students by gender

| | F | % |
|--------|----|-------|
| Female | 15 | 45.5 |
| Male | 18 | 54.5 |
| Total | 33 | 100.0 |

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Group: This research's data was collected from 33 students at the 2nd grade in Social Sciences Teaching Department during 2010-2011 instruction years.

As seen in Table 1; of the 33 students, 45.5 % is females, the rest of 54.5 % is males. Majority of the participants are male students.

Assessment and Evaluation Instrument: The data was collected by using the 12-item semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher. The interview form includes questions concerning necessity of art education, importance of art, artistic events, artists and their pieces and art movements.

Data Analysis: Collected data was grouped under certain themes. In assessing the interview forms, tables were drawn and then frequency and percentages were analyzed by calculating. Resulting data was interpreted in the light of the literature and relevant recommendations were brought.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the form, participants were asked whether art education is necessary for everybody. Table 2 was made up accordingly. Looking at the results by gender, one can see that percentages of males and females agreeing on necessity of art education are very close to each other. In total, 78.8 % of respondents regard art education necessary for everybody, while 21.2 % disagree.

The interview form also asked students' opinions about importance of art. Table 3 was made up accordingly. Looking at the results by gender, one can see that 6 of the female respondents (40 %) think art helps develop different points of view, 2 of them (6.7 %) think that art expresses human being's imagination and shapes culture of the community. Of the male respondents, 4 (20 %) identify the meaning of life with art, 2 students (6.25 %) say that art enriches their imagination and gives an aesthetic perspective. In total, 8 respondents (25.8 %) think that art helps develop different points of view, while 2 respondents (6.4 %) think that art helps them to understand themselves and the others.

The participants were asked which artistic events they attend. In Table 4, results by gender show that 35.7 % of the female respondents attend cinema, 35.7 % theater, 21.5 % painting and 17.1 % attend musical events. Of the males, 50 % go to the cinema, 22.2 % to theater, 16.7 % to painting and 11.1 % go to the musical events. In total, 43.8 % of the respondents prefer cinema, 28.1 % theater, 18.8 % painting and 9.3 prefer musical events.

Table 2: University Students' Opinions about Necessity of Art Education

| | | Female | | Male | | Total | |
|----------------------------|-----|--------|----|-------|----|-------|------|
| | | ----- | | ----- | | ----- | |
| | | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Necessity of Art Education | Yes | 12 | 80 | 14 | 78 | 26 | 78.8 |
| | No | 3 | 20 | 4 | 22 | 7 | 21.2 |

Table 3: University Students' Opinions about Importance of Art

| | | Female | | Male | | Total | |
|-------------------|---|--------|------|------|-------|-------|------|
| | | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Importance of Art | It is not influential on my life. | - | - | 3 | 18.75 | 3 | 9.6 |
| | It expresses our imagination. | 1 | 6.7 | 3 | 18.75 | 4 | 12.9 |
| | It enriches our imagination. | 3 | 20 | 1 | 6.25 | 4 | 12.9 |
| | It helps develop different points of view. | 6 | 40 | 2 | 12.5 | 8 | 25.8 |
| | It shapes culture of the community. | 1 | 6.7 | 2 | 12.5 | 3 | 9.6 |
| | It gives us an aesthetic perspective. | 2 | 13.3 | 1 | 6.25 | 3 | 9.6 |
| | It helps us to understand ourselves and the others. | 2 | 13.3 | - | - | 2 | 6.4 |
| | It is the meaning of life. | - | - | 4 | 20 | 4 | 12.9 |

Table 4: Artistic Events University Students Attend

| | | Female | | Male | | Total | |
|-----------------------------|----------|--------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| | | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Artistic Events They Attend | Music | 1 | 7.1 | 2 | 11.1 | 3 | 9.3 |
| | Cinema | 5 | 35.7 | 9 | 50 | 14 | 43.8 |
| | Theatre | 5 | 35.7 | 4 | 22.2 | 9 | 28.1 |
| | Painting | 3 | 21.5 | 3 | 16.7 | 6 | 18.8 |

Table 5: Art Branches University Students Want to be Involved in

| | | Female | | Male | | Total | |
|--|------------|--------|------|------|----|-------|------|
| | | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Art Branches They Want to be Involved in | Painting | 2 | 14.3 | 8 | 58 | 10 | 35.7 |
| | Cinema | 1 | 7.1 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 7.1 |
| | Opera | 1 | 7.1 | - | - | 1 | 3.6 |
| | Music | 10 | 71.5 | 2 | 14 | 12 | 42.8 |
| | Literature | - | - | 1 | 7 | 1 | 3.6 |
| | Sculpture | - | - | 1 | 7 | 1 | 3.6 |
| | Theatre | - | - | 1 | 7 | 1 | 3.6 |

The participants were asked which art branches they want to be involved in. In Table 5, results by gender show that 71.5 % of the female respondents want to be involved in music, 14.3 % in painting, 7.1 % in cinema and 7.1 % in opera. Of the males, 58 % want to get involved in painting, 14 % in music, 7 % in cinema, 7 % in literature, 7 % in sculpture and 7 % want theater. In total, 42.8 % of the respondents want to be involved in music, 35.7 % in painting, 7.1 % in cinema, 3.6 % in opera, 3.6 % in literature, 3.6 % in sculpture, finally 3.6 % want to join theater.

The participants were asked listing of talent, knowledge and perseverance in a decreasing order of importance. In Table 6, results by gender show that 46.6 % of the female respondents listed "talent, knowledge, perseverance", 40 % "talent, perseverance, knowledge", 1 % "knowledge, perseverance, talent", 1 % "perseverance, talent, knowledge" in a decreasing order of importance. Of the males, 46.6 % "talent, knowledge, perseverance", 46.6 % "talent, perseverance, knowledge", 6.6 % "perseverance, talent, knowledge". In total, 46.6 % of the respondents listed "talent, knowledge, perseverance", 43.4 % "talent, perseverance, knowledge", 3.3 % "knowledge, talent, perseverance", 3.3 % "knowledge, perseverance, talent", 3.3 % "perseverance, talent, knowledge" in a decreasing order of importance.

Table 6: Listing of Talent, Knowledge and Perseverance in a Decreasing Order of Importance by Students

| | | Female | | Male | | Total | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| | | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| The Necessities of Performing Well | Talent, knowledge, perseverance | 7 | 46.6 | 7 | 46.6 | 14 | 46.6 |
| At The Fine Arts Due To The Students | Talent, perseverance, knowledge | 6 | 40 | 7 | 46.6 | 13 | 43.3 |
| | Knowledge, talent, perseverance | 1 | 6.6 | - | - | 1 | 3.3 |
| | Knowledge, perseverance, talent | 1 | 6.6 | - | - | 1 | 3.3 |
| | Perseverance, talent, knowledge | - | - | 1 | 6.6 | 1 | 3.3 |

Table 7: Turkish and Foreign Works of Art that University Students Know

| | | | Female | | Male | | Total | |
|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| | | | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Works of Art They Know | Turkish Works of Art | Kaplumbağa Terbiyecisi | 2 | 22.3 | 10 | 43.5 | 12 | 37.5 |
| | Foreign Works of Art | Mona Lisa | 7 | 77.7 | 10 | 43.5 | 17 | 53.2 |
| | | The Portrait of Fatih Sultan Mehmed | - | - | 2 | 8.6 | 2 | 6.2 |
| | | Last Supper | - | - | 1 | 4.4 | 1 | 3.1 |

Table 8: Turkish and Foreign Artists that University Students Know

| | | | Female | | Male | | Total | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| | | | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Artists They Know | Turkish Artists | Osman Hamdi Bey | 2 | 100 | 8 | 100 | 10 | 100 |
| | Foreign Artists | Van gogh | 3 | 11.5 | 1 | 2.1 | 4 | 5.4 |
| | | Michelangelo | 4 | 15.4 | 7 | 14.5 | 11 | 13.5 |
| | | Donatello | 3 | 11.5 | 5 | 10.4 | 8 | 10.8 |
| | | Leonardo da Vinci | 9 | 34.6 | 13 | 27.1 | 22 | 29.7 |
| | | Rafaello | 2 | 7.7 | 8 | 16.7 | 10 | 13.5 |
| | | Picasso | 5 | 19.3 | 14 | 29.2 | 19 | 25.7 |

Table 9: The Artist and Piece that University Students Like the Most

| | | | Female | | Male | | Total | |
|----------------------|--|--|--------|---|------|------|-------|----|
| | | | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| The Artist and Piece | Osman Hamdi Bey / Kaplumbağa Terbiyecisi | | - | - | 1 | 11.1 | 1 | 10 |
| | Leonardo da Vinci / Mona Lisa | | 1 | 1 | 7 | 77.8 | 8 | 80 |
| | Gentile Bellini / The Portait of Fatih Sultan Mehmed | | - | - | 1 | 11.1 | 1 | 10 |

Table 10: University Students' Opinion about the Piece of Art They Would Prefer Doing

| | | Female | | Male | | Total | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------|------|------|-------|-------|------|
| | | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Piece of Art They Prefer | Mondrian's Art Work | 1 | 6.7 | 2 | 11.12 | 3 | 9.1 |
| | Caravaggio's Art Work | 14 | 93.3 | 16 | 88.88 | 30 | 90.9 |

Table 11: Art Movements that University Students Know

| Art Movements They Know | Female | | Male | | Total | |
|-------------------------|--------|-------|------|------|-------|------|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Romantism | 10 | 23.8 | 5 | 11.3 | 15 | 17.4 |
| Realism | 10 | 23.8 | 11 | 25 | 21 | 24.4 |
| Surrealism | 6 | 14.28 | 2 | 4.6 | 8 | 9.4 |
| Sembolism | 1 | 2.38 | 3 | 6.8 | 4 | 4.6 |
| Futurism | 1 | 2.38 | 5 | 11.3 | 6 | 6.9 |
| Naturalism | 10 | 23.8 | 13 | 29.5 | 23 | 26.7 |
| Cubism | 3 | 7.14 | 2 | 4.6 | 5 | 5.8 |
| Empressionism | 1 | 2.38 | - | - | 1 | 1.1 |
| Expressionism | - | - | 2 | 4.6 | 2 | 2.3 |
| Postmodernism | - | - | 1 | 2.7 | 1 | 1.1 |

The participants were asked which Turkish works of art they know. In Table 7, by gender show that 22.3 % of the female respondents know Kaplumbağa Terbiyecisi. Of the males, 43.5 % know Kaplumbağa Terbiyecisi. In total, 37.5 % of the respondents know Kaplumbağa Terbiyecisi.

The participants were asked which Foreign works of art they know. In Table 7, results by gender show that 77.7 % of the female respondents know Mona Lisa. Of the males, 43.5 % Mona Lisa, 8.6 % The Portrait of Fatih Sultan Mehmed, 4.4 % Last Supper. In total, 53.2 % of the respondents know Mona Lisa, 6.2 % The Portrait of Fatih Sultan Mehmed, 3.1 % Last Supper.

The participants were asked which Turkish artists they know. In Table 8, results by gender show that 2 female students know Osman Hamdi Bey. Of the males, 8 male students know Osman Hamdi Bey. In total, 10 students know Osman Hamdi Bey.

The participants were asked which foreign artists they know. In Table 8, results by gender show that 34.6 of the female respondents know Leonardo da Vinci, 19.3 % Picasso, 15.4 % Michelangelo, 11.5 % Van Gogh, 11.5 % Donatello, 7.7 % Rafaello. Of the males, 29.2 % know Picasso, 27.1 % Leonardo da Vinci, 16.7 % Rafaello, 14.5 % Michelangelo, 10.4 Donatello, 2.1 % Van Gogh. In total, 29.7 % of the respondents know Leonardo da Vinci, 25.7 % Picasso, 13.5 % Michelangelo, 13.5 % Rafaello, 10.8 % Donatello, 5.4 % Van Gogh.

The participants were asked which artist and piece they like the most. In Table 9, results by gender show that only one female respondent like Leonardo da Vinci / Mona Lisa. Of the males, one student likes Osman Hamdi Bey / Kaplumbağa Terbiyecisi, one student likes Gentile Bellini / The Portrait of Fatih Sultan Mehmed. In total, 80 % of the respondents like Leonardo da Vinci / Mona Lisa, 10 % Osman Hamdi Bey / Kaplumbağa Terbiyecisi, 10 % Gentile Bellini / The Portrait of Fatih Sultan Mehmed.

The participants were asked their opinion about the piece of art they would prefer doing. They were given two pictures. One was Mondrian's art work, the other one was Caravaggio's art work. In Table 10, results by gender show that 93.3 % of the female respondents prefer doing Caravaggio's art work, 6.7 % Mondrian's art work. Of the males, 88.88 % prefer doing Caravaggio's art work, 11.12 % Mondrian's art work. In total, 90.9 % of the respondents prefer doing Caravaggio's art work, 9.1 % Mondrian's art work.

The participants were asked which art movements they know. In Table 11, results by gender show that 23.8 % of the female respondents know naturalism, 23.8 % romantism, 23.8 % realism, 14.28 % surrealism, 7.14 % cubism, 2.38 % sembolism, 2.38 % futurism, 2.38 % empessionism. Of the males, 29.5 % know naturalism, 25 % realism, 11.3 % romantism, 11.3 % futurism, 6.8 % sembolism, 4.6 % surrealism, 4.6 % kubism, 4.6 % expressionism, 2.7 % postmodernism. In total, 26.7 % of the respondents know naturalism, 24.4 % realism, 17.4 % romantism, 9.4 % surrealism, 6.9 % futurism, 5.8 % cubism, 4.6 % sembolism, 2.3 % expressionism, 1.1 % empessionism, 1.1 % postmodernism.

CONCLUSION

Assessment of collected data provided following results. Most of the students think that art education is necessary for everyone, while only few students think otherwise. As for the importance of art; varying extents were offered such as developing different points of view, expressing imagination, enriching human being's imagination, shaping the culture of the community, giving an aesthetic perspective, helping to understand ourselves and the others and identifying the meaning of life. Only few students expressed that art isn't influential on their lives at all. Looking at the artistic events that students attend, it is seen that painting, cinema, theater and musical events are popular among them and most of them go to the cinema and theater. Regarding the art branch they are interested, majority of the respondents mentioned music and painting.

As for ordering of assets affecting success in fine arts, majority of the students regard talent most important followed by knowledge and perseverance. About the art movements, they are mostly familiar with such terms as naturalism and realism. On the other hand, the art movements the least frequently mentioned were postmodernism and impressionism. Regarding Turkish pieces, the students know one piece of art only, which is Kaplumbağa Terbiyecisi by Osman Hamdi Bey. As for the foreign pieces of art, most of them is familiar with Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa. They tell only Osman Hamdi Bey as a Turkish artist they know. For the foreign artists, they know Leonardo da Vinci the most followed by Picasso. As for the artist and piece of art they like the most, majority of them opted for Leonardo da Vinci and his Mona Lisa.

After, most of the respondents would prefer painting a picture on which Baroque figures, light and shade are applied diligently as a piece of art. Because, as they said, such a piece of fine art requires good talent, imagination and perseverance and having visual appeal. Pictures defining optical reality are preferred. "Many like seeing things they want to see in real life in pictures as well" [8]. It was found that only few students opted for an abstract picture. The reason is that such a picture can be drawn more easily than others, it allows varying comments, it appeals to feelings and requires thinking. Presence of artistic background and abundance of art-related experience may ensure easier understanding and interpreting of abstract pieces of art. "Before seeing a Mondrian exhibition, one can hardly explain what kind of an expression richness he creates within the borders of his own language of picture" [9]. Bearing this in mind, students' not preferring abstract art pieces because they do not have poor experiences in arts.

According to overall results, students' awareness level regarding art and art education is low. It is important that students in social sciences education should gain knowledge and experience related with art due to their field. Also it can be suggested to increase courses related with art as well as artistic events and offer incentive for participation.

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