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**COMPARING THE VISUAL ARTS COURSE PROGRAMS IN TURKEY AND IRAQ**

**Arzu ASLAN**

MEB, [aslanarzu77.26@outlook.com](mailto:aslanarzu77.26@outlook.com)

Orcid: 0009 0006 6089 4001

**Barış HABLUTLUOĞLU**

MEB, [barputluoglu@hotmail.com](mailto:barputluoglu@hotmail.com)

Orcid: 0009-0004-6430-7260

**Ali Çağatay GÖK**

MEB, [cagatay7279@hotmail.com](mailto:cagatay7279@hotmail.com)

Orcid: 0009-0008-3046-4574

**Lütfi KAYMAZ**

MEB, [metinlutfikaymaz@outlook.com](mailto:metinlutfikaymaz@outlook.com)

Orcid: 0009-0003-9307-3371

**Abstract**

The visual arts course is an educational program that positively enhances students' creative capacities, critical thinking skills, and aesthetic perspectives, increases their selectivity, and encourages their original thinking abilities. This course aims to enable students to express their emotions, thoughts, and experiences by observing, creating, and experiencing works of art. Art education equips students with the ability to distinguish between what is beautiful and valuable and what is ugly and worthless. This is achieved through a learning process that art offers. The visual arts course allows students to explore aesthetic values, concepts of beauty, and the differences between good and bad within the realm of art. Its practical purpose is to enhance students' perception of beauty and encourage them to naturally appreciate what is beautiful, using this skill in their lives, especially in their artistic expressions. The visual arts course aims to develop students' visual creativity, enabling them to create original intellectual and artistic works, improve their technical skills when creating art pieces, make decisions related to beauty, and enhance their aesthetic sensibilities. Therefore, the visual arts course offered in schools is an important lesson that adds value to students' lifelong learning processes. This course allows students to understand the universal language of art, improve their thinking and expressive abilities, appreciate aesthetic values, and discover their own artistic potential.

**Key Words:** Visual arts curriculum, Visual arts, Talent, Education.

**IRAK ile TÜRKİYE'NİN IRAK GÖRSEL SANATLAR DERS PROGRAMLARININ  
KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI**

**Özet**

Görsel sanatlar dersi, öğrencilerin yaratıcılık kapasitelerini, eleştirel düşünme becerilerini ve estetik bakış açılarını olumlu yönde geliştiren, seçiciliklerini artıran ve özgün düşünme yeteneklerini teşvik eden bir eğitim programıdır. Bu ders, öğrencilerin gözlem yaparak, sanat eserleri oluşturarak ve sanatı deneyimleyerek duygularını, düşüncelerini ve deneyimlerini ifade etmelerini amaçlar. Sanat eğitimi, öğrencilere güzel ve değerli olanı, çirkin ve değersiz olandan ayırt etme yeteneği kazandırır. Bu, sanatın sunduğu bir öğrenme yoluyla gerçekleşir. Görsel sanatlar dersi, öğrencilere estetik değerlerin, güzellik kavramlarının, iyi ve kötü arasındaki farkların sanatın içinde keşfedilmesini sağlar. Pratik amacı, öğrencilerin güzellik algılarını geliştirerek doğal bir şekilde güzel olanı takdir etmelerini ve bu beceriyi hayatlarında (özellikle sanatsal ifadelerinde) kullanmalarını teşvik etmektir. Görsel sanatlar dersi, öğrencilerin yaşamın her alanında kullanabilecekleri görsel yaratıcılıklarını geliştirmeyi, özgün düşünsel ve sanatsal eserler oluşturmalarını, sanat eserlerini oluştururken teknik yeteneklerini geliştirmeyi, güzellikle ilgili karar vermeyi ve estetik duygularını geliştirmeyi hedefler. Bu nedenle, okullarda verilen görsel sanatlar dersi, öğrencilerin yaşam boyu süren öğrenme süreçlerine değer katan önemli bir derstir. Bu ders, öğrencilere sanatın evrensel dilini anlamalarını, düşünce ve ifade yeteneklerini geliştirmelerini, estetik değerleri takdir etmelerini ve kendi sanatsal potansiyellerini keşfetmelerini sağlar.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Görsel sanatlar ders programı, Görsel sanatlar, Yetenek, Eğitim

### **Introduction**

The ability of the owner of a work of art to convey his/her feelings to the audience is considered as art. Art is the process of emotionally reliving what one has experienced, feeling these emotions again, using one's creative power with concrete and abstract materials, and conveying this to others through symbols characterized by lines, colours, movements, sounds or words. Moreover, it is only possible to refer to the process as art when it enables other people to experience the same emotions. Art, in its broadest sense, is known as the expression of creativity and imagination. In other words, it would not be possible to consider a product as a work of art if it does not reflect the feelings of its creator. According to this statement, a work of art that does not fully reflect the artist's thoughts and feelings cannot be accepted as a work of art. On the other hand, the artists may believe that they have successfully conveyed their emotions in their works, but the viewer's level of perception affects the reality of this transfer. In this case, a work of art that upsets one viewer may bring happiness to another. No matter what emotion it carries, the aesthetic expression of that emotion adds value to the work (Tolstoy, 2017). However, in order to better understand what art is and what can be called a work of art, it is useful to first consider the many different definitions of the word "art" and then become a work of art and an artist. Its main features are worth considering (TDK, 2012).

Art in the literal sense of the word is an expression of emotion, design and beauty. All expression and expression methods are the highest creativity revealed by these methods (TDK, 2012). Art is a means of human labor/effort, creation and self-expression. According to Read (1972), art is the effort to create forms that please people. According to Kant (2001), art is the design of something beautiful rather than the design of something beautiful. Hartmann (1884) states that art is a beautiful object with the ideal of "beauty" that gains aesthetic potential thanks to a certain idealism and subject. According to Mamur (2012), where there is an image, the debate seems to flare up; these ephemeral images cannot provide aesthetic pleasure, have no artistic value, and are considered very harmful to humanity. Akdoğan (2001) mentions that one of Tolstoy's general definitions is that art should act for the good of society and have intellectual, moral and religious characteristics that unite society. According to Güteryüz (2014), while the artist ignores the reality he/she takes into consideration during the creation process, he/she must attribute this to solid reasons, that is, if the artist puts aside his/her right to use the truth, even this situation should be perceived as the artist's own reality.

### **Brief History of Art**

Since the beginning of human history, art has always made itself felt in life. The most primitive people drew pictures of the animals they hunted on cave walls. These paintings on the cave walls remain the first paintings created by humans in human history. They cannot be said to have artistic value in today's sense, but they are important because they are the first paintings in the world. Various animals that lived at that time, such as deer, bull, mammoth, horse and wolf, are often seen in these cave paintings. There are also artistic and educational qualities in cave paintings and stone sculptures, leading us to consider the most intelligent and important people, artists, and/or the most "educated" segment of society (Dickerson, 2018; Erzen, 2012).

After people moved to a settled life, the division of labor increased and various minerals were extracted and processed, art entered daily life and art-based professions were created. Thus, it can be seen that studies based on handicrafts and traditions began. The civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Greece built palaces and religious places representing power and faith created according to certain doctrines, without going beyond their traditional borders. Ancient Greek artists created a great antiquity with the ideal measurements of the human body, their

sculptures and the large temples they built, which deeply influenced later artists. In the Greek civilization of Egypt, the art of decorating everyday objects such as vases, jewelry and clothes emerged as a part of social culture and proved itself in architectural examples such as temples and palaces (Üner, 2010).

In the 15th century, European art focused on Greek, Roman, and Byzantine culture, creating Renaissance art based on humanism. Humanists argued that since Antiquity was the pinnacle of human culture, it was necessary to contact with the writers and artists of the classical world, especially with the school founded in Florence, Italy. Venice and Rome also educated many important artists (Charles, Manca, McShane & Vigal, 2011).

Artistic expression has begun to appear in different dimensions through the processes and stages in human history, social movements, socio-political events, discoveries and inventions (Renkchi Tahtan, 2016). Until the 18th century, European artists could and even had to create functional paintings focusing on Christian teachings and sacred events; while creating these functional images, expressions based on their characteristics were taken into consideration (Üner, 2010). After the 18th century, especially with the invention of the camera, it became important to interpret nature and create a form of artistic expression instead of imitating it (İpşiroğlu & Piroğlu, 1991; Kanmaz, 2013). For this reason, artists began to create various art movements with new methods and techniques by freely reflecting their feelings and ideas in their works (Daughterly, 2015). However, what the artistic criterion should be, ideas of value and taste began to be questioned (Üner, 2010).

The contemporary art period began with the emergence of different movements in France, which pioneered this art for years at the end of the 19th century. One of these movements is modernism. Modernism developed its own artistic form and became the aesthetics of industrialized society. The 20th century, which was the beginning of modern art, became the center of technical and scientific development and presented itself as the Analytical Age. During this period, artists expressed their own unique attitude towards the world and events, and many artistic movements were created accordingly. Artists expressed their reactions by painting childlike, deep and perspective-free paintings; they tried to express themselves by publishing manifestos in magazines in order to express these reactive and emotional images. However, new artistic evaluations and criteria have become a matter of interest to all artists and aestheticians. Contemporary art focuses on non-existent aesthetic objects created and presented by the artist (Şahin, 2012). A rapid change has been seen with the post-modern art period. The post-modern art period is discussed in many aspects. This is a time when the lines between what is and what is not art become blurred and unclear. With artistic thought, the line between art and life softened, subculture and high art merged and emerged as a form of expression (Halhalli, 2013).

#### ***Purpose of the Study***

The purpose of this research is to compare the Turkish and Iraqi visual arts curriculum and determine its impact on the field of education. The research was conducted by comparing the curricula of the Fine Arts Course taught in Iraq and Turkey.

#### ***Research Design***

This research is an educational comparison study based on a qualitative approach and using the document analysis method. Comparative education includes a multifaceted analysis approach that brings together different education systems and examines in depth educational components, curriculum, teaching structure, social and philosophical foundations of the educational process, and educational goals. As a result of this review, it aims to identify deficiencies, errors and good practices in the education systems examined. In other words, this research aims to examine in detail different elements related to education by comparing

different education systems. This comparison aims to develop a more in-depth understanding by determining the strengths and weaknesses of education systems (Türkoğlu, 1983; Demirel, 2000; Ültanır, 2000; Erdoğan, 2003; Bolat, 2016). In this study, information about the adequacy, applicability and achievability of the visual arts course program for students studying in educational institutions in the compared countries was collected and presented comparatively at the end of the research.

### ***Visual Arts Education in Turkey***

When the recent period regarding the development of artistic education in Turkey is examined; the fine arts committee was first established by the Ministry of Education in 1961 to examine art and art education in Turkey. As a result of the examination and evaluation, the committee report stated that artistic education in primary education was provided by classroom teachers who were not skilled in this field. In addition, although national education inspectors pay the same attention to every subject, it has been revealed that art education is seen as a "spare" course by the majority of classroom teachers and is not given enough importance and there is no cooperation (Abaküs, 2003). After the Ninth Meeting of the National Education Board in 1974 in which art education was recommended to be supported by other educational disciplines, art education became an elective course in high schools and similar schools (San, 2001). Although these developments may seem like progress in arts education, they show that arts education is not seen as a long-term priority.

A new curriculum for art and design education was introduced in 1992 and revised by the authorities in 2005 (DES, 1992). Visual arts could not gain a place in society until changes were made in the artistic education curriculum in Turkey; this was only achieved by introducing new expressions and different techniques (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Information Systems Department, 2004). The establishment of a special commission for fine arts education in Turkey is an important event, although there is no direct written document from this commission. In 1992, the Department of Education and Training of the Ministry of National Education and Culture developed the "Primary Education-Art Education Curriculum." Although this curriculum defines the need for art education, its principles, and the use of assessment, little is known about how art is taught and evaluated (Abaküs, 2003). In 1926, 4 hours for 1st to 3rd grades, 2 hours for 4th and 5th grades; in 1975, these hours were reduced to 1 and 2 hours. In addition, the course duration is determined as 1 hour; Since 2014, the course duration for the grades from 1st to 8th has been 1 hour (Fer, 2005: 104; Kurtuluş, 2002; MEB, 2014a; MEB, 2014b). Therefore, the shortening of class hours and the introduction of elective art courses can be seen as an indication that artistic education is no longer a priority in the Turkish education system.

While compulsory education was provided to children in the Turkish education system eight years ago (Sarigöz, 2013), visual arts began to be taught by classroom teachers in the first three grades of primary education, and from the 4th grade onwards, lessons began to be taught by experts in the field of art. With the implementation of the new 4+4+4 education system in 2014, the duration of teaching art lessons for classroom teachers was increased from 3 to 4 hours. There is no doubt that the perspective of the authorities speaking in the field of education and the value of education play an important role in art education, but interest in art education is not important among Turkish educators and Turkish society (Özsoy, 2012). This directly affects the place and importance of arts subjects in the curriculum at all levels. Society needs art education. Therefore, in addition to creating aesthetic and artistic taste, the importance of art education might also be understood.

### ***Current Program of Visual Arts Course in Turkey***

Curriculum is an important instructional guide for all courses (Bolat, 2017). One of these courses is the visual arts course. Visual Arts covers a wide range of fields such as painting,

sculpture, architecture, textile, graphic arts and fashion design (Göknur 2011: 7). Visual art course, which aims to offer people an aesthetic personality, is one of the fields of educational sciences. Visual Arts course is a field of learning through art.

Education in the field of fine arts is a process of introducing art not only to gifted individuals, but also to all individuals in society. It is a field that gives the individual an aesthetic identity. Education in the field of fine arts is an educational field that should not be considered separately from general education due to its characteristics and aims to develop the aesthetic personality of the individual by using the laws and methods of art (Nal inçi, 2014: 4).

Fine arts education brings people who embrace art and express themselves to society through art. Art lessons aim to raise students as a generation that loves and assimilates art and is conscious, and also has aesthetic pleasure and critical thinking skill (Pekdağ, 2011: 1).

Fine arts education is an education that provides individuals with social sensitivity and multidimensional thinking skills. Art lessons have an important place in the age of basic education in order to develop human characteristics and human values, which are the cornerstones of modern society, and to increase individual and social sensitivity (Ateh, 2007: 1).

Fine arts education is a course given for children to express themselves, develop aesthetic sensitivity and carry out artistic activities. The name of this course, formerly known as painting and business administration, has been changed to fine arts to better reflect the needs and objectives. Fine arts education aims not only to raise talented people but also to make individual aesthetics. Fine arts are not an activity that only gifted people can do, as many people misunderstand, but a character education that enables each individual to reach his or her true nature (Türkkan, 2008: 9).

The emphasis on mathematics and science in the education system has led to the neglect of art subjects (Güneş, 2006). The education system should give more importance to fine arts. Fine arts education provides children with the opportunity to develop not only in artistic fields but also in other areas. Fine arts education enables individuals to reveal their talents and creative aspects and raises productive individuals equipped with original thoughts. Therefore, it is part of a developed local education structure. In the visual arts course, students work on visual forms, expand their visual culture with new information, and gain an understanding of museums (Daniş, 2011). Fine arts education goes hand in hand with the process of the individual gaining an aesthetic perspective and learning to use and apply his/her creativity in his/her life. One of the purposes of art education is to realize the child's inherent strengths and abilities and take them to an advanced level.

Fine arts education is a valuable field that provides many lifelong benefits. An effective art education will offer students various ways to express their feelings and thoughts. Likewise, students will be able to believe in themselves and express themselves using their creativity when approaching a problem with a problem-solving attitude (Ayaydın, 2004). The most important aim of fine arts education is not to forget the diversity of the individual. An instructor should not expect the same performance from everyone. Arts education in primary school arises from play, but allows students to find their own interests, talents and direction. Art teachers should be aware that every child is born with creative and unique abilities (Hurşit & Dağ, 2007). The purpose of the fine arts course is not only to preserve knowledge about art, but also to gain artistic skills, further develop this work and apply it to other fields (Türkkan, 2008).

With visual arts education, children are given the necessary elements to transform their strengths into interests and abilities, and thanks to this mastery, children gain the ability to visually perceive the environment and develop cognitive skills in young children. It is crucial to learn to open the fullness of expression, using artistic and descriptive skills to express experiences. (İlhan, 1999). Raising a child to be an artist is not one of the purposes of art classes.

Through visual arts education, children apply their knowledge and develop their first self-produced literate language. It is recommended that early childhood education programs allocate more time to art-based activities because they include critical thinking skills through art (Wright, 2003; Dalğar, 2017). Fine arts education helps all people to be civilized from an early age and to develop their ability to use their emotions, intelligence and the power of their dreams (Özsoy, 2008).

The focus of art lessons is on the development of children's perceptions, thoughts and emotions. Fine arts education aims to educate and develop people's knowledge about art and culture (Buyurgan & Buyurgan, 2007). Thanks to this training, students will be able to make decisions, separate, combine, etc. They have the ability to analyze and combine patterns and can gain a critical perspective).

Fine arts education has a valuable place in art education in terms of developing children's characters and increasing their self-confidence. Because students can participate in workshops, on this basis they are aware of their responsibilities, learn to work in a disciplined manner and do not neglect their belongings (Buyurgan & Buyurgan, 2007). During the fine arts course, students can master the actions of awareness, learning, thinking, analyzing, expressing themselves and criticizing by using aesthetic criteria and artistic style (Aykut, 2006). Based on this idea, visual arts education is considered to be a missing part of general education and is seen as an inseparable part from it, but it defines a department equipped with some special educational methods and tools (Artut, 2006).

It demonstrates the ability to perceive the difference between the concepts of sight and vision by developing all the conditions for the formation of an additional function called creative vision, which forms the basis of the visual arts course. Creative vision is the purposeful behavior of an individual activated by stimuli chosen by those who want to improve themselves through art education since childhood (Atalayer, 1994). In this way, the child becomes aware of external factors in the exciting emotional world and manifests himself in the early stages of his educational life, when s/he is more sensitive than normal and most sensitive to stimuli. Creative thinking training based on visual arts lessons connects with other subjects by jumping from sensitivity to stimuli to the physical, mental, moral, and vocational domains. The purpose of creating a visual arts education program is to discover the connections and relationships between technical tools that can be adapted to art and students' abilities to use technology in creating art and to achieve the intended results. In this way, visual art is perceived and reshaped by connecting various branches of art (Tuna, 2004).

In order for art lessons to achieve their goals, the teacher of this subject must first believe that art lessons are important and necessary and convey this feeling first to the students and then to the children. In addition, the teacher should ensure that the classroom environment s/he creates is democratic and free; does not hinder students' original and creative ways of working; The fact that students are individuals should not be forgotten. In visual arts lessons, the use of multi-dimensional creations, works of art, different methods and techniques, as well as different tools should be practiced in the classroom environment in order not to lose interest and motivation in the activity, and the works should be exhibited. Evaluation should be fair and based on certain criteria (Türkcan, 2011).

#### ***Current Visual Arts Curriculum in High Schools***

Visual art education implemented in high schools describes the level of aesthetic development determined by the individual's reaction to a work of art. However, reaching this level of development means overcoming many obstacles for the benefit of the student. Since 2010, fine arts courses, which aim to enable students to discover their various talents and gain self-confidence, have been reduced to one hour as an elective course in primary schools

(Buyurgan & Buyurgan, 2012). In our country, in the 2017-2018 academic year, the curriculum was changed to two hours a week only in the 9th grades, and it is planned to expand this situation to the 10th, 11th and 12th grades in the 2018-2019 academic year. The 2018 Ministry of National Education secondary education visual arts curriculum says: The learning-teaching process should be meaningful and integrated for the student. In order to make the educational process meaningful, students' personal characteristics (interests, learning needs, readiness level, learning methods) are determined and these differences are taken into consideration when determining teaching methods and methods.

Program is an educational guide for children, youth and adults, with all its activities aimed at achieving national education and organizational goals (Varish, 1996; Gökür, 2011). The effectiveness and efficiency of the educational program is only possible with careful preparation of the program and continuous evaluation (Pekdağ, 2011: 7).

The Ministry of National Education published the updated Fine Arts Curriculum for fine arts courses in 2018. Fine arts education requires a well-planned fine arts curriculum. For meaningful learning, the new information learned must be parallel to daily life. In this context, students should organize activities and research that will enable them to understand how what they have learned can be used in different life situations and different professions. This will contribute to students' development of positive attitudes towards learning and lifelong researchers and learners, and learning will be more meaningful and permanent. Activities and research should be planned and implemented in a way that enables students to relate the new knowledge and skills they have acquired to their previous learning. Applied learning activities should improve students' prior knowledge, correct mistakes, attract their attention, and encourage students to participate in meaningful practices inside and outside the classroom (MEB, 2018: 5).

In this context, it seems that artistic education is student-centered and includes life preparation and values education. Additionally, values education can also be given artistically through drama (Deveci, 2023). According to Buyurgan and Buyurgan (2012), purposeful and competent art education; Realizing the existence and importance of artistic education, a curriculum (education) that can be updated according to the changing and developing conditions of the age, competent art educators, sufficient lesson hours, physical tools and equipment. According to Buyurgan and Buyurgan (2012), taking into account the development level of each student in the field of art and aesthetics, taking into consideration the class and age characteristics of each student, is one of the important duties of the teacher in education. Professional art education requires, above all, a talented art educator. In their study titled "Suggestions for the Aesthetic Development of Art Education Students", Buyurgan and Buyurgan (2012) determined that the idea of reaching all students, taking into account their development and individual differences, is in the first place. They have space and a modern perspective. As high school students approach the end of their teenage years, they enter the age of aesthetic criticism. Art teachers have an important responsibility to maximize the aesthetic understanding of their students at this age and to contribute to the development of humanity and the future of society. It seems that an art educator should interact with students one-on-one and get to know the students' individual characteristics. Additionally, in this study, the teacher's role is defined as putting the student at the center, giving importance to their ideas, and reaching everyone.

As in every field of education, a system idea is discussed in the Visual Arts Course. The face-to-face teacher is the most important part of the system, and his/her attitude towards students, the relationships s/he establishes with them and the classroom atmosphere s/he creates are very important. Art educators should be able to give their students discipline, vision and understanding of seeing, and the confidence to make new syntheses (Buyurgan & Buyurgan, 2012).

Buyurgan and Buyurgan (2012), the teachers who participated in the research, believed that it was necessary to develop presentation tools and use computers, video cards and slides to motivate students. However, they thought that it was necessary to benefit from the structure of schools and cities and develop museum knowledge. In addition, the teacher should always improve herself/himself in terms of academic knowledge and practice and make changes according to the conditions. Additionally, the PGCE teacher should invite lecturers and artists to school and give them the opportunity to engage in dialogue with students.

Appropriate materials and workshops are very important in art education. However, appropriate and equipped workshops need to be created especially for the implementation process (Buyurgan & Buyurgan, 2012).

During all these research, teachers and students need the support and contribution of the school administration and the family union. These elements should evaluate teachers and students one by one, evaluate their actions on behalf of the subject, and show them in the most accurate way (Buyurgan & Buyurgan, 2012). Management should not consider the grades a school receives as a result of a competition as superior to real education.

Considering the teaching method from the constructivist approach, one of the most important methods used by teachers in the classroom is drama (Deveci, 2023), museum, virtual museum, brainstorming, storytelling and sampling (Cengiz et al., 2015). Methods may vary depending on circumstances and situations, and there is no single accepted standard teaching method. According to Buyurgan and Buyurgan (2012), the curriculum should allow the student to be responsible, actively participate, and work on projects through group discussions. From now on, it should be aimed to raise individuals who can think highly, express their ideas and find solutions (Buyurgan & Buyurgan, 2012).

One of the most important factors in a competent art education is time. Considering that art education is a field of education in which many fields operate simultaneously, its implementation takes sufficient time after theoretical knowledge is acquired and should not be rushed (Buyurgan & Buyurgan, 2012). Considering the processes, students' attendance, material preparation, etc. it seems that one lesson hour per week is not enough.

#### ***Current Program of Visual Arts Courses Applied in High Schools***

Undoubtedly, art will continue to exist as long as humans exist. The understanding of beauty that is planned to be imparted to the student, the desire to beautify the environment and the way to express oneself are only included in the Visual Arts Course. The fact that the administration, teachers, students and parents, who form the legs of this education table, do not have enough influence on the course causes a gap. However, the fact that teachers, students, school administration and parents, who are the elements of artistic education and who need to be in communication and interaction, do not have sufficient sanctions on the course creates a gap. Therefore, the subject of fine arts is; are natural and social events. Knowledge, manners, emotion and thought are the basic elements that make up fine arts. In general, fine arts can give form to the chaotic human soul. Countries create education programs within certain criteria to ensure that people get satisfaction from life and reach the targeted human characteristics

It can be thought that students, rather than school administrators and parents, find the lessons useful and interesting because the lessons are not only a recreational and leisure lesson, but also an educational lesson. It requires them to express themselves, chat with their friends, and eventually they can produce a product. The student should be positioned as a researcher, be interested in the scientific aspect of the subject, and try to learn artistic elements and principles. At the primary school age, when imagination is at its peak, using teacher-centered and undisciplined teachers to teach subjects or classroom teachers to support other subjects can alienate students. But creativity is a necessary factor in all areas of life. According to San (2008),



creativity is not only an ability related to the artistic process, but also one of the main elements that can be observed at all stages and in all areas of life. One of the negative factors for teachers is that the use of technology is not available in terms of time and space for the preparation of materials and the parent-teacher association and school administration cannot provide the necessary support. It has been observed that school authorities often try to focus on competitions that create resentment among students and especially disrupt peace and tranquility. According to Başbuğ and Başbuğ (2016), another important problem is that art education cannot be adequately integrated into education as a result of students and parents' anxiety about high school entrance exams.

Considering the students' opinions about the course, it is understood that the class is full and the teachers of other courses do not work in coordination with the general education department. Class time was reduced to one hour per week and the curriculum was calculated, making the Visual Arts Class more difficult and disabling. However, in the 2017-2018 academic year, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, affiliated with the Ministry of National Education and Culture, created a comfortable and productive environment for teachers and students in the 9th grade for more than two hours. Since the Visual Arts Course requires a multi-disciplinary education, the duration of the course must be extended in order to benefit from many areas of art. Starting from the 2018-2019 academic year, the courses have been increased to two hours at all grade levels. As a result of all these developments, today's people exhibit different degrees of understanding and aesthetic appreciation for real works of art, under the influence of socio-cultural life, education level and visual media. This situation is not caused by the choice and preference of art movements, but by the power of illusion resulting from the fact that the works exhibited under the name of art have no aesthetic value and negatively affect society and youth. Here, stakeholders of art education have a great responsibility in distinguishing what is genuine art and what is not. Fine arts education is important for the formation of cultural identity, creating meaning in human life, and the formation of creative and free-thinking people who question knowledge. Students within the scope of the Fine Arts Curriculum which aims to raise an individual who learns, creates and follows art in accordance with universal values, assimilates the cultural values of one's own society, respects the cultural values of different societies, understands and realizes art.

With the Visual Arts Course Curriculum, Students are expected to;

1. Have knowledge about what art is,
2. Have an idea about artistic practices,
3. Create original products using traditional and contemporary materials,
4. Understand the elements and principles of art and using these principles and elements in his work,
5. Gain the sense of beauty through the practice of art education,
6. Develop visual perception through observation,
7. Reflect imagination in art,
8. Gain the ability to use the main terms, techniques and methods related to visual arts,
9. Express oneself through art by transforming one's thoughts, feelings and impressions into original artistic designs,
10. As a universal-minded individual who knows the contribution of art to humanity, s/he understands the role and importance of visual arts in social development,
11. Be aware of the richness of expression brought by different techniques, following innovative ideas and taking advantage of technological opportunities in his art,

12. Describe, analyze, explain, judge, make works of art

According to the fine arts course curriculum, students follow the current developments in the field of fine arts and participate as spectators in activities such as conferences, panel discussions and seminars related to fine arts. While students participating in cultural and artistic events (exhibitions, museum trips, etc.) develop their social and entrepreneurial skills, they will gain the following skills and enable them to look at works of art from a different perspective. The Visual Arts curriculum aims to respect cultural diversity; It aims to establish constructive communication by using Turkish properly, elegantly and effectively when communicating with others, and to raise students who love nature and are sensitive to the living environment.

**Education in Iraq**

The British, who occupied Iraq during the First World War, knew that the Ministry of Education had collapsed. For this reason, they thought of opening schools in large and important provinces and carrying out activities to increase the quality of education. In addition, the British made changes in their education programs; They changed the language of instruction, especially in law faculties, from Turkish to Arabic. Realizing the lack of teachers, the British took advantage of Egypt and Damascus to bring back teachers and books that provided a valuable educational curriculum (Balci, 2004).

Iraq's education system was negatively affected by the First World War. Although some regulations were made in the education system of the British occupation, these regulations covered the temporary education policies of the occupied country. Based on their experience during the previous Indian invasion, the British felt that their priority in Iraq was to gain publicity and recognition. Before the invasion of Iraq, education and training had an important place in society, but after the British occupation, there was a period of significant decline in education. Especially the impact of the First World War affected all fields and, of course, the field of education (Alakush, 2011).

The British government did not agree to open schools with the guidance of the Ministry of National Education. This is because; The British realized that there was a shortage of teaching staff in Iraq and were of the opinion that opening schools would not help. For this reason, they preferred to bring teachers and valuable books from Egypt and Damascus.

During this period, especially after the royal period (after 1968), many projects were developed to modernize education and gain its popularity. However, due to war, regime change and unrest, most of the research remained inconclusive. In July 1968, the Bas regime came to power and brought radical changes in the education sector. In general, it can be said that the Heroes Party has carried out many reforms in the field of education and attaches great importance to vocational education. There were some developments during this period, first of all, the number of students increased by 30% between 1967 and 1986. The number of female students increased by 45 percent. The number of primary school teachers increased by 40%. At the high school level, there was an increase of 46% for male students and 55% for female students. During this period, the duration of school education is 6 years in primary school, 3 years in secondary school and 3 years in high school. Students who graduate from here can enter colleges and faculties through secondary school and high school branches. Based on these examples, it can be seen that the Iraqi education system is the best education system in the Middle East according to 1990 UNESCO data. This is confirmed by 99 percent of the literate population (UNESCO, 2006).

Before 1968, Iraq had a backward education system compared to other countries in the Middle East, but since then the education system has stabilized and literacy has increased. The Bas regime initially took very important steps regarding education, created the best and most challenging education system in the Middle East, and allocated great resources for the

continuation of this system. However, the two major wars that Iraq entered into gradually destroyed the future of the country. When the period after 1968 is examined, it is seen that a great success has been achieved in the field of secondary education, especially for students studying at vocational schools. The number of students reached in 1977 was three times that in 1968 and, according to statistics, consisted of 120,090 students.

#### ***Visual Arts Education in Iraq***

One of the important references about visual art education regarding Iraq is the art-related works of Palestinian artist and writer, Jabra Ibrahim. Jabra's work; *Modern Iraq Art and Art In Iraq Today* is a work published regarding the exhibition opened in Meem. During the wars in Iraq, most works and publications were burned and damaged, schools were closed, and therefore reference books were lost. Another positive development today is Mataf: Museum of Contemporary Arab Art, Doha, founded by Shah Hassan Bin Mohammed in Qatar in 2010. The museum also hosts works by Iraqi artists. Art has been used as a political tool and propaganda tool in Iraq since the 1950s.

Due to the state's attempts to control artists and civil unrest, important young artists eventually left Iraq and moved to free places in Europe, North America or other Middle Eastern countries such as the UAE, Jordan and Beirut. In Iraq, the first artists were called pioneers, and art groups such as Baghdad Contemporary Art Group and New Visions were added to the next generation. They were established by a British and French agreement after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. After Ottoman rule (1639-1917), England remained in the region until the 1970s. In 1958, the kingdom was overthrown in a bloody coup and replaced by a republic that began to rule alongside the Kingdom of Faisal Khan, who came to power in England. General Abdul Karim Rasim and other leaders ruled Iraq until 1979. Saddam Hussein ruled the country in 1979 and was killed by US forces in the Iraq War in 2006. Iraq is one of the richest countries after the United Arab Emirates in terms of oil reserves. The British withdrew from the region in the 1970s, but US influence in Iraq continued after the war with the US in the following years. The United Arab Emirates was established in 1971 with the withdrawal of the British. Qatar declared its independence (Tan, 2011).

The first conservatory was established in 1936 to promote culture and music in Iraq. Faek Hassan (1914-1992), who studied at the School of Fine Arts in 1939-1940, transformed the conservatory into a fine arts institute. In 1958, it was decided to become an academy of fine arts and many departments were opened.

#### ***Current Structure and Educational Purposes***

A very different development has occurred in Iraq since 2003, and many changes have occurred in the education sector, as in every sector. If we were to list the general structure and goals of the Iraqi education system today, we can summarize it under the following headings. The Iraqi Constitution contains laws regulating education and training. These laws, which were formerly issued by the Ministry of National Education, are now issued by the Iraqi Ministry of Education. The general structure of the education system of the Iraqi Ministry of Education, the basic provisions of the teaching profession, school buildings, teaching equipment, the role and responsibility of the state in the field of education and training are based on the principle of unity and solidarity (White, 2013).

#### ***Structuring of the Visual Arts Education System in Iraq and the Current Program***

The Iraqi Ministry of Education was established before the Republic. After Iraq gained independence from imperialist invaders in 1921, it tried to preserve the primitive and madrasa schools inherited from the Ottoman Empire. At that time, the national education department was called the Ministry of National Education. Thus, the Ministry of Education continued its activities in Iraq until the end of the Kingdom. After the proclamation of the Republic of Iraq in

1968, new laws and projects were developed and its name was changed to the Ministry of Education and Training (Boduroğlu, 2010).

With the Bas Party coming to power in 1979, the Ministry of Higher Education was established and an organization called "Education and Training" was established under this ministry. If we look at the history of the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Turkey, this name changed again and in 1982 the name of the organization was changed to the Ministry of National Education.

An important point to note here is that Turkish higher education institutions fulfill their main functions in cooperation with the Ministry of National Education. The situation is reversed in Iraq, where the Iraqi Ministry of Education operates under the Iraqi Higher Education Institution and the decisions taken by the Higher Education Institution are reviewed and examined by the Iraqi Ministry of Education (Boydaş, 2005).

The Iraqi Ministry of Education continues its activities under a central system. This system serves 18 provinces. Provincial Directorates of National Education carry out the orders coming from the Ministry. Small areas of provinces and districts belong to the Provincial Directorate of National Education. The Iraqi education system almost overlaps with the Turkish central system in this regard. However, after the overthrow of the Saddam Hussein regime, some political groups tried to transform Iraq into a federal form of government, while the Northern Iraqi administration tried to establish its own system. In fact, the examination system has even begun to surpass the Baccalaureate system used in Iraq. In addition, it is not known exactly how many education consultants and education attachés there are in Iraq at the moment. There is no such record in official state records. For this reason, the Turkish National Education system is more organized and controlled than the Iraqi education system.

Throughout human history, art has sometimes been seen as magic, sometimes as an ornament, sometimes as a permanent language, sometimes as a tool to spread religious thought, science and technology, and sometimes as money or investment. Making art, understanding art and dealing with art is a requirement of being human. It is one of the most important dimensions of social life.

Art education is based on aesthetic problems and development from the cauldron of thought by revealing human creativity and knowledge. It aims to become distinguished art producers and art supporters who understand art and get rid of their prejudices about art (Artut, 2006).

There are many concepts that affect art. One of these concepts is undoubtedly education. With artistic education or art education, the individual socializes and the individual's social perception increases. Art education enables the formation of individuals who adapt to the environment they live in, are cognitively and psychologically developed, and understand, interpret and contribute to themselves and their environment. In this context, art education is a process that aims to provide the most appropriate education by using the most appropriate tools for the aesthetic expression of emotions and thoughts, which is an important need.

The most important goal of development-oriented modern education systems is to raise creative and scientific people. This is accepted as the most important reason why art education is provided uninterruptedly from childhood to adulthood in developed societies. Because one of the most important gains of the art education process is the development of the individual's creativity.

Today, new developments in the field of art and art education have made it necessary to provide different information to educators in addition to individual needs. Art education is an area that needs to be developed in schools. Art education should be developed and disseminated with contemporary concepts and methods in general, amateur and professional types. In this

regard, the role of school art education and educators is to create the natural creative nature of each individual through various practices. At the same time, music education, which is an important part of visual arts, also serves this goal. Art education has many aspects, and one of them is fine arts education. Fine arts education aims to develop a creative, collaborative and intellectual individual while providing general, inspiring and professional personal development within the social framework (Bozkurt, 2013).

### **Findings and Implications**

#### **Findings**

An individual's ability to live a life with certain standards that do not conflict with the society he lives in is directly proportional to the education he receives. For this reason, states put forward educational programs in line with certain criteria in order to raise people in the desired human profile, at peace with life. Visual arts course is important in terms of giving students the freedom to express their feelings and thoughts through pictures, sounds and objects, as well as an artistic perspective and aesthetic pleasure. This is a constant phenomenon for the whole World

"There are two beauties: the beauty that humans find in nature and the beauty that they create themselves." The same expressions reflect his admiration for the other and his admiration for the other. If he always admired the same things, whether it be a landscape, a tree, a painting, or a temple, no beauty would exist. But the situation is a little different. The idea of aesthetics seems to vary with tastes, that is, with climates, ages, and even individuals. Beauty comes from habit and education. They are so different from each other that they can be called opposites. Every culture inculcates hidden and unspoken tendencies in the individual, which he believes to be natural, derived from history or school.

The way to aesthetic thought and the ability to express oneself correctly and the desire to beautify the place that students want to gain through artistic education is through the Visual Arts Course. However, the lack of sufficient sanctions on the course by teachers, students, school administration and parents, who are the elements of art education and who need to be in communication, creates a gap. Therefore, the subject of fine arts is; are natural and social events. Knowledge, manners, emotion and thought are the basic elements that create fine arts. In general, only fine arts can give form to the complex human soul. Countries create educational programs within certain criteria to ensure that individuals are satisfied with life and reach the desired human profile. In order for a person to adapt to the society he lives in and to live a quality life, he must receive a good education. Visual arts course allows students to express their feelings and thoughts through sounds, pictures, etc. While it is a course that allows students to express themselves with objects, it is also important in terms of giving them an artistic perspective. And this is of great importance all over the world. Since the Middle East is a geography that carries the main vein of religions and cultures, its countries are, as its name suggests, right in the middle of this tradition. If we were to take a panoramic tour of visual arts around the world, it would be clear that Middle Eastern countries do not receive the necessary attention and do not stand in the place they deserve. For this reason, current syllabuses are very important for visual arts courses.

We can list the results of the research as follows: While interior studies (workshop, interior) are preferred within the scope of art education in Turkey, it is seen that in Iraq, the focus is on exterior (outdoor) studies. When we look at the reasons for this, it is possible to list factors such as workshop facilities and security concerns in the working environment.

When the analysis and discussion on the subject is made within the scope of the sample study in Turkey and Iraq covered within the scope of the research, differences in education are actually observed due to the change of country on the border line of the two geographies.

The political situation, chaos and war in the country disrupt Iraqi education or make education in a closed environment mandatory.

Religious perception, understanding and lifestyle negatively affect art education in some ways, albeit indirectly. The religious approach in Iraq does not allow figurative painting. In Turkey, this situation is more flexible and applicable.

As a result of economic difficulties and the difficult wars in Iraq, art activities make home-art education opportunities more limited than in Turkey.

Due to logistical war and environmental factors, participants coming from abroad to art events in Iraq act more cautiously and sometimes even do not come for security reasons. This negatively affects the educational socialization of Iraqi educators.

### **Implications**

There are similarities in the cultural structure of these two regions or countries that are close to each other. It is also seen that, although in small numbers, people living in two different countries in the region have kinship ties. In order to develop cultural cohesion and neighborly (neighbouring country) relations, mutual cultural promotions, conferences, congresses or symposiums can be organized within the Public Education centers with activities such as Iraqi handicrafts in Turkey and Turkish handicrafts in Iraq.

By planning small-scale trips in these two regions, citizens of both countries can have the opportunity to get to know each other's cultural and artistic works thanks to mutual educational trips.

Mutual cultural promotion events can be organized together with the audiovisual press using artistic television programs or local media opportunities.

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