

Motivational Effects of ‘Artists in Schools Program’ (AIS) in Visual Art Education Among Secondary School Students in Malaysia

Wan Juria Emeih Binti Wahed, Wan Juliana Emeih Wahed, Patricia Pawa Pitil

ABSTRACT---Given the growing demand for and trends in economic and social reforms, adaptive and creative generations are needed. In the Malaysian context, one of the greatest challenges entails motivation to pursue Arts Education, especially within the formal education sector. For the majority of the affected countries, one of the promising solutions involves the promotion of collaboration between schools and artists. This collaboration entails the sharing of experiences and ideas between the concerned parties. In this study, the main aim was to explore the motivation of secondary school students towards pursuing Visual Arts Education. The target program that was investigated involved “Artists in Schools (AiS),” a collaborative program. Participants involved nine artists and nine schools. Participant registration was achieved via a website established by the researcher. Regarding a face-to-face interview session that was held, one student was selected from each school. From the perspective of the research design, the study involved multiple case studies. The objective was to discover new information regarding the motivation of the students. Hence, the data collection process involved secondary data, direct observation, and conducting interviews. The theoretical framework that guided the review of literature and inference-making processes involved Keller’s ARCS Motivational Theory. From the results, AiS plays an instrumental role towards the enhancement and encouragement of students’ motivation in arts; translating into improved creativity among the learners.

Keywords: Secondary school students, motivation, arts education, ‘Artists in Schools Program’ (AiS)

I. INTRODUCTION

From the report by the Ministry of Education (2013), most of the schools in Malaysia had witnessed significant improvement compared to the rest of Asia. Hence, the rest of Asia has had schools experience significant challenges that are worth addressing, especially due to the relationship between this ability to tackle the perceived challenges and the realization of socio-economic development at the country level (Sadiman, 2004; 2008). Despite this growing demand, arts education continues to receive little attention, making the future of the subject in the Malaysian context uncertain (Ling, 2014). The lack of acknowledge regarding the criticality of this subject implies further that the learning

and creativity processes (among students) might be hampered, translating further into poor academic performance. Imperatively, one of the notable factors determining the students’ degree of academic performance entails motivation (Ling, 2014, Seffetullah, 2014). Among stakeholders such as educators, the arts lovers, and the rest of the public, art education is one of the most important issues that have been discussed continuously, yet little attention is directed to the subject; especially among policy makers in the Malaysian context (Rage, 2015). Notably, motivation forms one of the most crucial parameters that shape success in human life (Baharom Mohamad Dan Ilyas Hashim, 2009). In education, a study by Khairudin (2007) demonstrated that there is a correlation between motivation and academic achievement among learners.

Ranging from the planning phase to program implementation, arts education continues to face problems in Malaysia. The challenges revolve around issues of planning and implementation and threaten to stall progress and also hamper motivation among students, hence their creativity (Fa’izah et. al., 2009). One of the factors observed to contribute to this situation entails ineffective teaching strategies, which hamper the teaching-learning process implementation (Sadiman, 2004; Song, 2008; Faizuan, 2016).

In one of UNESCOs’ world conference on art education, which was held in 2016 (in Lisbon, Portugal), the main purpose was to determine trends in arts education, as well as the incorporation of creativity in the education process. One of the outcomes that have been observed to be promising involves the road map targeting art education, which acknowledges that in the 21st century, there is growing need for innovative, adaptable, flexible, and creative workforces. Also, the aspect acknowledges that these shifting conditions call for the evolution of the education system to ensure that it is responsive. The quest to create a responsive education system arose further from the need to keep abreast with the 21st century’s demands, especially by ensuring that graduates are better placed to analyze the environment in which they live and ensure that they cope accordingly, having aligned their goals to the visions and missions of firms to which they might be attached.

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Wan Juria Emeih Binti Wahed, Faculty of Arts, Computing and Creative Industry, Sultan Idris Education University, Tanjung Malim, Perak, Malaysia. (amiesaiiful@yahoo.com)

Wan Juliana Emeih Wahed, Faculty of Art and Design, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Sarawak, Malaysia. (wanjuliana@sarawak.uitm.edu.my)

Patricia Pawa Pitil, Faculty of Sports Science & Recreation, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Sarawak, Malaysia. (patriciapawa@sarawak.uitm.edu.my)

In Arts education, the demand for innovative, creative and flexible generations account for the increasing pressure to embrace change. Through positive energy, it is predicted that students will better placed to participate in different activities actively and also think critically. According to Theresa Amabile (1998), a renowned psychologist in the U.S., humans are likely to gain motivation through the avoidance of external pressure, the provision of challenging tasks, satisfaction, and interest. For students, this observation implies that the decision to motivate them to gain more knowledge and skills might make them to exhibit good behaviors, become more positive, and remain focused on the tasks that they are assigned. In situations, where the learners are less motivated, the resultant problem is that the instructors end up spending more energy and time on the teaching process; implying that academic success is predicted by motivation among students (Crotty, 2013). With a correlation between motivation and academic success documented, a study by Fluke, Reece, Olson dan Cathcart (2015) indicated that the concept plays a crucial role in shaping trends in the education sector. From the assertion by Nevid (2013), motivation strives to maintain, drive, and activate positive behaviors among individuals.

In the last four decades, there has been an increase in the exposure of students to the external environment. In psychology education, studies such as those conducted by Piaget (1974) and Vygotsky (1978) indicate that by becoming active, students end up relating theoretical knowledge to practical situations in the real world. Notable, students can also be exposed to the external world indirectly by engaging them in collaborative projects within the school community, including interaction with artists. Through this collaboration, artists, teachers and students tend to gain opportunities for fun and diverse learning experiences. Hence, it becomes a platform from which opinion, skills, knowledge and ideas are shared regarding different subjects in the field of art. Furthermore, the interaction allows learners to gain opportunities to engage with other genres and fields via progressive and innovative approaches, eventually stimulating their motivation.

According to Badrolhisham Muhammad Tahir (2011), the effort by different stakeholders in art education, especially that which entails student motivation, is worth implementing because it allows individual learners to become active and contribute to the subject being discussed. However, other scholarly studies avow that the process is at the infancy stage and that there is a need to implement different strategies that seek to improve the quality of education in arts, especially among stakeholders in the education research community (Blackstone et al., 2015).

The observation above aligns with the vision of the Malaysian Ministry of Education, whose goal to steer artistic thinking through motivation and reinforcing the process of knowledge, skill, and idea sharing among the concerned parties (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2015). In another study, Iberahim, Md Nasir and Jamilah (2003) observed that teacher incompetency in relation to content delivery and poor interaction with students hinder the vision of achieving motivation, especial in the Visual Arts subject. In future, these challenges are predicted (if

unaddressed) to yield a problem of poor linkages between theory and practice. The problem of teacher incompetency is also seen to compromise the intended values and quality of arts education; with the Malaysian context unexceptional. In this study, the main aim was to explore how the AiS program affects motivation among Visual Art students, targeting secondary schools in the Malaysian context.

II. METHODS

To determine the correlation between learner motivation and the AiS, this study employed a qualitative approach. The study gained data from nine artist and nine schools. The selection of these parties involved a focus on schools that had registered on the website <http://www.artistsinschoolsmalaysia.com>, a site that had been developed by the researcher. Indeed, 319 participants were selected, having targeted Peninsular Malaysia's six zones. The zones included the western zone (Melaka), the Klang Valley zone (Kuala Lumpur), the lower east coast zone (Pahang), the upper east coast zone (Kelantan), the lower north zone (Perak), and the upper north zone (Kedah). Regarding participants form the AiS program, they included students enrolled in the Visual Art Education subject. Hence, those who had not enrolled in the subject were excluded from participating. As suggested by Merriam (1998), such an approach, involving at least two case studies, constitutes a multisite or multiple case study, which yields varied information. Some of the factors that prompted the use of a multiple case study approach included the need to gain data from different participants' viewpoints and contexts, and the ability to be replicated and yield similar patterns (as documented by Merriam (1998)).

Indeed, descriptive and narrative approaches were used. In relation to data collection, secondary data, direct observation, and interviews were used. To guide the inference-making process, Keller's ARCS Motivational theory was incorporated. Imperatively, about three or four hours were spent in the AiS sessions, ensuring that constructive and reliable data was collected. The process began by introducing the program and different artists before providing room for the sharing of experiences and technical knowledge between the selected students and artists. The figure below describes the AiS activity approach in the selected schools.

Figure 1.1: Program description

Time	Activity
8.30 – 9.00 am	The invited artists and organizer's
9.00 – 9.30 am	Briefing
9.30 am – 1.00 pm	Beginning of the session
1.00 – 1.30 am	Conducting in-depth interviews
1.30 pm	End

After the session, a two-hour task was given to both the students and the artists. In the process, there was direct observation in which the artists were allowed to give



opinions regarding progress. Later, there was a brief talk before the AiS activity was concluded. As mentioned earlier, a student was selected from each school and exposed to a face-to-face interview, with data recorded systematically to support effective analysis of the results.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The ages of the student selected for participation ranged from 13 to 17 years. The interview sessions, which involved one student from each school, lasted between 10 and 20 minutes. The aim of the interview sessions was to aid in gaining first-hand information regarding the students' viewpoints, as well as provides room for further inquiry to understand areas that required further research (regarding the subject that was being investigated). Particularly, the interviewees were asked to respond to three questions, which touched on the ARCS Motivational Theory.

Figure 1.2: A highlight of the interview questions

Context	Interview Questions	
Inquiry about attention	1.	What is your opinion about the artist?
Inquiry about relevance	2.	What was the artist' emphasis in relation to the AiS session?
Inquiry about confidence and satisfaction	3.	Does the AiS program or session provide interesting learning features?

As indicated in the table above, the ARCS Motivational Theory' four major elements of emphasis were investigated; including satisfaction, confidence, relevance, and attention.

Question no 1: What is your opinion about the artist?

The aim of this question was to unearth the opinions or views of the participants in relation to the importance of AiS implementation. The interview outcomes, which were obtained from nine participants, are summarized as follows:

- Inf 1: "I support the process of allowing students and teachers to interact with various artists in the school setting "
- Inf 2: "I prefer being shown different artists from different fields and areas "
- Inf 3: "The most interesting bit is the painting that the artist shows to me"
- Inf 4: "The main development that the artist sensitized me involved color development"
- Inf 5: "He encouraged students to work in different fields and genres and also emphasized cretaivity"
- Inf 6: "I had never interacted with an artist directly. It is fun. I hope to interact with more in future "
- Inf 7: "the artist uses a positive approach and has motivated me "
- Inf 8: "i gained more knowledge in art education, especially about coloring"

Inf 9: "the experience was exciting and fun. I gained a lot of information about art education and what is expected to me as a studnet "

Question no 2: What was the artist' emphasis in relation to the AiS session?

In this question, the central objective was to determine how AiS implementation was likely to enable the learners to link theoretical content with practice in the real world. Also, the question sought to determine the extent to which the invited artists had supported the students in achieving the intended goals of the AiS program. For the researcher, this question aimed at determining and predicting the feasibility of the program to arts education, especially visual art education. The participants' responses are summarized as follows:

- Inf 1: "The artist's approach is promising and easy to understand. I have been motivated to do further inquiry in visual arts education. I look forward to succeeding in the subject"
- Inf 2: "The artist gave me tips on painting. It stretches all the way form the composition stage to the coloring stage. I have gained knowledge that will help me to develop interesting and creative posters that appeal to the audience"
- Inf 3: "The artist enabled me to gain freedom of independent working and also minimize resource wastage"
- Inf 4: "I have gained a lot of knowledge from the program. I am more courageous and free to work independently. The artist emphasized creativity and now I understand the importance of being creative in this subject"
- Inf 5: "The artist emphasized the process of sketching through water-cooling. He guided me well in the course of the program. He also gave me an opportunity to work with freedom, with his role being only to guide me in various steps."
- Inf 6: "The artist encouraged me to bring along papers and pencils in most cases, emphasizing that new ideas could emerge at any moment and in any situation or setting. The program proved useful to me"
- Inf 7: "I am motivated and would prefer to interact with such artists again in future, especially to gain more skills about coloring and painting"
- Inf 8: "The program exposed me to more issues in visual arts education, especially about drawing and coloring; due to the artist's emphasis of different stepwise procedures . i hope to interact with them again in future"
- Inf 9: "I was satisfied with the program. I met famous artists and learned a lot of information about visual arts education and various procedures"

Question no 3: Does the AiS program or session provide interesting learning features?

To unearth the relationship between AiS program implementation and the



selected participants' confidence in arts education (as well as the prediction of their satisfaction), indeed, confidence reflects one's positive outlook, as well as their level of expectation in relation to the realization of a certain objective. This observation also holds for the student community. When confidence is compromised, it is also notable that most of the students are unlikely to understand the intended concepts. To achieve satisfaction, it is expected that individuals' efforts are recognized accordingly, especially regarding the ability to realize the intended objectives. Through satisfaction, it becomes possible to enhance the motivation and enthusiasm of individuals, eventually becoming better placed to tackle more challenging tasks.

- Inf 1: "The program has transformed me into a creative thinker. I have gained knowledge form basic materials in art education. I have also understood the issue of the box frame 3D. It has stimulated me to analyze more information about the subject. The interaction was positive and support. It has also made us more cheerful, especially by interacting with the artists directly. I support that the program is continued in future because it promises improvements in the academic performance of students in visual art education"
- Inf 2: "The program is unique. I support it fully. It should be continued in future. It has provided me with new knowledge and skills. It also breaks the boredom in traditional and conventional classroom settings and teaching-learning sessions or interactions"
- Inf 3: "I have always yearned for such experiences. The program should continue. The collaboration gives learners an edge and ability to understand concept in art education"
- Inf 4: "The program has enabled me to improve on my weaknesses. It should be continued in future"
- Inf 5: "I am proud of this program and support its continuation"
- Inf 6: "I believe the program should be supported in future and should be continued because it makes art education easier and also enables learners to apply theoretical information to practical content in the real world"
- Inf 7: "From what I have gained in this program, I prefer that it is continued because it improves students' knowledge and skills in art education"
- Inf 8: "I think the program needs to be supported and should continue to be implemented because it improves the understanding of concepts in art education"
- Inf 9: "The program is very beneficial to students and is worth continuing and supporting"

IV. CONCLUSION

In summary, the results obtained by this study demonstrate that AiS plays n instrumental role towards the enhancement and realization of motivation among students, especially regarding their interest in arts education. As such, it is worth inferring that the program tends to improve

creativity among learners. From the analysis of the collaboration between schools and artists, it is also evident that there is positive response and feedback whereby most of the participants concurred that AiS is worth incorporating into arts education.

Relative to the ARCS Theory, collaborative sessions involving AiS program implementation exhibit a positive relationship with motivation among students, especially in visual arts education. Indeed, most of the participants indicated that the program had prompted their interest or attention in the subject, coming due to the presence of artists in their schools. Hence, the AiS program is seen to drive learners to more positive attractions regarding visual arts educational involvement.

From the majority of the participants' view, it is also worth inferring that AiS implementation poses beneficial effects in terms of relevance, findings that concurred with the assertion in the ARCS Theory. Specific factors that were cited to contribute to the relevance of the program included the provision of an opportunity to learn new content, as well as the provision of room to apply theory to practice. Hence, AiS implementation was observed to increase the learners' interest, having made tasks easy to learn and accomplish or complete. The collaboration also paved the way for the learners to explore the subject's basics, translating into skill improvement in relation to the achievement of the intended goals of arts education.

In Malaysia, there is growing need for high-quality education, especially due to the quest to achieve stability and continuity in the future of the education system. From the component of confidence, which is contained in the ARCS Theory, AiS is seen to make the learners to have a positive expectation regarding the achievement of the intended student or learning outcomes.

In the ARCS Theory, another notable component involves satisfaction, which can be measured through the determination of the degree of intrinsic motivation and rewards such as praise, certificates, and gifts to students. From the findings gained from the selected participants, most of the individuals were positive about the AiS program. Particularly, most of the individuals had their responses emphasize excitement as a product of the AiS program, especially due to the resultant interaction and idea sharing with professional artists. Hence, the final component of the ARCS Theory was evident in their responses. Hence, there is a need for stakeholders in arts education to emphasize the criticality of producing experts in the subject, with the AiS program poised to play a supportive role in achieving this vision.

In summary, this study concludes that Malaysian schools ought to embrace collaboration (such as between artists and schools or the student community). The impact of this collaboration is predicted to stretch beyond student motivation and enhanced creativity to emerge as an eye-opener for society to support visual art education in the country.



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