Elevating Students' Interest in Learning Visual Art Education (VAE): Exploring Issues on Barriers and Challenges

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Abstract
Until today, visual art education (VAE) received limited attention in Malaysian-particularly at the secondary school level. Students are allocated to the arts stream during upper secondary school based on the outcomes of their prior examinations. Hence, this study aims to explore current art students' interest, challenges, and their commitment to art education. This study employed a survey research design to collect the relevant quantitative data using questionnaire This study involved 62 students from Art Stream students. They were purposefully selected among secondary school students in Selangor, Malaysia. The students answered the questionnaire in Google Forms which were—distributed online to the respondents. Questionnaires were used as research instruments to identify respondents' perceptions of Visual Art Education. The data obtained were analyzed descriptively statically using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23 to obtain the frequency distribution, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The findings in this study showed that factors that affect students' commitment to Visual Art Education are they are easily stressed by the lack of art materials and tools to do the Visual Art activities, they think that Visual Art Education is difficult and the lack of exposure to Visual Art Education. We could see that the students think Visual Art Education is important in their studies and can enhance their creativity. The finding also shows that teachers used improper teaching aids.
Keywords: Interest, Challenges, Barrier, Creativity, VAE.

Introduction
Visual art education in Malaysia encompasses a wide range of artistic disciplines, including drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, photography, digital art, and more. It plays a significant role in fostering creativity, cultural expression, and personal development among students. Catterall and Peppler (2020) examines the concept of transfer in arts education. It explores how skills and knowledge developed through arts learning can be applied to other areas of academic and personal growth. The birth of the Malaysia Higher

Education Blueprint (2015-2025) published by the Ministry of Education Malaysia, aspiration to create a higher education system that ranks among the world. According to the (Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 - 2025, 2013), the goal is to make sure that the educational system develops in accordance with global trends, where it is expected that the implementation of new technology will transform the business and social landscape from what it is now.

Visual Art Education (Pendidikan Seni Visual) should be emphasized in the education system due to creative minds are needed in every Malaysia curriculum system. From the previous research, the education system in Malaysia does not seem to give much notice to art education at the upper secondary school. Form Four students are assign to a particular curricular streams based on their PT3 results. Well performing students are encouraged to choose science stream while the rest with underperforming students have to take arts stream which required them to take visual art education as one of their subject. According to the National Curriculum Development Centre or *Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Menengah* (2003) encouraged students into science stream rather than arts stream which cause visual art education to be marginalized. Ministry of Education aims to fulfill a 6:4 ratio of students to pursue science and technology rather than arts education. Teaching and learning visual art education must be improving to inspired students become more eager to learn and explore art. This action causes the challenges to teachers and students. The placement of art stream is not based on their interest and some students are force to take visual art education as a subject as there is no other choice for them in the curriculum system. Therefore, it highly effected their motivation and the learning of the subject especially Form Four and Form Five students. However, the former Deputy Education Minister Teo Nie Ching in New Straits Times (2019) said, the arts and science streams would be replaced with STREAM which consist Science, Technology, Reading, Arts, Music education without alienated the arts education and prioritize the science stream. Both stream should be recognized. The present study is directed to the following research objectives:
1. To explore the factors that affect students' commitment in visual art education.
2. To investigate the students' interest in visual art education.
3. To identify the challenges faced by Art students in visual art education.

Literature Review

Studies from Soyoye (2017), the problems faced by students nowadays are many people even those in high intellectuals in our society, are still blind to the important role in art as a core subject that could play in the build nation. Moreover, even though the world is greatly developed in the 21st century, art education still suffered from misconceptions as the field of study that are static, time-wasting and uninteresting. Students are also facing challenges from the non-professionalism of art teachers themselves. Fadeiye (2004) mention that there is no doubt that anyone who wanted to be a teacher must have good credibility in a specific teaching profession. Unfortunately, because of the lack of art teachers and their replacement by non-art-based teachers, students have become less interested in visual art education. This type of teacher devastated students' motivation. The teachers also will consequently pay less attention n visual art education in other areas. Furthermore, although some art teachers have the necessary qualification in visual art education, they are not effective in teaching skills because they teach in an abstract manner. Based on various previous studies, many teachers conducted the class without the usage of proper teaching aids. As a result, many students from secondary school develop a dislike for learning visual art education due to the aids does not match and align with the curriculum. With this kind of action, the visual art education will

never be a meaningful subject in curriculum without the suitable and necessary teaching aids to overcome this challenges. Last but not least, the challenges also come from student's personality. The achievement and performance is affected by their personality of reasoning, feeling, adjustment and behaving with some particular environment (Farrant, 1980). Students with extrovert personality will always reach out for a new connection with other students as they prefer to attract attention and mix well with others. it exposes them for a better learning situation. By ask and answer questions, they can confidently adjust well with fellow students and teachers. Meanwhile for the introvert personality is more concern with their surroundings. This kind of personality influence students to deal more with facts and interpretation.

Nevertheless, it has been discovered that learning about visual art presents a variety of difficulties for students from both the scientific and the arts streams. The reason why students' interest is waning has been explained. It can be concluded that Visual art education will be given better recognition and a rightful place in the school curriculum if the challenges face by students and teachers are overcome.

Research Methodology

In this study, a quantitative research approach was–used to obtain quantitative data using questionnaires. It involved the utilization and analysis of numerical data using specific statistical techniques to answer the research questions. The analysis was targeted to explain the phenomenon of engaging in art education. This aims to meet scientific and systematic search on the specific topic (Kothari, 2018). For this study, researchers have chosen non-random sampling methods which is a purposive sample. Purposive sampling also known as judgment, selective or subjective sampling. To conclude, the researchers decide what need to be known and find respondents to provide the information by their own experiences and knowledge. Specifically, it involves the identification and selection of individuals or groups that are well informed (Cresswell & Clark, 2011). Furthermore, respondents must be willing and able to communicate comfortably to justify their experience and opinions in an expressive, articulate and reflective manner (Bernard, 2002).

The respondents for this research study were students from upper level from secondary school. The students were from art and science stream. Both streams involve 30 students to be part of the respondents and answer all the questions. All the respondents answered the questions align with the research objective to achieve the findings in this research.

Findings

The researcher will describe the data and findings based on the data collection where research obtained from the respondents. The total of 62 respondents from Science Stream students and Art Stream students had answered all the questions. All of the questionnaire's questions are intended to further the goals and objectives of the researcher.

Table 1
Factors that Affects Students' Commitment in Visual Art Education
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. I am lacking in the skill in Visual Art Education	62	1.6774	.47128
2. I feel down when someone asked me about Visual Art Education	62	1.7581	.43175
3. I would be easily stressed with the lack of art materials and tools to do the Visual Art activities	62	1.8548	.35514
4. I do not like to bring the art materials and tools from home	62	1.8871	.31906
5. I personally think that Visual Art Education is hard	62	1.7419	.44114
6. My exposure to Visual Arts are very low	62	1.8065	.39830
Valid N (listwise)	62		

Majority of the students disagree that they are were lacking of skill in VAE (Mean 1.68 and Std. 0.47), followed by they does not feel down when someone asked them about visual Art Education (Mean 1.76 and Std. 0.43), they easily stressed with the lack of art materials and tools to do the Visual Art activities (Mean 1.85 and Std. 0.36), they're personally think that Visual Art Education is hard (Mean 1.74 and Std. 0.44) and their exposure to Visual Arts are very low (Mean 1.80 and Std. 0.40). Hence, the students rated that they were trying to cope with art education.

Table 2
Students interest in visual art education
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Visual Art Education is not important in my studies	62	1.8548	.69770
2. I have found that Visual Art Education is unnecessary for me in the future	62	1.9355	.84681

	N	Mean	Std.
3. I enjoy learning Visual Art and it activities that are being practiced	62	4.0645	.80716
4. I think learning Visual Art can improve my creativity and I have fun doing the activities	62	3.6935	1.15359
5. I feel stressed whenever I am drawing due to lack of skills I have	62	2.5645	.95163
6. I can release stress during learning Visual Art Education	62	3.5000	1.08265
7. Visual Art Education is the only subject that can enhance my creativity in school	62	3.7581	1.08167
8. I think Visual Art Education is a must in the syllabus	62	3.6290	1.11963
9. Every students need to learn Visual Art Education to increase their critical thinking	62	3.5323	1.14115
Valid N (listwise)	62		

This is the descriptive statistics of the students' interest in Visual Art Education. It stated that most of the respondents or the students were disagree that Visual Art Education is not important in their studies (Mean1.85 and Std. 1.70), they are disagree that Visual Art Education is unnecessary in the future (Mean 1,94 and Std. 0.85), they are enjoy learning Visual Art and it activities that are being practiced (Mean 4.06 and Std. 0.81), learning Visual Art Education can improve their creativity and having fun doing it (Mean 3.69 and Std. 1.15), the students does not feel stressed whenever they are drawing due to lack of skills (Mean 2.56 and Std. 0.95), they also agreed that they can release stress during learning Visual Art Education (Mean 3.5 and Std. 1.08), Visual Art Education is the only subject that can enhance their creativity in school (Mean 3.76 and Std. 1.08), they think Visual Art Education is a must in the syllabus (Mean 3.63 and Std. 1.12) and lastly, they agreed every students need to learn Visual Art Education to increase their critical thinking.

Table 3
Challenges Faced By Students In Visual Art Education
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. My circle thinks that learning Visual Art Education is wasting of time	62	2.2742	1.01091
2. My capabilities in doing art is one of the challenges subject to learn	62	2.5161	1.12704
3. I agree with the perception of Visual Art Education is unnecessary, wasting of time and not a good future	62	1.7097	.77644

4. The common misconceptions of art should be eliminated and treated as same as the mainstream subjects	62	3.5645	1.09576
5. Perception of Visual Art Education only for students with underperformed and as a 'soft option'	62	1.8871	.70373
6. The judgement of Visual Art Education from the narrow mindset who sees art as futureless	62	1.9355	.76546
7. Visual Art/s teacher conducted class without the usage of proper teaching aids	62	2.0484	.75590
Valid N (listwise)	62		

Based on the list of the challenges perceived which given by researchers, most of the students disagreed that the society think learning Visual Art Education is wasting of time (Mean 2.27 and Std. 1.01), their capabilities in doing art is one of the challenges subject to learn (Mean 2.52 and 1.13), most of them disagreed with the perception of Visual Art Education is unnecessary, wasting of time and a bleak future (Mean 1.71 and Std. 0.78), they agreed about the common misconceptions of art should be eliminated and treated as same as the mainstream subjects (Mean 3.56 and Std. 1.10), they are not agreed with the perception of Visual Art Education only for students with underperformed and as a 'soft option' (Mean 1.89 and Std. 0.7), they are disagreed with the judgement of Visual Art Education from the narrow mindset who sees art as futureless (Mean 1.94 and Std. 0.77) and lastly, most of them are agreed that Visual Art/s teacher conducted class without the usage of proper teaching aids (Mean 2.05 and Std. 0.76).

Conclusion
The findings of this study indicated that factors that include students' tendency to stress, their perception that visual art education is challenging, and their lack of exposure to visual art education are factors that contribute to their commitment to visual art education. According to Lerner (2018), with further understanding, the arena of visual-spatial learning as enhanced by art and design learning, may find more inclusion in general education. The students feel stress with the lack of art materials and tools. Tay (2021) mentions that understanding the artist's materials and techniques enables the expansion of material knowledge and can serve as an anchor for future study of works of art. The teaching and learning visual arts must also be upgraded in accordance with the most recent developments in the art world and pressing requirements. As a result, the government has the authority to later the course of Visual Arts Education in order to foster individuals who are both creative thinkers and adept artist. According to Hamlin and Fusaro (2018), In classrooms, artists can serve as creative role models who identify themselves not just as makers but as learners, thinkers, engaged citizens, and the "critical eye" of society.

From the results of the study, we could see that the students think Visual Art Education is important in their studies and can enhance their creativity. According to Eisner (1995), an artistic education encourages the development of superior skills like critical thinking and creativity by allowing students to come up with many solutions to certain issues that aren't possible in other subjects covered in the school curriculum. It is essential to comprehend creative education as a discipline in its whole. In addition to preparing expertise in a particular

field, it also aims to advance all students' general education by fostering shared formative values across all subjects. It shows that even though the students from Science Stream are aware of the Visual Art Education and its importance. The students enjoy and not feel stressed whenever they do the activities due to lack of skills.

The majority of the students disagree about the negative statement and agree for the positive statement of the questionnaire. Their perspective and point of view have change aligned with the time. The negative perception and mind set can be seen not as same as the previous generation. The students most likely open their eyes and point of view to see the world of Art as the new future. According to Mat (2017), participation by artists in public art events aids in raising public awareness of art and strengthens the industry's business. Examples of activities that could excite society's interest in learning more about visual art include art discussions, performance art, murals and many others. In order for art knowledge to continue to grow until the end of schooling, these practices should be encouraged from the beginning of Visual Arts Education. It is proved that students were agree that Visual Art Education is need for the future. They are also stated that they enjoy every classes that they attend and this subject can release their stress. According to research, art has been seen positively promote the efficiency part of the therapy as well as to help emotionally strengthen their tension, worry and anxiety, (Bilgin et al., 2018).

Based on the issues barriers and challenges of students in learning art education, teacher and educator should be more creative in various approaches to teaching and learning processes which more relevant to the youngsters. One of the suggestions is to come out with interactive and creative teaching material as suggested Freedman and Stuhr (2004) explores various aspects of curriculum and teaching in art education, including the use of visual and material culture as teaching aids. Brustureanu (2022) also suggest that education for tomorrow does not mean limiting learning only to the assimilation of basic knowledge, through art or any other form of learning, but to how we can invest more closely and more carefully in the role that creativity can and should play in the training and preparation of young people.

Teachers play an important role in connecting art with the environment and culture of the students so that they can gain students' interest and understanding of the concept of art. According to Birsa (2018), the proposed guidelines for teaching art concepts will help teachers to overcome specific obstacles in planning activities for the visual arts learning process, while students will benefit from an increased connection between subjects and integrated knowledge of the visual arts.

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