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Integrating Arts Education System Enhancing Students' Level of Creativity: A Case Study in Beijing, China

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Abstract

Student's experience, perception, and evaluation of art, as well as its aesthetics and connection to creativity, appear particularly difficult to comprehend. In this regard, there has not yet been investigates the relationship between arts education subjects and student's level of creativity specifically focusing on primary school students in Beijing, China. This paper concentrates on analysing the relationship between Visual Arts subjects and creativity, which has not been formally addressed in Chinese education system in Beijing. The significance of creativity's intrinsic connection to research and practice has been repeatedly demonstrated. The results of this study could assist educational stakeholders in enhancing the Arts and Design curriculum. This study used a qualitative research approach by asking students a series of questions in semi-structured interviews to see how students' creativity was affected by the inclusion of arts education. Ten educators and two professionals in the field were interviewed in semi-structured focus groups at different schools in Beijing, China, to discuss their thoughts on the arts curriculum's effect on students' imaginative capacities. The findings will result in a shift in the university curriculum toward a greater appreciation for the significance of Visual Arts courses in fostering higher-level creative thinking. This paper includes recommendations for both educational policymakers and educators, such as allowing creativity-enhancing instruction as separate courses to become an integral part of the design educational process and no longer considered as the not essential of the design curricula and providing students with more opportunities to use creative skills and creative thinking techniques to solve real-world design problems. The paper concludes with implications and suggestions for further research.

Keywords: Arts Education, Creativity, Creative and Cognitive Skills, Beijing

Introduction

Individuals cultivate creativity through interaction with their environment. It is the ability to come up with novel combinations using information and data that already exists or is generally accepted. There are numerous ways to define creativity, but none of them have gained widespread acceptance. Creativity is a unique brain process that results in "different thinking." It is the capacity to create works of music, art, or ideas when the creator has not

yet been discovered. Creativity has different meanings for different people, which is one of the greatest obstacles to mastering, defining, and cultivating it. Visual arts education influences the cognitive and behavioural development of adolescents. Visual Arts education may involve the study of paintings or sculptures, literary works, or theoretical analyses of musical compositions that rely more on observation than on invention. However, this is a crucial element of originality, also known as creativity. In addition, visual arts education provides students with an excellent opportunity to attempt new things, determine which are effective, and determine how to incorporate the results into their own technique. By interacting with and comprehending the work of others, an individual's artistic abilities will also be enhanced through the use of observations.

Beijing has taken a number of measures in recent years to encourage creativity in the classroom.
To cultivate a knowledge-based economy and keep pace with global innovations, the Chinese government emphasizes the importance of cultivating creativity and creative thought among its students. The "Comprehensive Education Reform" program is a significant initiative of the Chinese government, with the primary goal of replacing rote learning and exam preparations with a curriculum that encourages students to think creatively and critically. Teachers are encouraged to attempt new things in the classroom by participating in this program, which facilitates the creation of original curricular elements. The Chinese government has also implemented initiatives such as the "Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education Reform Pilot" and the "Maker Education" initiative. Students can develop their critical thinking, problem-solving, and entrepreneurial skills through the emphasis on experiential learning in these programs. Schools are establishing "Maker Spaces" and "Innovation Labs" to equip students with the resources necessary to develop their own concepts and initiatives.

This paper illuminates the most significant elements such as the research background and problem statement, in order to depict the current state of Arts Education subjects in Beijing. The second component is the research objectives centred on the problem statement. The purpose of this study is to address these research questions in order to determine the influence of Arts Education courses on the creativity and academic performance of students who are taking arts education in their classroom.

Creativity Level within Students

To date, it is important for the countries to cultivate creative thinking among their students as an essential skill. Due to its emphasis on the requirements of the modern economy, Beijing must incorporate innovation, flexibility, and inventive thinking into its curriculum. Enhancing students' creativity and thought processes is a fundamental mission and vision of the Chinese educational system. However, the majority of education systems teach students "convergent thinking" or practical thinking, such as solving problems with a single correct answer that is already known, rather than creative thinking. For instance, how to create multiple solutions for unstructured and open-ended problems. As students will pursue their professions in the future, they are frequently confronted with these types of open-ended and complex problems. Design thinking is a methodology that guides students through human-centered problem solving, intellectual stimulation, and ongoing empirical research in order to define and creatively solve problems. Moreover, The arts, a vital part of "Key Competences for Lifelong Learning" which it emphasises the cultural awareness and expression competence

where cultural awareness is the foundational competency (Li & Mendoza, 2022). In addition, design thinking in the Art and Design program encourages students to generate ideas, consult with their peers, refine the ideas, and ultimately select the optimal solution to a problem. These processes require numerous abilities, including communication, creativity, and teamwork.

Activities and social involvement in class

Arts and design education cultivates students with creative thinking skills and an understanding of design principles. Art educators have been advocating for Community-Based Art Education (CBAE) in schools as a means of strengthening students' ability to identify with and learn from their communities' diverse cultural traditions (Luo & Lau, 2020). It has the potential to improve students' capacities for inquiry, discovery, and meaning-making while also bridging the gap between students' everyday lives and their communities and the arts. Moreover, Luo & Lau (2020) emphasised that Community-based Art Education (CBAE) has been used by Chinese art teachers in classrooms for decades, and it plays a key part in the National Standards for Visual Arts.

In spite of this, the experience of art, and consequently the perception and evaluation of art, including aesthetics and its relationship to creativity, appears especially difficult to conceptualize within a scientific framework. This study aims to investigate how Visual Arts subjects can foster creativity among Arts and Design majors at select Chinese universities. In addition, Beijing has been emphasizing STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) programs in schools as a way to promote innovation. The objective of STEAM is to encourage students to think creatively by incorporating more art and design into traditionally "STEM" subjects. Regarding these initiatives, it is essential to recognize that Beijing's Chinese education system continues to place a premium on academic performance and standardized testing. While initiatives to promote creative thinking are being implemented, the extent to which they are implemented may vary across provinces and institutions in Beijing.

In Beijing, STEAM is an acronym for an educational curriculum that combines Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics. The STEAM strategy emphasizes the interdependence of diverse fields and encourages students to learn and apply concepts from a wide range of disciplines. In recent years, the Chinese government and educational institutions have placed a greater emphasis on STEAM education, recognizing the importance of encouraging students' creativity, critical thinking, and originality. Incorporating arts and design into STEM is intended to provide students with a more comprehensive education and to better prepare them to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Social media use and student intrinsic motivation

The development of a swiftly expanding economy in Beijing necessitates the recruitment of more futuristic creative thinkers. However, Beijing falls short of fulfilling the demand for creatively minded students. It is also lacking in youthful creative talent that will contribute to global economic growth (Wang & Greenwood, 2013). Art and Design education aims to develop and improve skills such as imagination, creativity, and ingenuity, critical awareness, interpersonal and social skills, an appreciation for diversity, creative problem-solving and decision-making, teamwork, and the ability to work independently, verbal and expressive

communication, and visual presentation (Botella et al., 2018). Subjects such as Visual Arts are assertive disciplines that promote a student's success throughout their education, both inside and outside the classroom.

Everyone is exposed to visual arts on a daily basis, whether through their own creativity or through objects such as the design on a box of cereal or the logo of a favourite sports team. The visual arts help students connect, create, respond, and acquire skills that will one day bring about positive change and improve the prospects of individuals and the environment in which they reside. The visual arts have a profound impact on creativity, albeit one that is somewhat indirect, by stimulating positive emotions or affective responses (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976). Positive emotions, such as enjoyment, interest, and inspiration, broaden the thought processes and enhance creative thinking conducive to learning, problem-solving, and innovation, particularly when completing complex tasks.

Students' creativity and academic performance using social media

Student's creativity and academic performance are important aspects that have shown a direct relationship with their achievements and creativity is an impressive feature of students of higher education (Malik et al., 2020). The engagement of the students is referred to 'the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic work (Gulzar et al., 2021). In this modern age, students' engagement and creativity are derived from the usage of social media. For instance, Gulzar et al (2021) stated that social media usage of students may increase the students' intrinsic motivation leading to the students' academic engagement and student creativity.

Students who are satisfied with their school performance tend to show higher self-esteem, confidence, and motivation. many online activities, including short videos, social media networks, and online games, have been designed or presented to be mentally stimulating to give users high levels and continual enjoyment (King & Delfabbro, 2018). Students' basic psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness may be better satisfied by Internet use rather than by traditional learning activities, which may lead to a decrease in their engagement in school work and an increase in Internet use (Dou & Shek, 2021)

Chinese educational concepts

Arts education subject allows students to enter imaginative worlds, be creative, and think fancifully. In addition, this course develops students' analytical and problem-solving skills. Exam preparation and academic excellence have figured prominently in traditional Chinese education (Zhao et al., 2020). This examination-centered approach to education has the potential to impede students' ability to discover and cultivate inventive perspectives.

Beijing's educational system lacks creative individuals. Only "knowledge" is discussed, emphasizing the aphorism "knowledge is power" (Yingyi, 2020). Not only is the level of students' creativity based on their knowledge, but also on their curiosity and imagination, which are essential for the growth of a prosperous economy and nation. Achieving high scores on national examinations such as the Gaokao is regarded as crucial for future educational and employment opportunities, thereby placing enormous pressure on students' academic performance. This expectation may discourage students from pursuing their interests outside of the classroom and taking risks. Many Chinese parents place a premium on their children's

academic performance and may discourage "out-of-the-box" thinking. This circumstance can increase the burden on children to succeed academically, thereby limiting their creative expression. However, visual arts education may also provide a service if it is designed to foster a positive emotional experience. This positive emotional experience will increase interest, motivation, cognitive ability, and imagination. Considering that the ultimate goal of any instructional design of an artwork is to maximize student learning, the 'aesthetic' elements of this artwork were not consciously considered.

Several studies conducted in western nations such as the United States and Europe demonstrated a correlation between student creativity and a thriving economy (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006). Nonetheless, research on this topic, particularly in Beijing, remains 'inadequate'. Furthermore, empirical studies and publications on the effect of Arts education such as Visual Arts subject on the creative thinking of Chinese students are scarce. There is a striking dearth of large-scale experimental studies examining the educational effects of the arts. There is a chance that many instructors in China have been instructed in traditional educational practices, making it difficult for them to adopt more contemporary methods in the classroom.

The cultivation of creative thinking in students may lead to improvements in areas such as problem solving, adaptability, creativity, communication, and self-expression. Students who develop these skills are better prepared to face the responsibilities of maturity, to make meaningful contributions to society, and to continue their own education throughout their lives (Yenawine, 2013). Students who are encouraged to think creatively develop an essential skill for problem solving: the capacity to see problems from several angles. A subject's style of thinking is shaped by their unique combination of upbringing, cultural background, and life events. Students' imaginations flourished because they spent time in natural settings and were allowed considerable independence by their parents (Horng et al., 2005). Teachers may help children learn to think critically, analyze issues, and come up with original solutions by encouraging and supporting their imaginative capacities. Creativity was formerly thought to as a necessary component of intellect, something that only a select few exceptionally gifted people possess and which represents something novel and unusual about the human experience (Esquivel, 1995).

Teachers may not be given sufficient time or resources to experiment with innovative instructional methods. In addition, not all classrooms in Beijing have access to adequate materials, such as art supplies, resources for hands-on activities, and technological laboratories. Especially in rural or economically disadvantaged areas, a lack of access to these resources may inhibit the growth of creativity. This lack of empirical evidence demonstrating its educational value is a significant obstacle for arts education (Bowen et al., 2019). In such an environment, students are unable to experiment with new ideas and strategies for working with visual media inspired by their peers, which they internalize and then draw from in later context. On the other hand, arts education also assisting in the development of students' learning, including their metacognitive abilities.

Methodology

A qualitative research method adopted in this study where a set of questions from semi-structured interviews are designed to investigate the impact of integration arts education can

enhance level of creativity within students. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in selected schools in Beijing, China with 10 teachers and 2 industry practitioners which focusing on their perception towards the impact of arts education to student's creativity. The data information is analysed using NVivo to obtain the information. Academics and industry practitioners in the private sector will be recruited to participate in the semi-structured interviews. The purpose of the focus groups is to investigate the effects of current methods of student evaluation in the classroom. The purpose of the self-evaluation tasks is to understand more about how students use a sense of play and curiosity to synthesize new ideas.

This study used research questions and research objectives for the researcher were able to develop a solid connection between the two, which helped us accomplish all of the purpose of the study. This paper examines the Art and Design students' attitudes and perceptions about learning Visual Arts subjects as predictors of their creativity. The objective of this paper is to investigate the relationship between students' levels of creativity and the visual arts subjects. The primary research query is whether the current Arts and Design curriculum fosters creativity in students. Would incorporating visual arts education into the curriculum enhance and add value to students' creative minds? And What is the relationship between Art and Design education and the creativity of students?

Findings and Discussions

From the findings collected from the qualitative data, Arts education integration into the classroom seems to have been an early innovation of the modern education duration in China. There are many advantages of integrating arts education to improve student's level creativity at the early stage.

Arts education thought

Cultural immersion is a key component in helping students grasp the complexities of a language. It encourages them to probe the rich humanism of traditional cultures as well. These traditional culture workshops at school are a great method to supplement classroom instruction by getting children out into the community and showcasing what they've learned in Chinese . The goal is to increase students' enthusiasm for learning about and engaging with Chinese language and culture.

By taking part in group projects themselves and demonstrating good communication and problem-solving skills, visual arts teachers provide a great example for students. Students may learn a great deal by seeing how their professors react and how they address the difficulties raised in class. Teachers can capture students' attention by raising compelling questions, presenting engaging material, and introducing novel concepts. Teachers may stimulate students' curiosity about the world and help them develop their critical thinking, learning, and growth skills. The capacity to think unconventionally is a cornerstone of creativity. The use of open-ended questions, the encouragement of several approaches to a problem, and an understanding of contrasting points of view may all contribute to the development of divergent thinking in the classroom. Teachers may help students develop their creative thinking skills by creating a classroom climate that values and supports a variety of approaches.

Arts Education Skills Cognition

Activities in visual art lessons are not limited to paintings only but it may even complement each other from the making of paintings and drawings. Teachers may include creativity into a variety of subject areas by, for example, using arts, creative projects, and hands-on activities. Creative outlets such as drama, visual art, music, and creative writing, among others, may help students think more creatively and independently in the classroom. Teachers may encourage students and show them that their own creativity is valuable by using classroom time to discuss and display examples of their own work (Suryanto et al., 2021).

Effective collaborative learning requires group interactions characterized by constructive interdependence and individual accountability. Students are graded on how well they meet their own unique learning objectives, and this often requires collaborative group activities. Teachers may facilitate student assessments of group dynamics in order to help students jointly identify areas for development. Creativity is the outcome of both personal initiative and dedicated practice. Creating activities that have pupils tackle real-world problems is a great way to provide students this much-needed practice. It is crucial to include real-world challenges into the classroom curriculum since they may inspire students to think beyond the box. It is important to develop in students a growth mindset, which means that their abilities and thinking may be developed further through study, dedication, and the implementation of skills learned through experimentation (Mutohhari et al., 2021).

Arts Education Cultivates Cultural Appreciation

Students who have opportunities to engage with the arts tend to have a more compassionate, deeper perspective on life. Students may increase their appreciation of the world by engaging in a wide range of creative activities. As a result, individuals will be more empathetic and compassionate, leading to a more peaceful and welcoming society. Students develop a feeling of identity and community via the arts because they are able to open up about their own histories in a safe setting. There are several ways in which exposure to art might improve interpersonal interaction and mutual understanding. The wide range of human cultural expressions across time might be reflected and recorded by this method. It might be used to record historical events and save the memory of those who experienced them directly. By raising awareness about important issues, art may influence political and social change.

Arts education helps students build the skills and knowledge necessary for success in today's competitive workplaces. The entrepreneurial spirit, technological prowess, and aesthetic sensibilities fostered in art classes are highly valued in a variety of professional fields (Lozano et al., 2013). Creative problem-solving, adaptability, and the ability to see obstacles from several angles are essential in today's rapidly evolving world. As Bolin & Blandy (2003) pointed out, arts education is predicated on the notion that cultural processes and products are investigated in relation to a wide range of social and historical contexts, and this research supports that view. Defining visual culture studies may be difficult, with terms like "fluid and subject to debate" and "resolutely interdisciplinary" being thrown about.

Emerging the use of Technology in Classroom

Students nowadays must be ready to adapt to a world where circumstances and expectations are often shifting. Because creativity is one of these characteristics, teaching it in schools has emerged as a crucial element. With the proliferation of digital resources, educators are paying

close attention to the best ways to use technology into the classroom. The ability to think creatively is seen as a must-have for success in the workplace and classrooms in the twenty-first century. Modern art and design, creative problem-solving, and brainstorming sessions have all benefited from the use of digital tools (Gulzar et al., 2021).

Web-based tools and programs may stimulate students' imaginations by exposing them to new points of view. Students are encouraged to express their individuality via the use of multimedia creation tools and adaptable layout options (Malik et al., 2020). Visual thinking tools may help students achieve their full potential and better visualise conceptual topics, hence fostering more creative thinking in the classroom. However, there is no standard findings on how technology is really used to foster innovation in the classroom. The implementation method is described in depth to assist readers understand the steps used to incorporate technology into classroom instruction and ultimately improve student results. Qualitative and mixed-method study results that may have shed light on how new technology influence inventiveness.

Conclusions and Future Research

The most effective approach to teach students to think creatively and strategically like entrepreneurs is to encourage them to examine their own artistic and business projects critically, to draw suggestions, and to make successful adjustments to their methods. Motivate the students to adopt a growth mindset, in which they see failures as educational opportunities rather than frustrating obstacles. It is crucial for teachers to be able to recognize and encourage students for their creative work in the classroom. Providing students with platforms for promoting their projects through presentations, academic exhibitions, and business exhibitions. The findings indicated that by acknowledging students' efforts and successes can motivate them to keep working toward their objectives and improves their self-confidence in their achievements.

Moreover, this study identified significant benefits to the effective delivery of technology in the classroom where technology should not ‘drive’ preservice and in-service training but teachers should begin with compelling, creative, and conceptual ideas throught technology in the classroom to increase the level of creativity within students. According to the results, the overall pedagogical approach was responsible for the achievement. It is recommended that technology play a subordinate role to creative pedagogy, allowing the concepts of teaching and learning to lead the art education curriculum. Students obtained success when they learned the technology that enabled them to develop their artistic projects in creative and diverse ways. Second, we conclude that empowering teachers to independently and creatively shape their curriculum in the area of new media results in greater pedagogical success in virtual classrooms. In conclusion, we believe that conventional visual arts provide the foundation for digital arts. Today's digital art classrooms must encourage student creativity, just as they must for traditional visual arts. This paper concluded that the arts education may be used to teach students how to solve problems by engaging in a creative process. Students' reasoning and logical skills were related to their literary and artistic creativity. Both a preference for the arts and originality were linked to the ability to think beyond the box. Despite the fact that divergent thinking was linked to a technical orientation, it showed that the connection was either decreased or enhanced when dealing with difficulties from an arts perspective. The findings are in line with the goals of arts education to foster critical thinking, innovation, and originality. Moreover, teachers also can provide

students with 21st-century education by utilising their students with digital worlds instead of using 'traditional method' in the classroom.

Future research should address the positive impact of adopting visual arts in classrooms within students at primary school and provide explanations and resolutions to enable student's level of creativity from young compared to university level and exploration the teaching system in primary school and not specifically focusing in Beijing, China but comparison studies between China and other Western education system.

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