

Article

Opinions of Fine Arts Students about Their Profession and Their Expectations from the Future [†]

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Abstract: Art emerged the moment humankind existed. Today it is seen that art exists everywhere humans do. It is essential for the future of nations that art and culture is maintained and transferred to next generations. For this reason, developed or developing nations give considerable value to the education of art and conduct studies so as to increase its quality constantly. Fine Arts High Schools which are established for this purpose aim at educating individuals who have self-confidence in society, who think and criticize. In addition, they aim at creating artistic and cultural awareness in students through Fine Arts High Schools and make contribution to the free thinking of individuals in an environment where art is produced. In this study, the opinions of 100 students chosen with convenience sampling who are enrolled at two different art schools (Nicosia Anatolian Fine Arts High School and Atatürk Vocational High School) in Northern Cyprus are consulted as regards the branch of art they are studying and an effort is paid to display where they see themselves in this field in the future. Besides, based on student opinions, an effort is paid to determine the viewpoint of Cypriot Turks towards art and recommendations are made for the development of fine arts education in Northern Cyprus with the obtained results. An evaluation of the results of the research shows that a majority of both female and male students are planning to continue with the branch of art they are studying and that they are satisfied with the education they receive. In addition, it is concluded that the expectations of the majority of students at their entrance to the art school are met and that the students have a negative perception as regards the viewpoint of Cypriot Turkish community towards art.

Keywords: education; fine arts; Northern Cyprus; culture; student

1. Introduction

Education is one of the most effective processes in the development of individuals and their equipment with terminal behaviors. Education informs people on almost every issue; thus, it covers all social processes that elevate societies to certain standards. As a part of education, art is one of the most important building blocks of developed societies. The arts are an integral part of the human experience [1]. In globalized world, societies maintain their development in the fields of art and science and organize the education of children in that direction. “Societies which recognize the value of art and culture and show required sentiment have created their futures. Today the art works which are viewed with admiration in several art museums of the world add prestige to the country of their origin

as well as huge economic gains. The countries which contend themselves with preserving historical and touristic places can live in the minds of tourists only with their nostalgic memories. Considering that every genius artist is the child of their society and age, an artist themselves cannot possibly achieve this task. This problem can be overcome by being a conscious society as well as with carefully implemented government policies. In order that humans can live happily and in peace with their environment, their emotional and intellectual requirements have to be met in addition to their physical needs. The quality of emotions and opinions can, on the other hand, only be ensured with the rise of universal knowledge and aesthetics" [2]. Today in order to reach the level of developed countries it is a precondition that importance is given to art education and individuals are given sensitiveness towards art through education. Through art education which is defined as the process of developing terminal behaviors in humans, children are educated as querying and qualified individuals.

"Individuals who can see accurately, perceive existence accurately, think analytically, question, escape from the stringent boundaries of the traditional and produce new patterns directed towards development, and make important contribution to the development of societies can only be raised with art education as art is an essential component of science and technology" [3]. Jale Baysal referred to this topic and stated that "development can be witnessed in a society to the extent which science and technology is integrated with art and thinking" [4]. Likewise, related to this topic, Oğuz Özdemir (2012) emphasized the importance of art-supported education in terms of improving scientific creativity in his article titled "Aesthetic Processes in Science Education: Art-Supported Science Education" [5].

"People live in a physical, emotional, mental and spiritual world. People can get mental acquisitions from other courses. However individuals cannot meet their needs for emotional and spiritual experiences in courses such as maths, chemistry and foreign language etc. In this sense, it can be claimed that art is the most important source that feeds the sensitiveness which affects the development circles of people" [6].

As will be shown, the educative quality of art and therefore art education besides its entertaining quality is an undeniable fact.

"According to the Board of Education and Discipline Regulations of Ministry of National Education, in the solution of risks and problems that threaten individual, family, the society that we live and the world, such acquisitions as helping each other, solidarity, tolerance, hospitality, patriotism, righteousness, goodness, cleanliness, hardworking, love, respect, being sensitive, being fair, and being participative which create the fundamentals of our social life are our most important sources of reference" [7].

Art education plays a very important role in equipping the individual with these characteristics. Art develops individuals in a versatile manner; it is also very important in making the individual a part of the society they belong to, which is socialization in short. In their study titled "The importance of art education in the socialization process of individual", Şahin and Bağcı emphasized that through art individuals could communicate easily, gain the ability to think critically, internalize the values in the works of arts and develop an accumulation of values, and become individuals who make contribution to social development [8].

In his article titled "Public Perception, Public Dialectic in Art Education", Hasbi Aslan (2016) claimed that the basic objectives of contemporary art education were ensuring that individuals are sensitive towards their community, helping them to develop beneficial interaction with their community, meeting their aesthetic needs, and ensuring that they display and interpret products. In the same article he also emphasized that the general objective of art education was similar in all European countries which were displayed under six titles, namely artistic skills, knowledge and understanding, critical approach, cultural heritage, individual expression/identity, cultural diversity, and creativity. In his paper the author drew attention to the fact that art education had a much more important place in Europe compared to Turkey in terms of average class hours, area of topic and general objectives [9].

Art education which has an extremely important place in terms of the development of countries unfortunately receives the necessary importance neither in Turkey nor in Northern Cyprus which follows a curriculum similar to Turkey: "In the elementary and secondary education institutions in our country art education is not given adequate place due to general problems related to education system, teachers, students, socio-cultural environment and school administration. The reasons of lack of interest in art education should be studied and problems should be eliminated and new programs should be developed which is essential in order to create the information society" [10].

Schools which offer art education are seen in Northern Cyprus as well as in Turkey either as education institutions which appeal to unsuccessful students or luxury. In his study, Gençaydın stated that art education is not luxury; on the contrary, it is a necessary personality education required for every individual [11]. As the basic requirements of being able to reach the level of developed countries, art education should be supported as a state policy, art should be placed in the center of education and art education should be improved further.

In this paper, an attempt is made to evaluate the situation in the Northern Cyprus of art education which is extremely valued by especially developed countries and the viewpoint of Cypriot Turks towards art in general through the eyes of the students who are enrolled at these schools.

The Objective of the Study

In this research, the opinions of students enrolled in Northern Cyprus at Nicosia Anatolian Fine Arts High School and Atatürk Vocational High School on their profession are obtained and an effort is paid to display where they see themselves in the future. In addition, based on student opinions, the viewpoint of Cypriot Turks towards art are evaluated and, based on the obtained findings, recommendations are made for the advancement of fine arts education in Northern Cyprus.

2. Method

2.1. Model of the Research

The study was conducted with quantitative research approach and in accordance with scanning model with the aim of interpreting the collected data.

2.2. Sample

As the sample of the study, 100 students enrolled at Nicosia Anatolian fine Arts High School and Atatürk Vocational High School in Northern Cyprus were chosen. While the students covered by the study were being determined, convenience sampling method was used. Convenience sampling consists of preparing a sample by beginning from the most accessible respondents until a group of needed size is reached. In this method, the aim is preventing loss of time, money and labour [12]. Therefore the schools where students included in the sample were given intense art education were chosen and the participant students were chosen among those who studied a variety of art branches such as drawing, music, handcrafts etc. Demographic features of the students chosen for research are shown in the tables below.

As can be seen in Table 1, female students preferred art schools more compared to males.

Table 1. Distribution of the participants according to gender variables.

	f	%
Female	65	65
Male	35	35

In Table 2 it is observed that children whose parents did not receive higher education preferred art schools more compared to children with parents who received higher education.

Table 2. Distribution of participants according to educational status.

	f	%
Children of parents with higher education and above degree	31	31
Children of parents with high school and below degree	69	69

2.3. Collection and Analysis of Data

In the conducted study, a total of 110 students enrolled at 10th, 11th and 12th grades of Nicosia Fine Arts High School and Atatürk Vocational High School were given a questionnaire of 10 questions 8 of which were multiple-choice. Before the application necessary permissions were obtained from Northern Cyprus Ministry of National Education and school directorates. The data were usually obtained with the help of teachers at the school during work hours. While data were collected attention was paid to ensure voluntarism and the names of the students were kept confidential. The questions were prepared by the researcher after having received the opinion of experts. Students were given 15 min in total to answer the questions. One hundred of these surveys were included in evaluation as valid. The obtained data were analyzed through statistical methods (by calculating frequency and percentage values). Then the findings were shown in tables and interpreted.

3. Findings

When Table 3 is evaluated in terms of gender, 60% of female students and 71.42% of male students stated that they would continue the branch of art they were being taught in the future whereas 16.92% of female and 14.28% of male students stated that they would decide it in the future. In addition, another point which attracts attention in Table 3 is that 20.65% of female and male participants stated that some participants from both groups (females: 13.84% and males: 2.85%) emphasized that they would not continue with their profession in the future as they thought that it would not yield any financial gains.

Table 3. Do you plan to continue with the branch of art that you are being taught in the future? (Options: a. Yes, I am planning to continue. b. Maybe, but I will decide it in the future. c. No, I am going to this school just in order to receive a diploma. d. No, because I think that I will not have any financial gains in this field).

	a		b		c		d	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Female (65)	39	60	11	16.92	6	9.23	9	13.84
Male (35)	25	71.42	5	14.28	4	11.42	1	2.85
Children of parents with higher education and above degree (31)	26	83.87	4	12.90	0	0	1	3.22
Children of parents with high school and below degree (69)	38	55.07	12	17.39	10	14.49	9	13.04

When Table 3 is examined in terms of the education status of parents, it is seen that 83.87% of the children of parents with university and higher degree plan to continue with the branch of art they are being taught whereas this ratio is 55.07% for the children of parents with high school and lower degree. On the other hand, 12.9% of children of parents with higher education degree stated that they would decide whether or not to continue with their profession in the future whereas this ratio is 17.39% in children of parents with high school or lower degree. Another remarkable element in Table 3 is that 14.49% of children of parents with high school and lower degree are going to school only in order to obtain diploma. This ratio is 0% for children of parents with university and higher degree. 13.04% of children of parents who did not receive higher education are planning to discontinue with their profession thinking that it will not yield financial income whereas this ratio is 3.22% for children of parents with higher education degree.

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that 61.53% of female students are satisfied with the education they receive on the branch of art they prefer, whereas this ratio is 74.28% for male students. The most remarkable point in Table 4 is that 32.07% of female and 14.28% of male students think that art education is not given sufficient value in Northern Cyprus for which reason they believe that the education they receive will not provide any benefit for them. In the same question, 12.3% of female students and 8.57% of male students are indecisive on whether the education they receive will be beneficial for them or not due to lack of practical application. 23.07% of females and 14.28% of males think that the education they receive will not be beneficial for them. In addition, 3.07% of female students and 2.85% of male students do not believe that education will be any use for them as they think that art is directly related to talent.

Table 4. Do you think that the education you receive will be beneficial for you in the future? (Options: a. Yes, I think that the education I receive here has developed me. b. I am not sure as I have not practiced it yet. c. I do not think that it will be beneficial enough as not much value is given to art in our country. d. No, I do not think that education will be beneficial for me as I think that art is directly related to talent).

	a		b		c		d	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Female (65)	40	61.53	8	12.30	15	23.07	2	3.07
Male (35)	26	74.28	3	8.57	5	14.28	1	2.85
Children of parents with higher education and above degree (31)	19	61.29	5	16.12	7	22.58	0	0
Children of parents with high school and below degree (69)	47	68.11	6	8.69	13	18.84	3	4.34

When Table 4 is examined in terms of the education status of parents of students, it can be seen that the satisfaction with the art education they receive is almost equal for children of parents with (61.29%) and without (68.11%) higher education degree. Again, in this table 16.12% of children of parents with higher education degree is indecisive due to lack of practice whereas this ratio is 8.69% for children of parents without higher education degree. 22.58% and 18.84% of children of parents with and without higher education degree respectively agree that the education they receive will not make sufficient contribution to them as art education is not given sufficient importance in Northern Cyprus. It is seen that 4.34% of children of parents without higher education degree believe that education will not make any contribution to them as they think that art is directly related to talent.

When Table 5 is examined, it can be seen that a majority of female and male students (female students: 49.23%, male students: 54.28%) state that their expectations at their entrance in art school are met. On the other hand, 16.92% of female students and 31.42% of male students claim that they do not think that their expectations before entering art high school have been met there, but that they are happy to receive education at this type of schools. In addition, it is seen that 23.07% of female students wanted to obtain more information about art and perform application before they entered art high school. This ratio is lower for male students (8.57%). In the last part, a considerable percentage of female and male students (16.47%) stated that art school has not met their expectations at all and that they made a mistake by receiving education there. This datum requires consideration.

Table 5. Is there any coincidence between your expectations at entrance to art school and the present situation? (Options: a. Yes, I can say that the school has met my expectations. b. I do not think that my expectations before entering art school are being met here; yet, I am happy that I receive education at these schools. c. Before entering art school I expected that I would obtain more information about art and perform applications; thus, I can say that my expectations are only partially met. d. No, it has not met my expectations at all. If I knew it would be like this, I would never consider receiving education at this type of schools).

	a		b		c		d	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Female (65)	32	49.23	11	16.92	15	23.07	7	10.76
Male (35)	19	54.28	11	31.42	3	8.57	2	5.71
Children of parents with higher education and above degree (31)	17	54.83	7	22.58	6	19.35	1	3.22
Children of parents with high school and below degree (69)	34	49.27	15	21.73	12	17.39	8	11.59

When Table 5 is examined in terms of education status of parents, 54.83% of children of parents with university and higher degrees said that their expectations when they entered art school were met whereas this ratio is 49.27% for children of parents with high school and lower degree. Examined in terms of education levels, it can be seen that at both levels the answers of students in the form of “I do not think that my expectations before entering art high school are met here but I am happy to receive education here” are close to each other (22.58% for children of parents with higher education degree and 21.73% for children of parents without higher education degree). It is also seen that the answers given to the third option of the question are close to each other. 19.35% of children of parents with higher education think that at these schools they thought that more information would be obtained and application would be made as regards art, whereas it can be seen that 17.39% of children of parents without higher education hold the same opinion. It is seen that very few students who are children of parents with university and above degree think that art school has not met their expectations (3.22%). However, this ratio is 11.59% for children of parents with high school and lower degree. Based on this finding, it can be said that children of parents without higher education degree had higher expectations from art high schools.

When Table 6 is examined, it can be seen that a majority of students (63.07% of females and 62.85% of males, 74.19% of children of parents with university and higher degrees, and 57.97% of children of parents with high school and lower degree) think that art education in our country is necessary and that art is perceived as a building block of the nation. 33.84% of female students, 28.57% of male students, 22.58% of students of parents with university and higher degree and 36.23% of children of parents with high school and below degree emphasized that art education in Northern Cyprus is a must and it should be given in other schools at least partially as well. Study of the arts in its many forms—whether as a stand-alone subject or integrated into the school curriculum—is increasingly accepted as an essential part of achieving success in school, work and life [13]. In addition, some students (3.07%, 5.71%, 3.22% and 4.34%) think that art education is necessary but there are other issues that should be given priority. Another point which attracts attention in the given answers is that, albeit very few, 2.85% of males and 1.44% of children of parents with high school and lower degree think that art education is not important and perceive it as a private field of interest.

Table 6. Do you think that art education is necessary in our country? (Options: a. Yes, art is one of the building blocks of a country. b. Yes, art education is definitely needed and it must be provided in other schools, at least partially. c. It is necessary, but there are other more important areas of priority. d. No, art education is definitely not necessary as it is a private area of interest).

	a		b		c		d	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Female (65)	41	63.07	22	33.84	2	3.07	0	0
Male (35)	22	62.85	10	28.57	2	5.71	1	2.85
Children of parents with higher education and above degree (31)	23	74.19	7	22.58	1	3.22	0	0
Children of parents with high school and below degree (69)	40	57.97	25	36.23	3	4.34	1	1.44

When Table 7 is examined, it can be seen that a majority of students (83.07%, 91.42%, 93.54%, 82.6) adored the art branches for which they were educated and that they would do this job with love for their entire life. In addition, 7.69% of females and 7.24% of children of parents with high school and lower degree stated that they preferred this education in order to provide sufficient financial income. When the given answers are paid attention, it will be seen that 4.61% of females, 8.57% of males, 6.45% of children of parents with higher education degree and 5.79% of children of parents without higher education degree wanted to become a famous person due to the education they receive. The ratio of students who chose these schools due to parent pressure is 4.34% for children of parents without higher education degree.

Table 7. What are the elements that were effective in choosing the art branch that you are studying? (Options: a. Doing a job with love which I will do for life. b. Living a good life by obtaining a sufficient financial income. c. Becoming a famous person due to the education that I received. d. The only reason that I decided to study at this school is that my parents wanted it).

	a		b		c		d	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Female (65)	54	83.07	5	7.69	3	4.61	3	4.61
Male (35)	32	91.42	0	0	3	8.57	0	0
Children of parents with higher education and above degree (31)	29	93.54	0	0	2	6.45	0	0
Children of parents with high school and below degree (69)	57	82.60	5	7.24	4	5.79	3	4.34

In answering this question which was asked as regards the future of art education in Northern Cyprus (Table 8), 16.92% of female students, 11.42% of male students, 12.9% of children of parents with university and higher degree and 15.94% of children of parents with high school and lower degree marked "a". It is observed that the choice "b" has the highest frequency in this question. Almost half of the students in each group (43.23%, 42.23%, 41.93%, and 49.27%) emphasized that if parents and the society gave necessary importance to art and supported children who wanted to study in this field, art education in Northern Cyprus would become much better. When the table is examined, it will be seen that the number of students who are not optimistic about the future of art education in Northern Cyprus is significant. Accordingly, 18.46% of female students, 31.42% of males, 25.8% of children of parents with university and higher degree and 21.73% of children of parents with high school and lower degree stated that they were not optimistic. A group of students (15.38% of females, 14.28% of males, 19.35% of children of parents with university and higher degree and 13.04% of children of parents with high school and lower degree) stated that development of art education would have meaning only if we cared for art as a society.

Table 8. What do you think about the future of art education in our country? (Options: a. Art education in our country is becoming better every day. b. If we pay required attention and support the children who want to study in this field as society, it will become better in the future. c. I am not much optimistic about the present and future status of art education in our country. d. As we do not pay attention to art as a society, development of education will not mean much).

	a		b		c		d	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Female (65)	11	16.92	32	49.23	12	18.46	10	15.38
Male (35)	4	11.42	15	42.85	11	31.42	5	14.28
Children of parents with higher education and above degree (31)	4	12.90	13	41.93	8	25.80	6	19.35
Children of parents with high school and below degree (69)	11	15.94	34	49.27	15	21.73	9	13.04

When the viewpoint of Northern Cyprus people towards art is evaluated, it can be seen that only 10.76% of female students and 11.42% of male students think that the society values art (Table 9). As can be seen in the table, almost equal ratio of female (47.69%) and male (45.71%) students think that nothing is being done in our society to popularize art. Likewise, 30.76% of female students and 34.28% of male students stated that art is seen as unnecessary in our society, whereas 7.69% of females and 8.57% of males claimed that Cypriot Turks perceived art as a somewhat luxury field of occupation.

Table 9. How does our society see art? (Options: a. Art is highly valued in our society. b. Nothing is done in our society in order to popularize art. c. In our society art is seen as unnecessary. d. In our society art is seen as a field of the well-to-do which is somewhat luxury).

	a		b		c		d	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Female (65)	7	10.76	31	47.69	22	30.76	5	7.69
Male (35)	4	11.42	16	45.71	12	34.28	3	8.57
Children of parents with higher education and above degree (31)	3	9.67	16	51.61	9	29.03	3	9.67
Children of parents with high school and below degree (69)	8	11.59	31	44.92	25	36.23	5	7.24

Only 9.67% of children of parents with university and higher degree and 11.59% of children of parents with high school and lower degree think that art is valued in our society. Careful examination of the table shows that both children of parents with university and higher degree (51.61%) and children of parents with high school and lower degree (44.92) mostly think that nothing is done in our society for the popularization of art. Likewise, a considerable group of students (29.03–36.23%) emphasized that art is seen as unnecessary in Northern Cyprus in their answers. In addition, 9.67% of children of parents with university and higher degree and 7.24% of children of parents with high school and lower degree indicated that art was seen as a somewhat luxury field of education in our society.

We planned to measure the level of awareness of students about art education with this question (Table 10). It is seen that 74.28% of males and 61.53% of females agree that art improves the society and individuals. 30.76% of females and 22.85% of males emphasize that art improves the comprehension and thinking capacity of both individuals and the society; in addition, 4.62% of females and 2.85% of males think that art makes some contribution to the society and individuals. The answer given by 3.07% of females to this question is very meaningful in that they think that art makes no contribution to the society and individuals at all.

Table 10. What is the contribution of art to the society and the individual? (Options: a. Art develops society and individuals in all aspects. b. It increases the comprehension and thinking capacity of both the society and the individual. c. Art makes some contribution to the society and the individuals. d. Art has no concrete contribution to the society and individuals).

	a		b		c		d	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Female (65)	40	61.53	20	30.76	3	4.61	2	3.07
Male (35)	26	74.28	8	22.85	1	2.85	0	0
Children of parents with higher education and above degree (31)	22	70.96	8	25.80	1	3.22	0	0
Children of parents with high school and below degree (69)	44	63.76	20	28.98	3	4.34	2	2.89

70.96% of children of parents with university and higher degree and 63.76% of children of parents with high school and lower degree think that art improves society and individuals in all aspects. Again, as can be seen in Table 10, 25.80% of children of parents with university and higher degree and 28.98% of children of parents with high school and lower degree emphasized that art made significant contribution to both individuals and the society in terms of thinking capacity in particular. 3.22% of children of parents with university and higher degree and 4.34% of children of parents with high school and lower degree answered to the same question and stated that art made little contribution to the individual and the society. As can be seen from the table, 2.89% of children of parents with university and higher degree think that art makes no contribution to the society and individuals at all.

4. Conclusions

This study which aims at determining the opinions of students studying fine arts in Northern Cyprus on their occupation and their expectations from the future and displaying their viewpoints on fine arts education has provided highly meaningful and remarkable data/results. As known, art is a phenomenon which truly cultivates, improves and carries further a society. Improving art education is especially dependent on the identification and comprehension of the problems and expectations in this field. In this sense, considering the answers provided, it can be said that essential findings are obtained which would serve the purpose.

When the answer given to the question “do you consider continuing in the future with your branch of art that you are studying?” is examined, it can be seen that a majority of female and male students consider continuing in the future with their branch of art which they study. In addition, another noticeable issue is that almost all children of parents with university and higher degree consider continuing in the future with the branch of art that they study. However, in contrast to this positive result, there are some participants who stated that they continued the school only to receive a diploma and that they did not consider continuing their profession in the future as they did not think that they would have financial gain.

Examined from the perspective of education status, it can be seen that only children of parents with high school and below degree (14.49%) are studying at art school for diploma. Again, it can be concluded from the findings that some of the children of parents with (3.22%) and without (13.04%) higher education degree do not plan of continuing with their profession as it will not bring them financial wealth. Based on this perspective, it can be easily claimed that a majority of the students studying at mentioned schools are fond of the branch of art they are studying and are thinking of continuing with it in the future. A general look at the questionnaire results shows that some of the children are not considering of establishing their livelihood on the branch of art they are studying as they think that they will not be able to gain enough income due to the lack of interest in Northern Cyprus for art. Nevertheless, the statements of some students that they study at these schools only for

a diploma is an indicator that parents and educators in Northern Cyprus fail to guide the children in profession selection properly.

When the answers given to the question “do you think that the education you receive will be beneficial for you in the future?” are examined, it can be seen that a majority of the students are satisfied with the education they receive. In addition, the general picture shows that a considerable amount of students think that the education they receive will not be beneficial for them due to the lack of importance given to art in Northern Cyprus or the lack of awareness of students in art education.

Another prominent aspect of the table is that children of parents with university or higher degree are more knowledgeable than other children. An examination of the results shows that art education in Northern Cyprus is mostly theoretical and there is a shortage of practice.

Based on the answers given to the question “is there any coincidence between your expectations when you entered the art school and the present situation?” it can be seen that a majority of female and male students (female students: 49.23%; male students: 54.28%) and children of parents with (54.83%) and without (49.27%) higher education degree stated that their expectations at their entrance to art school were met.

On the other hand, there are students who think that their expectations before entering art school are not completely met here. Again, the answers given to this question make clear that students expected to receive more theoretical information and perform more practice at art high schools. It is witnessed that a few students were not satisfied with the theoretical and practical education at art schools in Northern Cyprus at all.

Most students answered “yes” to the question “do you think that art education in our country is necessary?” and evaluated art as one of the building blocks of the nation. This shows us that regardless of gender and education status art is considered as significant by students. However, a few students stated that there were other issues that should be given priority in education more than art education. Besides, students emphasize that art education at other schools should be given partially, which is an indicator that they are aware of the importance of art in terms of social education.

The answers given to the question “what are the elements that were effective in choosing the branch of art you are studying?” displayed some interesting and diverse results. An examination of the answers given to this question shows that a majority of the students adored the branch of art they study (83.07%, 91.42%, 93.54%, 82.6%) and that they would perform this job with pleasure during their entire life. However, in addition to this positive answer, some answers were given which we cannot evaluate within the framework of art education. For example, a considerable amount of students stated that they chose this profession in order to gain sufficient financial gain (7.69% of females and 7.24% of children of parents with high school and below degree). Likewise, the ratio of those who want to become famous by courtesy of their education yields some meaningful results (4.61%, 8.57%, 6.45%, 5.79%). In addition to the foregoing, family pressure is also prominent in preferences as a factor external to the student. The ratio of females who chose these schools due to parent pressure is 4.61 percent. If we take a closer look, those who prefer these schools with parent pressure are females and children of parents with high school and below degree. Based on this proposition, it can be understood that personal preferences are more important in choosing art schools. Based on the answers provided, it is clear that in addition to the students who receive education in the field of art willingly, there are students who do not have sufficient awareness of art and do this only for financial gain, and who even receive art education in order to become famous in the future. However, it should be noted that according to questionnaire results, the students who consider financial gains are only female students or the children of parents with high school or lower degree. This result shows that these students and their parents do not have adequate concern about art and that they are not knowledgeable in this area.

The first remarkable point in the question “what do you think about the future of art education in our country?” is that a majority of students emphasized that the society should pay effort as a whole for the development of art education.

Students are optimistic in general; however, a considerable amount of students are pessimistic about the development of art education. Some of these pessimistic students stated that the development of art education did not mean much as the society did not value art.

In response to the question "how does our society see art?" an attempt was made to explore the opinions related to extra-school factors and only 10.76% of female students and 11.42% of male students believed that the society valued art. This is a rather low ratio which is an indicator that the students have negative perception about the viewpoint of society towards art. This is also clear from the answers given to other questions. For example, some students (47.69%, 45.71%, 51.61%, 44.92%) believe that nothing is done to popularize art while some students (30.76%, 34.28%, 29.03%, 36.23%) state that art is seen as trivial. Some students even state that art is seen as an activity of the wealthy and is somewhat luxury (7.69%, 8.57%, 9.67%, 7.24%). Based on all the foregoing, it can be claimed that students have a negative perception about the viewpoint of Cypriot Turkish society towards art.

Based on the answers given to the question "what is the contribution of art to the society and the individual?" it can be said that students are aware of the importance of art for the individual and the society. A majority of the students stated that art improved both the society and the individual in all aspects. Some students emphasized that art only improved interpretation and thinking capacity. The most remarkable answer to the question was given by a few students who claimed that art made little, even no contribution to the individual and the society. It is thought-provoking that some, even very few, of the students who receive art education provide such an opinion.

When the data obtained from the study are examined as a whole, it can be seen that a majority of students had positive opinions about art education that they received, and shared opinions about the development of art. In addition, it can be claimed that they have negative opinions about the art perception of the society of Northern Cyprus. Taking into consideration the obtained results, it can be seen that there are students who are not satisfied with the art education offered; in addition, it is clear that some children who do not feel related to art at all continued their education at these schools for different reasons.

Several developments are being experienced in the world in terms of education models which positively affect art education.

The term STEM which has been in full utilization in the world since 2001 began to be supported and implemented in Turkey which has close ties in educational, social, cultural and political terms with Northern Cyprus. In Northern Cyprus where the implemented curriculum is almost identical to the one used in Turkey, STEM education is not included in national education at all. The elementary, secondary and high school curricula in Northern Cyprus are not prepared and supported according to STEM education. STEAM education which was developed based on STEM education is not implemented, either. In STEAM model, art is related to creative education model based on problem-solving in addition to engineering and mathematics, which more clearly shows the importance of art education and art. It will make sure that the teenagers who chose art education especially with family pressure in Northern Cyprus fear that they will not be able to find a job after receiving art education and study only in order to receive a diploma (Table 3) will get rid of these opinions with a government education policy based on STEAM model and awareness will be raised that art can be as innovative and economically profitable as other disciplines. This is due to the fact that states in the new century will be able to maintain their economic and political freedoms as well as economic development only by exploiting the advantages of interdisciplinary cooperation between science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics and determine an innovative life style. In this sense, the importance of art will be recognized and its underestimation will be prevented in developing countries and more importance will be given to art education. For example, according to a majority of students in this study (Table 9) the society thinks that art is unnecessary and a luxury occupation of the well-to-do. This perception is actually a direct result of the failure of government in giving adequate support to art and in raising awareness in the society. Nevertheless, as will be seen in Table 3, there are students who think that art

has little or no contribution to the society and individual. An effective STEAM-model education will help eradicate this line of thought.

The question on the elements which are effective in the preference of art branch for education (Table 7) shows that students believe that they will not be able to obtain financial gain from their branch of art education in this country. This is also the result of the lack of awareness of the government concerning STEAM education. For this reason, it is witnessed that STEAM education policies should be implemented immediately in Northern Cyprus for the education of children and the youth and the development of the state. It is known that the economy of several states which implement STEM model improve and their success ranking in PISA and TIMSS exams increase. Huge improvements are being witnessed due to STEM/STEAM education which is applied in Europe, America and several developed countries of the world and the importance of interdisciplinary cooperation including art is being recognized.

When STE(A)M education model which is used in developed European countries (STEAM education stands for science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics [14]) is evaluated in terms of its results, it is seen that the sharp boundaries between science, technology, engineering, mathematics and art disappear. "The future of innovative thinking in STEM disciplines relies on breaking down the distinction between disciplines traditionally seen as creative like the arts or music, and STEM disciplines traditionally seen as more rigid or logical-mathematical. In light of this, STEAM has become an essential paradigm for creative and artistically infused teaching and learning in STEM disciplines" [15].

Through art education, individuals gain aesthetic sensitiveness, show respect to different opinions, protect their own culture and give the required value to other cultures. "Art education serves child, a young person, and an adult as a means of capturing, from the flow of time, those experiences and perceptions that are significant for human growth and for one's relationship with the world in general" [16]. Through art education, people know themselves better, gain some ethical values and learn to have a wider perspective to different topics.

According to Eurydice report [17] it is seen that art education in Europe is in good condition but it has some deficiencies (for example in many European countries visual arts and music are given the front seat in art education; however, drama, dance, architecture and media arts are paid less attention). Accordingly, a comparison shows that Northern Cyprus lags behind in terms of art education. For example, schools other than art schools in Northern Cyprus deliver only drawing and music classes in terms of art education and weekly class hours are kept at minimum (2 class hours, to be precise 45 + 45 min a week). Classes related to drama, dance, architecture and media arts are not offered at all.

Nevertheless, in most European schools art education is not only offered at fine arts high schools; separate classes are delivered at all stages of education and the education is supported and reinforced with museum visits, applications, dramas, concerts, operas and cultural trips. In this sense, it is possible to claim that Northern Cyprus is backwards compared to Europe in terms of art education. For example, as can be seen in Table 5, some students complain that not enough practice is done at art schools. It is seen that the perception of the society towards art is negative and art is given the backseat due to the failure of providing adequate art education. Likewise, as can be seen in Table 8, some students underline that the society does not pay attention to art and that if such lack of attention continues development of art will not mean much. Even worse, survey results show that secondary school graduates with low academic success are registered at fine arts schools with parent pressure so that they could receive a high school diploma.

Based on all these findings, it is crystal clear that Cypriot Turkish art education policies have to be reviewed, updated and improved.

5. Recommendations

- The awareness of students who are studying in this field should be heightened about the importance of art education.
- More theoretical information should be given at art schools and students should be provided with more opportunities for practice in the field they study.
- Courses related to art should be added to the curricula of different stages of other schools under Ministry of National Education and the sensitiveness of students towards art should be increased.
- People living in Northern Cyprus should be informed about the importance of art and art education.
- Necessary works should be launched by relevant authorities for the proliferation of artistic activities in Northern Cyprus.
- Especially parents without higher education degree should be told that they have to pay attention to the opinion of their children for choice of profession.
- Children should be given support by expert educationists/school guidance services on choice of profession.

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