Chapter 13
Visual Arts as a Tool for Value Education in Primary School

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to highlight the place and significance of visual arts in values education at the primary school level. Using a literature review method, one of the qualitative research approaches, the research concludes that visual arts serve as an effective tool for fostering values education in primary schools. Visual arts hold great importance in values education due to their ability to facilitate originality through diverse activities and practices. They provide an effective platform for developing values such as self-confidence, self-respect, sensitivity, awareness, empathy, respect, love, responsibility, cooperation, justice, respect for differences, and tolerance, both in individual achievements and group work. Visual arts are believed to play a vital role in values education by embodying abstract concepts.

INTRODUCTION

Education, whether planned or spontaneous, is a lifelong process that holds great significance in the growth and sustenance of society. It encompasses the transmission of factual knowledge and the crucial aspect of instilling values (Burkhardt, 1999). Values essential for the coexistence of a society can only be acquired through education. Educational institutions are responsible for preserving these values, passing them on to future generations, and ensuring their enduring impact.

Values serve as principles and beliefs that shape individuals' attitudes and actions, fostering societal cohesion and aiming to cultivate productive and responsible citizens who are in harmony with their environment. Values education occurs within the family during early childhood and later extends to formal educational settings, such as schools. Within this structured environment, visual arts play a crucial role in facilitating the effective acquisition of values education, mainly through their appeal to the affective learning domain of students. Visual arts contribute to individuals' spiritual and moral development while also promoting social and moral values essential for fostering harmonious coexistence within society. As

Ünver (2011) stated, "For the society that exists with its values, the accumulations of that society must continue. In the education system that aims to raise qualified people, it is possible to ensure that values are gained through art education because art education is the education of humanity" (Ünver, 2011).

Incorporating societal knowledge and values into primary education through visual arts holds significant importance within the formal educational framework, enabling their transmission to students. Edgington (1993) emphasized the imperative of utilizing every available opportunity, particularly schools, to impart specific values to students (Edgington, 1993, p. 10). Silcock and Duncan's (2001) research underscores the significance of voluntary participation, personal transformation, and consistency in formal and informal settings for students to acquire these values. Taylor (1994) identifies a range of frequently cited values, including cultural diversity, cultural identity, national consciousness, intellectual and academic values, peace, international understanding, human rights, environmental values, gender equality, anti-racism, business and economic values, health, tolerance, solidarity, and cooperation, which are shared human values.

Visual arts offer an effective means to embody and effectively teach socially significant values. According to Mercin and Diksoy (2017), visual arts provide opportunities to cultivate values such as individual thinking, emotional intelligence, trust, self-confidence, cooperation, empathy, respect, tolerance, and fairness. The visual arts education program encompasses various applications and experiences, from promoting family unity to instilling virtues like self-respect, patience, and perseverance. Consequently, visual arts hold a crucial place and significance in values education. This research aims to highlight the role of visual arts in imparting values within primary education, a crucial stage in the educational journey.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Values Education

The notion of value, introduced initially in the field of social sciences by F.W. Znaniecki, is defined by Raths, Harmin, and Simon (1966, p. 28) as "beliefs, attitudes, or feelings that an individual takes pride in, publicly endorses, carefully selects from alternatives without external influence, and consistently activates." (Halstead, 1996, p. 5). Znaniecki (1927, p. 529) identifies various concepts contributing to forming values, including social, hedonic, technical, aesthetic, religious, cognitive, symbolic, intellectual, and legal. Values, acquired and embraced through socialization, are a collection of beliefs that gradually become established within individuals or society over time (Rokeach, 1973, p. 4). Values encompass cultural elements, beliefs, tendencies, normative standards, and goals that become standardized in individuals' thoughts, attitudes, and actions as they internalize them.

Values serve as crucial mechanisms for social control and contribute to social cohesion. They influence an individual's perception of various aspects of life, and individuals learn the meaning of life through their values (Güven, 1999). Social norms, traditions, and customs enable individuals to distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil, and align their behavior with their moral principles (Beill, 2003, p. 14).

Education can be defined as deliberate activities aimed at developing the individual's knowledge, attitudes, and skills to become a competent person and a good citizen. However, education is about helping the individual to become both a competent person and a good citizen. Education, defined as developing desired behaviors in individuals, plays a vital role in understanding values. "The term values education as an overarching concept including terms such as moral education, civic education, and

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