



Research Paper

Teachers' Perspective on Art Education with Emphasis on Music in Elementary Schools in Marivan City

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Abstract

Aim: The purpose of present study was to determine the knowledge and attitude of teachers toward art education with emphasis on music in elementary schools in Marivan, Iran. The study population of this descriptive survey included all second grade elementary school teachers in Marivan city, 112 of whom were randomly selected for the study. The data collection tool was a researcher-made questionnaire to measure knowledge and attitude of teachers toward art education with emphasis on music. Data were analyzed with independent t-test. Findings showed that teachers expressed a positive attitude toward music education and had medium level of knowledge. Furthermore, they reported lack of skilled and trained teachers as the biggest problem of art and music education. According to the results, education policy makers and planners of the Ministry of Education should pay more attention to the category of art education with emphasis on music, especially in elementary schools.

Keywords: Education, Music education, Knowledge and attitude, Elementary school teachers

Introduction

One of the functions of the Ministry of Education in any society is to strive for the growth and flourishing of artistic and aesthetic abilities and talents of students; in other words art education. Just like reading, writing, and computation, branches of art including music, painting and theater are all keys to the door to a deep understanding and success of human (Paluch and Malikowski, 2016, quoted in Alhomaidi and Salleh, 2022). Art is an inseparable part of the growth of every human being and their experiences (Khan and Ali, 2016; Whitesell, 2016; Zhang et al., 2020). Art makes an invaluable contribution to student education, especially in relation to academic performance, attitude toward school, and perceptions of learning. In the absence of art education, all courses reduce to soulless bodies (Kumar, 2021). To address the importance of art education with emphasis on music, it is noteworthy to mention that one of the six domains mentioned in the Fundamental Reform Document of Education is aesthetics and artistic education (Secretariat of the Higher Council of Education, 2011). Accordingly, since significant capacities of art education have been neglected in the curricula and educational policy of Iran, the present study was conducted to assess the knowledge and attitude of second grade elementary school teachers in Marivan city with emphasis on music education.

Method

The study population of this descriptive survey included all second-grade elementary school teachers in Marivan city, 112 of whom were randomly selected for the study in the academic year of 2018-2019. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, simple random sampling method was used to select 112 elementary school teachers (72 male and 40 female). Data collection tools in this research were two researcher-made questionnaires of teachers' knowledge of and attitude toward art education with emphasis on music. The questionnaires were designed in Google Forms and made accessible through <https://forms.gle/oHRAWugkb3qc5dvHA>. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation and t-test was used to test the hypotheses for independent groups.

Results

According to the results, approximately 82% of teachers completely agreed with the statement "I believe music education should be taught in elementary schools", 1% strongly disagreed with that; meanwhile 80.4% strongly agreed with the statement "music can strengthen concentration, memory and perception" and 1% strongly disagreed with the statement. Also, 76.8% of teachers completely agreed with the statement "every student should take an art or music course at school" and 1% strongly disagreed with that, and 82.1% strongly agreed with the statement that "I will be glad if my child is taught music at school," and 1% strongly disagreed. Also 79.5% completely agreed with the statement "policy makers, researchers, curricula and teachers should pay attention to aesthetics and music education in the official school curriculum" and 1.8% strongly disagreed with the statement.

From the perspective of elementary school teachers, the lack of skilled and trained teachers in schools, lack of facilities, space and formal music classes, lack of financial and material resources and government budget to perform the idea and lack of attention to emotional, mental and psychological needs of students are the most important reasons which lead to failure in teaching music in schools and neglecting it in Iranian Educational System.

To assess the level of knowledge of the second grade elementary school teachers in Marivan about art education with emphasis on music, the mean score obtained from 20 items of the knowledge assessment questionnaire was used.

The mean score of teachers' awareness of art education with emphasis on music education was 13.45. Actually 67.23% of the participants had a good understanding of art education with emphasis on music, and in general, their level of knowledge was considered medium to high.

Discussion and conclusion

Art education is one of the basic fields in the education systems of different countries in the world. This type of education has attracted the attention of policy makers in the field of education system reform. The results of the research on teachers' attitude toward music education showed that elementary school teachers in Marivan have a positive attitude toward art education with an emphasis on music, and tend to include music education in the curriculum of elementary schools. The majority of elementary school teachers also agree with music education in elementary schools and believe that learning music and giving importance to art education in elementary schools will strengthen the spirit and academic progress of students. The results of this study are generally consistent with the results of research by researchers such as Efland, 2004; Richmond, 2009; Nilson, Fetherston and McMurray, 2013; Mahgoub, 2015; Kos, 2018; Kumar, 2021. These results can be attributed to the fact that the majority of teachers in this study were

young and had less than 10 years of experience, so their knowledge in this field was relatively up to date. The cultural atmosphere of Kurdistan Province can be an important and influential factor in creating an atmosphere of attention to music education, as Kurdistan Province was recently announced as a creative city of music among the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and Marivan is the center of street theater. Furthermore, Kurdish people have a rich and original music history, which facilitates more knowledge about music. The existence of well-known bands at the international level, such as the Kamkars, Shamss and the Andalibis, has been a sign of a rich history of songs and music among the people of this province. As a result, it is not surprising that teachers in Marivan have a high level of knowledge about music education.

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