

Examining Secondary School Students' Attitudes Towards Visual Arts Course

Ortaokul Öğrencilerinin Görsel Sanatlar Dersine İlişkin Tutumlarının Değerlendirilmesi

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Abstract

Art education is thought to be quite an important factor in helping students find their own selves. Guiding students to help them determine their skills at an early age and to take education in the fields appropriate to their skills is the key to children's success in their professional lives. The purpose of this study was to determine secondary school students' attitudes towards Visual Arts Education. In order to collect the research data, "Attitude Scale towards the Course of Art and Drawing on the Basis of Multi-Field Art Education Method" developed by Orhun (2003) was used. The data were analyzed with the package software of SPSS 18. The participants in the study were 350 students from eight secondary schools located in two districts of the city of Diyarbakır. The results revealed that there were significant differences in the students' attitudes towards the Visual Arts Course with respect to their gender, computer use and having family members interested in visual arts. On the other hand, no significant difference was found in relation to the students' ages, their parents' educational backgrounds or use of the Internet for the Visual Arts Course.

Key words: Multi-Field Art Education Method, Attitude, Visual Arts, Secondary School Students

Öz

Sanat eğitimi öğrencilerin eğitimlerinde kendi benliklerini bulmada çok büyük etken olarak düşünülmektedir. Öğrencilerin genç yaşta yeteneklerinin belirlenmesi ve bu yetenekleri doğru alanlarda eğitim almaları için yönlendirmek çocuğun meslek yaşantısında başarının temel anahtarıdır. Bu araştırmanın amacı, ortaokul öğrencilerinin Görsel Sanatlar Eğitimine yönelik tutumlarının belirlenmesidir. Araştırma verilerinin toplanmasında Orhun (2003) tarafından hazırlanan "Çok Alanlı Sanat Eğitimi Yöntemine göre Resim - İş" dersine yönelik tutum ölçeğinden yararlanılmıştır. Veriler SPSS 18 paket programında değerlendirilmiştir. Çalışma katılımcıları Diyarbakır il merkezindeki iki ilçeye bağlı sekiz ortaokulda öğrenim gören 350 öğrencidir. Çalışmada elde edilen verilerinin çözümlenmesinden öğrencilerin cinsiyet, bilgisayardan yararlanma ve aile içinde görsel sanatla ilgilenen birey olma durumlarına göre Görsel Sanatlar Dersi yönelik tutumlarında anlamlı farklılık olduğu belirlenmiştir. Bununla birlikte öğrencilerin yaşları, ebeveynlerinden anne ve babanın eğitim düzeyleri ile Görsel Sanatlar Dersi için internetten yararlanma durumları arasında anlamlı farklılık olmadığı tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Çok Alanlı Sanat Eğitimi Yöntemi, Tutum, Görsel Sanatlar, Ortaokul Öğrencileri.

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Introduction

Art is a tool which exists in human's nature, supports his creativity and helps him express himself (Erinç, 1995). The word Art is usually used to refer to visual arts. Art is not just a special field that artists are interested in. Art is important for all individuals. For centuries, fields of art that aim at helping individuals develop an aesthetic view point have contributed directly or indirectly to the cultural development of societies. Art is the most effective way of education that allows integration of thinking, perception and application (Erzen, 1990).

Art has cooperation with a number of disciplines, and its relationship with education has a much more importance and a special place in terms of the change and development of individuals (Mead, 2008). Today, modern education focuses more on the student rather than on information. In modern education, the student is not regarded as an object which is loaded with information. When the student, who constitutes the focal point of education, receives education in a way to improve his or her comprehension starting from elementary school, he or she becomes a person during his or her university education who can himself or herself examine, research and contribute to the lessons rather than becoming a person who just learns from the faculty member (MEB, 2009). Manuel Barkan, an art trainer, mentioned art teaching for the first time in 1962. This cognitive approach then allowed conducting studies on discipline-oriented programs in art education (Özsoy, 2001). Individuals make use of their school knowledge in their daily lives; on the other hand, they become more successful and creative in every stage of their lives with the help of the skills and knowledge they have acquired in the field of art (Arts, 2011). An art education program, besides providing theoretical information, covers Art History, Aesthetics, Art Criticism and applied studies as well (Alakuş, 2002).

Art education is given quite comprehensively by different populations of a society. Art education should not just remind us of education given at schools as a number of education models have been developed to provide students with art education more effectively at schools. One of these models is the Multi-Field Art Education, which was first adopted in USA in 1980s. The Multi-Field Art Education Method is also known as Discipline-Based Art Education. Discipline-Based Art Education is a comprehensive learning and

teaching approach which was developed primarily for elementary and secondary school students and which was then reformulated in a way to use for adult education, life-long education as well as to use in art museums (Dobbs, 2003). This method is one developed by Getty Fine Arts Education Center. The content of the method included art history, art criticism, aesthetics and art-related applications (Özsoy, 2003).

Visual Arts Education is an education method which is effective in terms of an individual's dimensions of perception, thinking and application and his or her brain-hand cooperation as well as which allows integration between these two areas. Visual Art Education is important for individuals to develop such skills throughout their lives as thinking critically, making decisions and establishing relationships between facts and events (Erzen, 1990). The basic purpose of using the four disciplines - found in Multi-Field Art Education Method - in modern art course is to allow students to examine and recognize both their own cultures and the world culture by increasing their knowledge about art movements, art works and artists (Kırıçoğlu and Stokrocki, 1997).

All the courses taught in the first four class-grades of the 2013 Elementary Schools Visual Arts Course Program generally focused on how to express emotions and thoughts via art, on the importance of art, on the changes in art works in time, on recognizing where these art works were created, on learning about different cultures by examining ancient art works and on developing ideas about the effects of ancient art works on today's art works. As for the courses taught in the following four class-grades of the program, the purpose was to allow students to internalize their previous knowledge about art, to evaluate and analyze art works paying more attention to details, to develop visual art language and to investigate the meaning and importance of art (MEB, 2013).

Thanks to such universal values as respect to differences, tolerance and calmness to be provided by Visual Arts Education for individuals, it will also be possible to contribute to social peace. With the Visual Arts Course, the purpose is to allow children to increase their knowledge about fine arts, to develop their artistic creativity, to express themselves via art and to develop aesthetic personality (Türkcan, 2008). Individuals taking visual arts education are not necessarily supposed to be just an artist or to have superior skills. Since Visual Arts Education brings about certain advantages for societies and people that we have a

relationship with, this type of education is a need for individuals of all age groups (MEB, 2013). Visual Arts Education is quite important for all individuals, yet not all of them have demonstrate similar attitudes toward art education. The society individuals belong to, the education they have taken and their background knowledge have direct or indirect effects on their relationship with art.

Attitude can be defined as the combination of constant belief and emotion that results in positive, negative or impartial behaviors towards certain people, objects, events or institutions (Ülgen, 1995). Scientifically, attitudes do not directly appear in education, but can be identified as symptoms of behaviors (Özkal, 2002). Scientists support the view that students can be more successful if they develop positive attitudes towards education (Açıkgöz, 1998). Alıcıgüzel (1973) claims that for learning to occur, it is important to take instructional methods and techniques, learning principles and related tools into account in education. However, in order to achieve learning fully and to become successful, it is also necessary to take into account the teacher-student relationship and the student's attitude towards the course (Canakay, 2006). It is not easy at all for individuals to become successful if they are not interested in the course or if they do not like the course or the course teacher (Okan, 2014). There is a need for new educational policies and instructional methods that will contribute positively to individuals' attitudes.

Instructional methods are renovated in line with the changing understanding of education. It is seen in this century that the modern understanding of education has been replaced by post-modern approaches. In Visual Arts Education, Discipline-Based Art Education is regarded as a starting point to meet the changing needs. The problems experienced in Discipline-Based Art Education applications have caused Visual Arts Education to be given in line with the traditional understanding of art course (Aykut, 2006). Today, it is important to develop art programs considering the social needs. The success levels of art education programs can be determined better with scientific studies to be conducted. Little changes to be made in new Visual Arts Program taking the results of these future scientific studies will help students and their parents develop positive attitudes towards the field of art.

Problem

The influence of application of subjects found in the Secondary School Visual Arts Course Curriculum with the Multi-Field Art Education Method on students' attitudes towards the course constituted the research problem in the present study.

Method

Research Model

In the study, survey method was used to determine the relationships between two or more variables. Survey method aims at describing a part or current situation as it is (Karasar, 2006).

Data Collection Tool

In the study, a Likert-type attitude scale developed by Orhun (2003) to measure students' attitudes towards the course of Art and Drawing according to Multi-Field Art Education Method was used. The scale was made up of two parts. The first part included 10 items regarding the demographic backgrounds of the participants. As for the second part, it included 26 Likert-type items to determine the participants' attitudes towards Visual Arts Course. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the attitude scale used was .76.

Sample

The study was carried out with a total of 350 students from eight secondary schools located in two districts of the city of Diyarbakır in the Spring Term of the academic year of 2014-2015. The participants were determined with the random sampling method. Of all the participants, 50,4 % of them were male students, and 49,6% of them were female.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distributions of Secondary School Students with Respect to their Gender

Gender	f	%
Male	177	50,4
Female	174	49,6
Total	351	100

Data Analysis

For the analysis of the research data, package software of SPSS 18 was used. The positive items in the attitude scale were rated as 5 = I Completely Agree, 4 = I Agree, 3 = I am Neutral, 2 = I Disagree, 1 = I Completely Disagree. As for the negative items in the scale, they were rated in the opposite way in that the option of "I Completely Disagree" was assigned five points, and the other four options were graded accordingly (Tavşancıl, 2002). While interpreting the mean scores regarding the students' attitudes, the values between 1.00-1.80 were regarded as "I Completely Disagree"; those between 1.81 - 2.60 as "I Disagree"; those between 2.61-3.40 "I am Neutral"; those between 3.41-4.20 as "I Agree"; and those between 4.21-5.00 were as "I Completely Agree".

Findings

The findings obtained via the statistical analysis of the research data are presented in Tables with respect to the variables in the study. Attitude towards the visual arts middle school students participated in the study mean score = 3.395 \bar{X} with "Neutral" was determined to be.

Table 2. The average score of attitude towards the visual arts and the standard deviation of Secondary School Students.

	N	\bar{X}	SS
Students	350	3,395	14,88

Visual arts students by gender in order to determine the significant differences in attitudes towards the course t-Test is made.

Table 3. Secondary School Students' average scores by gender attitudes towards visual art "t-test" results.

Gender	N	X	SS	Sd	t	p
Male	177	3,3201	,56901	349	-2,493	,013
Female	174	3,4713	,56698			

p<.05

According to the research findings point average male attitudes towards the Visual Arts course the students (Mean_M=3,32, Ss=0.57) are female as the average score (Mean_F=3,47, Ss=0.57) of attitude. Made between the sexes in terms of statistical analysis it was determined that average students is a significant difference between mean scores of

attitude ($t_{(349)} = -2,493$; $p > .05$; $\eta^2 = .01$). According to the Visual Arts Course attitudes toward female students, male students were found to be less than significant.

Table 4. Frequency and Percentage Distributions of Secondary School Students with Respect to their Age.

Age	f	%
11 Age	47	13
12 Age	109	31
13 Age	93	26
14 Age	83	24
15 Age	19	5,4
Total	351	100

The age distribution of middle school students; 13% 11 years 31% 12 years 26% 13 years 24% 14 years old, has 15 years of 5.4%. The distribution of students according to age is showing differences in attitudes towards visual art ANOVA was performed. Sufficient to reach the age of 15 to analysis done before the test groups were excluded from the analysis scope.

Table 5. ANOVA results according to the status of Secondary school students score an average age of attitudes towards visual art.

	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	,809	4	,202	,859	,489
Within Groups	81,408	346	,235		
Total	82,216	350			

Table 5 secondary school students do not show statistically significant difference in terms of average scores by age attitude towards the visual arts $F_{(4,346)} = ,859$, $p = 0,489$.

Table 6. Secondary school students in Visual Arts by the time course of the mean scores of attitude towards the visual arts "t-test" results.

Lesson Time	N	X	SS	Sd	t	p
One Time	176	3,1509	,47188	349	-,300	,764
Two Time	175	3,1659	,46488			

$p < .05$

Visual arts courses they are enrolled in school mean scores of students' attitudes towards school hours does not show a statistically significant difference in terms ($t_{(349)} = -0,300$; $p > .05$).

Table 7. Visual Arts courses for secondary school students to take advantage of the internet mean score of attitude towards the visual arts by case "t-test" results.

Benefiting from the Internet.	N	X	SS	Sd	t	p
Yes	150	3,0727	,41950	349	-1,484	,139
No	201	3,1460	,48419			

$p < .05$

Attitude towards the visual arts of the middle school students average scores are statistically significant differences in terms of the visual arts by the state to benefit from the Internet for lessons ($t_{(349)} = -1,484$; $p > .05$).

Table 8. The mean score of attitude for the Visual Arts course for secondary school students according to the state of the visual arts to benefit from Computer "t-test" results.

Benefiting from the Computer	N	X	SS	Sd	t	p
Yes	73	2,9955	,42151	349	-2,646	,009
No	278	3,1554	,46896			

$p < .05$

Visual Arts students benefiting from computer attitude According to the findings mean score for the course ($Mean_Y = 2.99$, $Sd = 0.42$) to benefit the students' attitude scores and the average ($Mean_N = 3.15$, $Sd = 0.47$) and is shaped. The Visual Arts in statistical analysis between the average in terms of state benefit from computer students for the course is determined to students is a significant difference between attitude mean scores ($t_{(349)} = -2.646$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .01$). Accordingly Visual Arts attitudes of students using a computer for the course is significantly more than students using computers.

Table 9. Secondary school students' average score attitudes towards the visual arts and the presence of the computer with "t-test" results.

Personel Computer	N	X	SS	Sd	t	p
Yes	196	3,3673	,58729	349	-1,019	,309
No	155	3,4300	,55247			

$p < .05$

Secondary school students' attitudes towards the visual arts mean scores are not significantly different statistically significant according to the situation to have a personal computer ($t_{(349)} = -1,019$; $p > .05$).

Table 10. Secondary school students' average scores by state attitude towards the visual arts having Internet "t-test" results.

Internet	N	X	SS	Sd	t	p
Yes	140	3,4027	,62123	349	,206	,837
No	211	3,3899	,53872			

$p < .05$

Secondary school students' attitudes towards the visual arts mean scores are statistically significant differences compared to the situation in terms of having the internet ($t_{(349)} = 0,206$; $p > .05$).

Table 11. Percentage and frequency distribution of mother's education level.

Education Level	f	%
Not graduated from primary School.	142	40
Elementary School	115	33
Secondary School	71	20
High School	18	5,1
University	5	1,4
Total	351	100

The distribution of educational level of the mothers of the study participants with their parents; Not 40% of primary school graduates, 33% of primary schools, 20% of middle school, high school is 5.1%, 1.4% graduated from college. Students on the mother is showing differences in attitudes towards visual arts education According to ANOVA was performed. Sufficient to reach the educational level for analysis before testing done with high school and university were excluded from analysis.

Table 12. ANOVA Results by mother's education level of the students.

	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	1,263	2	,632	1,944	,145
Within Groups	105,572	325	,325		
Total	106,835	327			

Table of 12, middle school students are statistically significant differences by education level of the mother in terms of the mean scores of parents' attitudes towards the visual arts.

Table 13. Percentage and frequency distribution of father's education level.

Education Level	f	%
Not graduated from primary School.	31	8,8
Elementary School	108	29
Secondary School	124	37
High School	74	21
University	14	4
Total	351	100

Parent education levels distribution of the father of the study participants; 8.8% is not primary school graduates, 29% of primary schools, 37% of middle school, high school and 21% are university graduates 4%. According to parent education level of students for showing that differences in attitudes towards visual art ANOVA was performed. Sufficient to reach the level of education to be done before the test analysis was excluded from Analysis College graduates.

Table 14. ANOVA Results by father's education level of the students.

	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	,025	3	,008	,025	,995
Within Groups	111,643	333	,335		
Total	111,668	336			

Father of the parents of middle school students' attitudes towards visual art average scores are statistically significant differences by education level terms $F_{(3,333)}=,0,025$, $p = 0,995$.

Table 14. Secondary School Students in the family status of everyone involved by the visual art "t-test" results

Interested in Art	N	X	SS	Sd	t	p
Yes	121	3,5728	,47775	349	4,327	,000
No	230	3,3015	,59612			

Visual Arts students interested in visual arts in the family attitude mean score for the course participants ($Mean_Y = 3.57, Ss = 0.48$) and mean attitude scores of students interested in (Mean_N = 3.30, Ss = 0.59) in the form. Secondary school students are statistically significant compared to the situation that parents are interested in the visual arts in the family attitude mean scores for the visual arts. ($t_{(349)} = 4.327, p > .05$). The direction of the difference is for families' interested parties arts.

Discussion and Conclusion

This part discusses the results obtained in the present study, which aimed at determining the influence of application of subjects found in the Visual Arts Course Curriculum in Secondary Schools on students' attitudes towards the course.

In the study, it was found that the secondary school students' attitude mean scores regarding visual arts were "I am Neutral". The research findings demonstrated that the male students' attitude mean score regarding the Visual Arts Course was at the level of "I am Neutral", while it was at the level of "I Agree" for the female students. The statistical analysis conducted on the mean scores revealed a significant difference between the students' attitude mean scores with respect to their gender. Accordingly, the female students' attitudes towards the Visual Arts Course were significantly higher than those of the male students. Orhun (2003) did not find any relationship between the students' attitudes towards the Visual Arts Course with respect to their gender. Similarly, in another study conducted by Özkartal (2007) who determined elementary school sixth grade students' attitudes towards the Visual Arts Course, no significant difference was found in terms of gender. According to the results obtained in the present study, this change in the female students' attitudes towards the Visual Arts Course could be said to be because the curriculum of the Art-and-Drawing course was changed and turned by the Ministry of National Education into the course of "Visual Arts".

In the study, no significant difference was found between the secondary school students' attitude mean scores regarding visual arts with respect to their ages. In one study carried out by Neşe Gül (2006), a significant difference was reported in relation to the students' perceptions with respect to the variable of age. It was revealed that the students at the age of 15 or older had different perceptions when compared to younger students. In this

respect, the results of the present study did not support the study conducted by Neşe Gül; however, the results obtained in the present study were consistent with those reported by Orhun (2003), who did not find any significant difference with respect to gender.

In the study, the weekly course-hours allocated to the course of visual arts for students differed from one school to another. In the schools where the study was conducted, it was seen that the course of visual arts was given as an optional course for two course-hours a week. The results obtained in the study demonstrated that there was no significant difference between the students' mean scores with respect to the difference in weekly course-hours allocated to the course of Visual Arts. Almost half of the European countries allocate 50 to 100 hours a year to art education at elementary schools. When the course-hour allocated to art subjects in elementary and secondary schools is compared to other educational areas, it is seen that the total duration of time allocated to Visual Arts Course is limited (Eurydice, 2009). Among the difficulties experienced in relation to evaluation in Visual Arts Course is the limited duration of time allocated to the course in question. The Art-and-Drawing Course taught for in two course-hours a week in the academic year of 1974-1975 was decreased to one course-hour a week in the academic year of 1975-1976. Since 1976, it has been taught as an obligatory course in one course-hour a week (Kurtuluş, 2002).

Studies carried out with teachers regarding weekly course-hours allocated to Visual Arts support the result that a weekly one-hour obligatory course of Visual Arts is not enough for students. In a study conducted under the supervision of Gonca Erim, a great majority of teachers (81%) think that the weekly course-hour allocated to the course in question should be increased (Ertürk, 2013). Also, in another study carried out by Enver Yolcu, in relation to the problems experienced with Visual Arts Course, teachers reported that not enough importance was given to the course; that the weekly course-hour was not enough for students; that the weekly course-hour should be increased; and that the course should be taught by field teachers (Batur, 2010).

In today's world, in which access to the Internet is now quite easy, it is also possible to access the Internet without having a computer. Tablet computers and mobile phones can easily help do research (Yalman and Tunga, 2014). Whether individuals have a personal computer and Internet access or not does not make any difference in their attitudes towards

the Visual Arts Course. The fact that Visual Arts is a bit time consuming course and that it involves skill-based activities causes a decrease in some students' interest in the field. Use of computer and technology has contributed to the teaching of the course proficiencies in the field, their method of teaching, weekly course-hour and class environment are all likely to have positive or negative influence on students' attitudes.

Thanks to developing computer package programs, it is now easier for secondary school students to use the computer for the visual arts course. The research findings demonstrated that there was a significant difference between the students' mean scores regarding their attitudes towards the course of "Visual Arts" who used the computer. Accordingly, the attitudes of the students who did not use computer for the Visual Arts Course were more significant when computer to the attitudes of those who did not. Use of interactive course software programs - to be developed for computer-based art education - in visual arts course, is believed to contribute to art education (Zor, 2006). Art has a vital importance for our culture (Michael, 1983). In art education, overall purposes are quite similar in a number of countries. In many countries, there studies and attempts to encourage use of Information and Communication Technologies (European Commission, 2009). The level of interest in Visual Arts Education within the general education system is known to have an important place in the artistic development of the new generation (San, 1983); however, as can be seen in the present study, it is not enough alone. There is a need for support via different activities and studies.

Individuals' attitudes are influenced by larger societies and primary groups that they culturally belong to. Most importantly, the very first primary group is the family. Family is regarded as a tool for cultural transfer. It could also be stated that attitudes are transferred to the individual via the family (Morgan, 1991). In the study, the secondary school students' mean scores regarding visual arts were statistically significant depending on whether they had parents who were interested in visual arts. This significant difference was in favor of those whose parents were interested in visual arts. Regarding the education given within the family and at school, the child's creativity develops in line with the extent to which the child is allowed to demonstrate his or her competencies (Aşlıoğlu, 2012). Attitudes influence the concepts that will result in incentive behaviors (Morris and Stuckhardt, 1977). In this era of

rapid changes, there is a need for re-determining students' attitudes towards art education (Liaghatdar, Soltani & Abedi 2011). Many researchers hold the belief that students' attitudes towards a subject or an object have a relationship with their school lives as well as with their life-long achievements (Göktaş, 2009).

In a Visual Arts course taught without knowing how to discover the artistic development phases of or artistic creativity abilities of children who are at the age of doing original productions, it is not much clear whether students can develop enough positive attitudes or not (Dikici and Taşpınar, 2002). It will take time for studies - supported or conducted by the Ministry of National Education - to be effective in practice. With the results obtained in the present study, it could be stated that the changes made in the Visual Arts Course curriculum between 2006-2007 have started to be influential over the past years.

Suggestions

Since Visual Arts Course is one of the main courses influential on students' success, there is a need for material use to increase the productivity in art education courses. However technologically advanced the tools are, they can not be useful unless they are used appropriately at the right time. Importance could be given to selection of appropriate tools and appropriate method at the appropriate time and in the appropriate place.

In relation to subjects that follow the main concepts, activities to be included in each subject could be given to students in advance. In addition, teaching visual note-taking methods to students can be regarded as a factor increasing the success. Attitudes occur in time in large environment which covers the social environment besides the school environment. Therefore, visits to museums, to exhibitions and to different departments of universities could result in important contributions.

Multi-Field Art Education Method is one open to all flexibilities. In order to be able to apply the Multi-Field Art Education Method, which is also supported by Visual Arts Education Program, the weekly course-hour for the Visual Arts Course should be increased by avoiding the traditional understanding of art-and-drawing course.

Lastly, different activities could be organized together with students and parents at schools to make changes in parents' attitudes towards Visual Arts.

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