

Students' Views of Art Education as Their Future Career

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Abstract

Art has long been an important subject of the education system. In Vietnam, teaching arts is taken a solid position as a subject of the education system from primary to tertiary education level. However, little is known about the situation and the need for transformation in the way students are trained to become art teachers. To clarify the view and attitudes of the to-be-an-art-teacher students, we conducted an online survey to collect data from students who enrolled in the bachelor course, majoring in art teaching at a university in Vietnam. A total of 57 students participated in the survey, most of them are females in the second year of the on-the-job B.A. course. The results showed that the respondents reported needing more diversified learning content such as applied arts, installation, and multimedia. They showed a need to have more practice sessions and fieldwork such as visiting museums and exhibitions. The respondents specified that they chose this major because they love the subject and love teaching, as well as to address the social need of learning arts, as arts seem to be a more important subject for elementary education. They shared a positive attitude toward the internationalization of local art education, however, none of them plan to study abroad. These findings imply the need for improving the quality of teaching and internationalization of art teacher education to meet international standards in the context of a developing country.

Keywords: Art Education, Art Teacher, Attitude, Internationalization, Vietnam

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Introduction

Art education encompasses a diverse range of disciplines, including art history, art theory, and art production, with the aim of fostering creativity, critical thinking, and visual literacy among students (Luehrman, 2002). Its significance lies in nurturing self-expression, promoting cultural understanding, and contributing to overall academic achievement. Moreover, art education cultivates essential life skills like problem-solving, collaboration, and communication (Kuščević et al., 2022). In Vietnam, the evolution of art education has seen notable milestones, including the establishment of the Indochina School of Fine Arts in 1925, the Vietnam Fine Arts Association in 1957, the Hue College of Fine Arts in 1957 and the Vietnam National Institute of Arts and Culture Studies and the introduction of art education programs in primary and secondary schools in the 1980s (Pham, 2010). Among these institutions, Hanoi National University of Education (HNUE), established in 1951, is a leading institution in Vietnam specialized in education and offers a comprehensive training program for art teachers.

Art education in Vietnam primarily takes place within formal school settings, spanning primary, secondary, and tertiary education levels, alongside extracurricular programs and community initiatives. According to the national curriculum, 12% of the total number of instructional hours is to be dedicated to arts education in the first two years of secondary school. In addition to arts education's necessity for nurturing creativity and an interest in culture and cultural professions amongst learners, significant evidence points to the ways arts education and creative education overall helps to lift confidence, improve problem-solving skills, and aid attainment and achievement in other key subjects like science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Do, 1987). In Viet Nam, this figure of 12% indicates Vietnamese authorities already greatly value arts education, having a result that is more than double the average for test phase countries of the CDIS, which is situated at 4.8% (UNESCO, 2012).

The curriculum typically incorporates subjects such as painting, drawing, sculpture, and art history. Teaching methods embrace a combination of lectures, demonstrations, and practical workshops. Notably, innovative approaches like project-based learning, collaborative work, and the integration of digital technology are increasingly employed (MOET, 2016). Nevertheless, challenges persist, including limited funding and resources, a shortage of teachers, and insufficient public support for the arts. Amidst these challenges, art education in Vietnam possesses promising opportunities for growth and development, particularly in light of the expanding global interest in Vietnamese art and culture, as well as advancements in digital technology. Furthermore, research has demonstrated the positive effects of art education on students' academic achievement and social skills, highlighting the correlation between participation in art education programs and improved performance academically, as well as the development of crucial social competencies such as teamwork and communication. Thus, art education serves as a vital conduit for preserving Vietnam's rich cultural heritage and supporting the burgeoning creative industries that contribute to the nation's economic growth.

Becoming an art teacher in Vietnam necessitates completing a four-year bachelor's degree program in art education or a related field, followed by potential certification exams or additional training. The training and certification process typically combines academic coursework with practical teaching experience in local schools.

Looking ahead, the future of art education in Vietnam is expected to witness continued growth and development, driven by evolving social and economic conditions. To enhance and expand art education programs, strategies such as increased funding and resources, as well as improved teacher training, can be implemented.

This study endeavors to address the existing knowledge gap regarding the perspectives and attitudes of the future art teachers in Vietnam. Specifically, the study aims to investigate the perspectives, views, and attitudes of students aspiring to become art teachers in Vietnam. By uncovering their motivations, expectations, and challenges, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into the potential areas for improvement in art education. This includes understanding the participants' attitudes towards the structure, curriculum, and teaching methods of art education and the perceived challenges faced by art education in Vietnam. The results will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on art education in Vietnam by providing up-to-date and comprehensive research findings.

Method

We conducted an online survey to collect data from students who enrolled in the BA course, majoring in art teaching at a university in Vietnam. We designed a conceptual framework (Figure 1) to make clear the goals and purpose of this attempt. Students who have interest and curiosity towards teaching arts are attracted to enroll in the B.A. program. During the course they will form a clearer preference of the contents, attitude towards arts education and internationalization, and defining future.

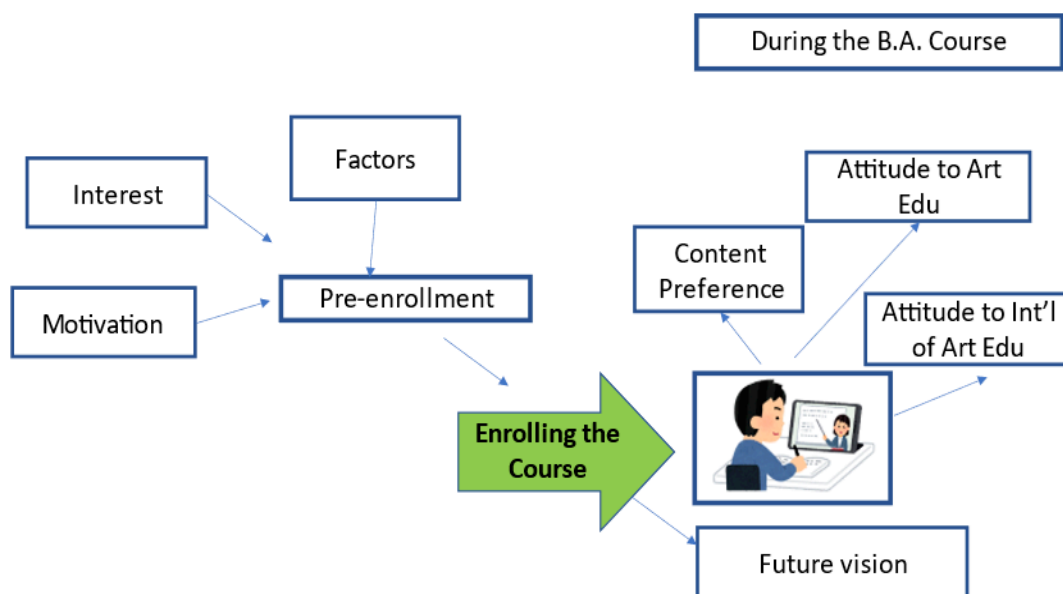


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

For data collection, we created a qualitative data form using Microsoft Forms, which included multiple-choice questions. The questionnaire consisted of personal information (5 items), views and attitude (8 items using a 5-level Likert scale where respondents can indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with a statement, ranging from "1. Strongly Disagree" to "5. Strongly Agree"), open ideas (1 item). It took approximately 5 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire was available bilingual in both Vietnamese and English. The survey was conducted during the initial two weeks of August 2022. The target respondents were the undergraduate students studying art education in a national

university in Vietnam. The survey responses were collected anonymously to ensure confidentiality and encourage candid responses from participants. Quantitative data was analyzed using IBM SPSS software, specifically employing correlation analysis to explore relationships between variables.

Results

The participants in this study have the following characteristics: they have a wide age range, with the majority being over 41 years old. There is a significant representation of female participants compared to male participants. The majority of participants are in grade 2, followed by grade 3 and grade 4. In terms of the course enrolment, most participants are enrolled in "B.A. (In service)," with a smaller number in "B.A. (Regular)" and only a few in "M.A." All the respondents have majored in Fine Arts Teaching. Figure 2 shows that most participants envision a career as an art teacher, indicating a strong interest in the field of education and art instruction. A smaller percentage aspire in professional artistic or design careers, while an even smaller group expresses interest in entrepreneurship.

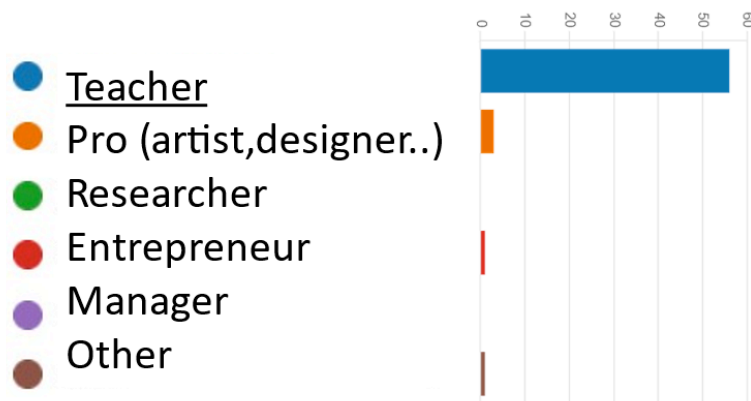


Figure 2. Respondents' envisioned career

The data in Table 1 presents the respondents' attitudes about the importance of fine art education for each level of education. There are 57 participants with valid responses in the elementary education level, and there are no missing responses. The data indicates that participants' attitudes towards the importance of fine art education tend to be relatively high across all education levels, with higher attitudes observed at elementary education level, and a gradually decrease in higher level of education. The mean score for participants at the elementary level is 4.77, indicating a relatively high attitude towards the importance of fine art education. The standard deviation of 0.627 suggests that the responses are clustered closely around the mean, indicating a high level of agreement among participants at this education level.

Table 1. Attitude about Importance of Fine Art Education

Education level	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
Elementary	57	0	4.77	0.627
Junior High	57	0	4.65	0.668
High School	57	0	4.60	0.753
Undergraduate	56	1	4.52	0.853
Graduate	57	0	4.25	1.005

Table 2 provides insights into the participants' perceptions regarding the prioritization of different aspects of fine arts in the training program, where higher values indicate a higher priority for a particular aspect.

Table 2. Which part of the fine arts needs to be prioritized in the training program?

	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
Applied	56	1	4.55	0.872
Layout	57	0	4.53	0.868
Aesthetics	56	1	4.39	0.947
Sketch	57	0	4.39	0.901
Oil painting	57	0	4.18	1.088
History of Arts	56	1	4.13	1.113
Wood	57	0	4.12	1.070
Silk painting	57	0	4.00	1.086
Sculpture	57	0	4.00	1.150
Lacquer	57	0	3.77	1.427
Other	57	0	3.18	1.702

According to the data, the participants rated "Applied" (4.55) and "Layout" (4.53) as the highest priority areas in the training program. Further analysis revealed that the respondents specified "multimedia, photoshop, installation etc." as the specific subjects of applied arts that they want to be given priority in the program. This suggests that the participants recognize the importance of practical and compositional skills in the field of fine arts. "Aesthetics" (4.39) and "Sketch" (4.39) also received high ratings, indicating that the participants consider these aspects crucial in their training. Aesthetics relates to the study and understanding of beauty, while sketching involves the foundational skill of drawing. The participants' emphasis on these aspects suggests a recognition of the significance of visual expression and artistic techniques. The data further reveals that "Oil" (4.18), "History" (4.13), "Wood" (4.12), and "Silk" (4.00) are also regarded as important areas in the training program, although they received slightly lower ratings compared to the forementioned aspects. These areas likely represent specific mediums, historical knowledge, and traditional techniques that contribute to a well-rounded fine arts education. On the other hand, "Sculp" (4.00), "Lacquer" (3.77), and "Other" (3.18) received relatively lower ratings compared to the rest. This suggests that the participants may perceive these areas as less prioritized or less essential in their training. In short, the data indicates that the participants consider applied arts, layout, aesthetics, sketching, and specific mediums such as oil and wood as important areas to prioritize in the training program. These findings can inform curriculum development and instructional strategies to better meet the needs and expectations of art teaching students.

The results shown in Table 3 indicate the motivations behind students' decision to enroll in the Fine Arts BA program.

Table 3. What motivates you to study Fine Arts?

	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
Love Teaching	57	0	4.67	0.787
Love Art	57	0	4.61	0.620
Social Need	57	0	4.49	0.909
Job Hunting	57	0	3.93	1.462
Business	57	0	3.12	1.680
Family Influence	57	0	2.84	1.820
Other	56	1	3.46	1.525

The participants rated various factors on a Likert scale, with higher scores indicating stronger motivation. Love Teaching (4.67) factor received the highest rating, suggesting that a significant number of students are motivated to pursue the Fine Arts program because they have a genuine passion for teaching. They are likely interested in sharing their knowledge and skills with others, fostering creativity, and making a positive impact on students' education. Love Art (4.61) is the second-highest rated motivation. This indicates that many students are drawn to the program because they have a deep appreciation and passion for various forms of art, such as painting, sculpture, or multimedia. Their desire to immerse themselves in the artistic process and explore different artistic techniques and expressions drives their decision to enroll. Social Need (4.49) gets a high rating suggests that a significant portion of students recognize the importance of art education in society. They are motivated to pursue the Fine Arts program because they believe that learning and promoting art is crucial for individuals' personal development and cultural enrichment. These students may be driven by a desire to contribute to the preservation and appreciation of art in their community. Job Hunting (3.93) gets a lower rating indicates that employment may not be the primary motivation for students enrolling in the Fine Arts program. Taking the fact that most of the respondents are currently working as an art teacher but probably do not possess BA degree in art teaching, it suggests that although students are more influenced by their passion for art and teaching rather than solely seeking job opportunities in the field. Business (3.12) and Family Influence (2.84) are the factors that received lower ratings compared to others, indicating that students are less driven by the potential for business or financial success in the art field or by family pressure or influence. In short, these results highlight the importance of intrinsic motivations such as love for teaching and art, as well as a recognition of the social value of art education. Students' desire to make a positive impact, foster creativity, and contribute to society through art and teaching plays a crucial role in their decision to pursue a Fine Arts BA program.

Discussion

In the study's context, while dedicated to nurturing creativity and artistic excellence, the institution also faces certain challenges, which are partly in line with the perceptions of the respondents in the current study. One of the challenges is the need to stay updated with rapidly evolving artistic techniques, technologies, and trends. The faculty must continually adapt its curriculum and teaching methods to ensure students receive relevant and comprehensive education in the ever-changing art landscape. Additionally, providing adequate resources and facilities for students' artistic endeavors can be a challenge. Art supplies, equipment, and studio spaces require continuous investment and maintenance to meet the diverse needs of students across different art disciplines. Furthermore, fostering a

supportive and inclusive learning environment for students from diverse backgrounds and artistic styles can present its own set of challenges. Balancing individual artistic expression while promoting collaboration and constructive critique requires a delicate approach. Lastly, establishing strong connections with the wider art community and industry to facilitate internships, exhibitions, and career opportunities for students is another challenge that the Fine Art Faculty must navigate.

The current study has been conducted during the fading phase of the pandemic, so we expected that the respondents still have been influenced by it at the time of the survey. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on various aspects of education, including art teacher education. As universities and educational institutions closed their premises and shifted to online learning (Tran, Nguyen, et al., 2022), art teacher education programs had to adapt to new modes of instruction. The pandemic brought about radical disruptions to routines, revenues, and relationships in the arts and cultural sector globally, including art teacher education in Vietnam (Tran, Kanchana, et al., 2022). In response to physical distancing measures, the value of connection, culture, and the arts became more pronounced [2]. In the context of teacher education, the pandemic presented both challenges and opportunities for art teachers. It prompted them to reevaluate and redesign their pedagogical models to better meet the needs of learners. The transition to blended learning, combining online and face-to-face teaching, became more prominent and emphasized the importance of flexibility in education. While there were initial struggles and issues during the technological transition, teachers demonstrated resilience and commitment to delivering quality art education even in the midst of a pandemic. The experience of the pandemic has likely influenced art teacher education by promoting the integration of technology, fostering adaptability, and reinforcing the importance of connection and cultural enrichment in art education (SingTeach, 2020).

There are limitations that may have influenced the findings. The sample size was relatively small, consisting of only 57 students from a single university in Vietnam. This limits the generalizability of the findings to a broader population of art teacher education students in the country. A larger and more diverse sample would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the views and attitudes of art teaching students. Moreover, the survey was conducted online, which may have introduced certain biases. The reliance on self-reported data from participants could be subject to social desirability bias. Moreover, the online nature of the survey may have excluded individuals who do not have access to or are less proficient in using technology. Additionally, the study focused solely on the perspectives of art teaching students and did not explore the viewpoints of other stakeholders, such as art educators, practicing art teachers, or educational policymakers. Including these perspectives would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities within art teacher education in Vietnam. The study was conducted within the context of a developing country, which may have unique challenges and considerations that differ from those in other countries. Despite these limitations, this study provides valuable insights into the views and attitudes of art teaching students in Vietnam and lays the groundwork for further research and improvement in art teacher education. Future studies could overcome these limitations by employing larger and more diverse samples, incorporating multiple perspectives, and addressing the practical barriers to implementing necessary changes in art teacher education programs.

Conclusion

In this study, we examined the views and attitudes of students enrolled in a bachelor's program in art teaching in Vietnam. The results shed light on the current situation and the need for transformation in the training of future art teachers. The findings revealed that the surveyed students expressed a desire for more diverse learning content, including applied arts, installation, and multimedia. They also expressed a need for increased practical sessions and fieldwork, such as visiting museums and exhibitions. The students chose the art teaching major out of their passion for the subject and their interest in addressing the societal need for arts education, particularly in elementary schools. Additionally, they displayed a positive attitude toward the internationalization of local art education, although none of them had plans to study abroad. These findings underscore the importance of enhancing the quality of art teacher education and promoting internationalization to align with global standards in a developing country context. By addressing these needs and aspirations, the education system in Vietnam can better prepare future art teachers who are equipped to meet the evolving demands of the field and contribute to the growth and advancement of art education in the country.

Overall, this study contributes valuable insights into the perspectives of students pursuing a career in art teaching, highlighting areas for improvement, and emphasizing the significance of internationalization in art teacher education. Future efforts should focus on implementing the suggested changes, such as incorporating more diverse learning content and providing ample opportunities for practical experiences, to enhance the effectiveness and relevance of art teacher training programs. Furthermore, collaboration and exchange with international institutions can facilitate the sharing of best practices and innovative approaches in art education. By addressing these challenges and embracing the opportunities, Vietnam can strengthen its art education system and nurture a new generation of skilled and passionate art teachers who will shape the artistic development and appreciation of future generations.

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