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Dear ABDULWAHAB, R.

ACCEPTANCE OF ARTICLE FOR PUBLICATION

I am happy to inform you that your article entitled: "An Assessment of the Relationship between Aesthetic Expression and Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State" has been assessed and accepted for publication in *Ilorin Journal of Health Promotion and Environmental Health Education* Volume 8, No. 1.

You will be sent a complimentary copy of the edition as soon as it is out.

On behalf of the Editorial Board, accept my congratulations as we look forward for your future contributions.

Yours faithfully.

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**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AESTHETIC EXPRESSION AND
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN ILORIN SOUTH
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KWARA STATE**

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Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between aesthetics and educational performance among primary school pupils in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design where two research questions were raised and one hypothesis was formulated. The population of the study consist of 100 pupils randomly selected across the primary schools in the sampled area. A researcher self-constructed questionnaires relationship between aesthetics expression and academic performance (RAEAP) and profoma were used for data collection. The validity of the instrument was conducted by two experts in Childhood Education and Psychology, University of Ilorin respectively, while Cronbach Alpha reliability method used yielded an index of 0.71. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions raised, while PPMC was used to test the hypothesis formulated. The findings revealed that integrating aesthetic expression into the curriculum has great value and benefits on pupils' academic performance, and there were underlying challenges facing the integration of aesthetics experiences into primary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State. Also, it was revealed that that there is significant relationship between aesthetics expression and pupils' academic performance in primary school in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State. It was therefore recommended that curriculum planners should ensure the integration of aesthetic expression into primary school curriculum, school management should ensure proper implementation of the aesthetic expression so as to make sure that its usefulness is unfold, and school management should ensure that the barriers that may impede the implementation of aesthetic expression is taken care of.

Introduction

Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy that makes clear the laws and principles of beauty. Furthermore, the nature of aesthetics is to express appreciation and admiration. In essence aesthetics seeks to clarify tastes in terms of what is beautiful. Aesthetics is the formal study of art especially with relation to the idea of beauty. One of the central questions in aesthetics is whether beauty is in the eye of the beholder or whether there is something else within an object that makes it beautiful. As Oluwasina (2014) puts it, there is no art without aesthetic value. It is therefore the perspective of view that gives a good or bad impression of an object or a thing. Thus, taste differs from one person to the other; just as it is natural for man to admire or appreciate a particular object. Art communicates to us through our eyes.

Art is observed or looked at and we try to read meanings into it. Through this, we are trying to locate some meanings in the experience; that is the experience derived from looking at an art object. Thus, communication takes place through seeing which is the mode of perception. Science has confirmed that such mode of perception is the interpretation of sensory data. Seeing is made possible through the eyes. In visual perception, the eye takes in information in the form of light patterns while the brain processes these patterns to give meaning (Geltin 2012). However, you should note that we do not see things the same way and, in some situations, we do not all see the same things at the same time. These facts should be born in mind when you are in contact with learners. The word Aesthetics associated with education, means for most people art education. The assumption is that aesthetic expressions, aesthetic judgement, and aesthetic mode of perception are to be predominantly related to the area of fine arts.

Aesthetic expression in education is therefore seen as a work in or about these various forms of art such as music, dance, and other creative activities. Aesthetic expression deals mainly with visual art in Nigerian schools. In the National Policy on Education (2014), there's a laid down aesthetic (creative and cultural Arts) curriculum for Nigerian Primary schools as detailed by the National implementation committee. The goals of the Curriculum at the primary school level include the laying of a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking and more importantly to give the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable him to function effectively in the society within the limits of his capacity. However, at these very young stages of life and because Creative and Cultural Arts naturally involve creativity through exploration and experimentation, special teaching approaches are required. It is vital that the arts in education receive an equal, independent status in relation to other subject areas. These gives equal weight to the artistic and human experience, to those individuals who create and those

who live in an environment in which such experiences are created-the artist and audience (Gadsden, 2018).

Through aesthetic expression, students learn to develop the necessary imaginative, intellectual, theoretical and practical skills to equip them for continuing personal development and professionalism (Ajibade, Enamhe and Oloidi, 2011). Art informs and provides visual, tactile and more practical learning environments. In the primary and secondary level of education, art teaching is in the service of general development of the pupils, which actually starts with drawing and illustrations in demonstrations of events which are supposed to be read out. But, instead of reading out, the illustrations speak on their own and leave lasting impressions in the pupils. Thus, the way to meaningful aesthetic understanding is through the study of architecture, sculpture, painting, drawing, music, theatre and dance. Visual art is a creative challenge to children. It is of great pleasure and satisfaction in developing the child's skills, abilities, imagination and observations when involved. In visual arts, certain factors are taken into consideration when looking at an artwork for example in the assessment or appreciation of a work of art the following may serve as reference point.

It is keen observation that gives the individual an unbiased assessment or appreciation, whether the work is beautiful or not. Getlein, (2012) puts it that, "Beauty is deeply linked to our thinking about art. Aesthetics, the branch of philosophy that studies art, also studies the nature of beauty." Visuals arts more especially are primarily concerned with the manipulation of materials to express ideas. This manipulation of materials in expressing ideas could be in a two-dimensional or a three-dimensional form. Those that are expressed in two-dimensional forms include: drawing, painting, textile design, and graphics

The significance of visual art in the development of a child cannot be debated, art is a tool subject. It is the child's lingua franca, through art the child's understanding and thoughts are made clearer. Other subjects require visuals and illustrations to back up the process of learning. To support the importance of learning from visuals, Ajibade and Elemi (2011), carried out a study on the importance of visuals in primary and secondary schools in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. They discovered that students performed better using visuals and illustrations to learn than those who learnt without them. They explained that teaching and learning is a complex process that can be reinforced with learning aids which stimulate, motivate as well as arrest learner's interest. Whenever the eyes and ears are used together, there are always better results recorded. Visual art arouses interest, so it leaves an

impression on the pupils. It helps the pupils to concentrate on and remember their work; they share experiences and active participation in class.

Aesthetic expression an important part of education. Many students find it difficult to express themselves through words, but art can offer a positive outlet. It also encourages children to express themselves through art, allowing them to become better communicators, team players, and accept mistakes. Participation in arts-related activities helps children excel in math, science, and writing competitions, and can improve their emotional health. In addition, it enhances academic performance and helps children develop communication skills. According to Burger and Winner, "When [visual] art instruction is not integrated with reading, such instruction has no effect on reading achievement scores, but has a moderate effect on reading readiness scores.

Research demonstrates a direct connection between visual arts and learning performance. Children rely on their senses to take in the world around them. With all the videos, pictures and recordings available, learners become actively engaged in their learning. Aesthetic expression should encourage and instruct aesthetic appreciation as it further promotes a child's holistic development and learning in the arts as it cultivates personal concepts of what they consider and define 'pleasing' art.

More so, instruction and development of aesthetic appreciation encourages individual pride and satisfaction in personal artwork as well as supporting what a child considers aesthetically pleasing. Bhroin (2017) noted that the art of young children has intense meaning to them, therefore in an early childhood context educator must embolden a sense of aesthetic appreciation in a child towards their personal work, encouraging them to examine and critique their art, increasing their critical thinking and reflection skills. Consequently, this research aims to investigate the relationship between aesthetic expression and learners' academic performance among a specific population, school children in Ilorin South, Kwara State.

Aesthetic education generally integrated in education has substantial positive effects on the overall academic performances of children. Therefore, the integration of aesthetics expression in the education curriculum can provide educational opportunities for a greater understanding of art and a method for teaching critical thinking. Considering art through an aesthetic approach can positively affect a student's appreciation. In many instances, students can see the link between humankind and art. This understanding can influence how students see beauty and the way they appreciate and understand art. The ability to view art using aesthetic methods of interpretation allows students to make personal judgments about why and how they respond to the art in a variety of ways.

Some educators and the National Standards in the Visual Arts say that the teaching of art should not focus solely on its production. Distinct goals should be set to provide both the knowledge and the opportunity for students to fully understand and appreciate art. The National Standards indicate that students should have the opportunity to visually experience art throughout history and to use a variety of media through hands-on activities. A variety of media should be explored; the students should assimilate the knowledge learned. They should analyse art through looking and exploring its meaning. Finally, students should incorporate this knowledge into their own work. Despite the stated policy on education regarding aesthetic experiences, student aesthetic expressions have been neglected. And also state institutions and various government documents or professional literature offer mostly theoretical starting points about the importance and role of aesthetic expression, which are also taken into account by curriculum designers; however, they do not provide any concrete didactic approaches to promoting aesthetic expression; teaching arts education.

Purpose of the Study

The general objective for this study is to investigate the relationship between aesthetic expression and academic performance of pupils in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State. Specifically, this study intends to:

1. Examine the benefits of integrating aesthetic expression into the curriculum of primary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State.
2. Find out the challenges and barriers faced in implementing aesthetic expression programs in primary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State.
3. Investigate the relationship between aesthetic expression such as visual arts, music and dance on the overall academic performances of pupils.

Research Questions

The research questions that this study aims to answer are listed below:

1. What are the benefits of integrating aesthetic expression into the curriculum of primary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State?
2. What are the challenges and barriers faced in implementing aesthetic expression programs in primary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State?

Research Hypothesis

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between aesthetic expression such as visual arts, music and dance on the overall academic performances of pupils in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State.

Methodology

The focus of this study is mainly on investigating the relationship between aesthetic expression such as visual arts, music and dance on the overall academic performances of pupils in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State. It employed a descriptive survey where the opinions of the participants were sought for the research. The population of the study consists of all registered primary schools in Ilorin South Local Government Area, while the target population would be all the primary school teachers. A sample of 100 teachers was drawn for this study from the target population using simple random sampling technique, and this will give a total number of 100 primary school teachers as the respondents for the study. In order to elicit valid information from the respondents, a researcher self-constructed questionnaire titled relationship between aesthetics expression and academic performance (RAEAP) and a profoma were used with clear information for the respondents.

The instrument adopted for this research work a researcher self-constructed questionnaire titled relationship between aesthetics expression and academic performance (RAEAP) and profoma. The questionnaire would be in section A and B: section A would be employed to gather data on the personal information of the respondents, while the section B would be used to elicit information on relationship between aesthetics expression and academic performance. The items in the section B would be structured in four-likert format of Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed, and Strongly Disagreed.

In order to ensure the validity of the instruments, face and content validity would be used where the items on the questionnaire and would be checked against the research purposes. An expert judgment would also be sought from the supervisors and two other lecturers from the department who will assist in the validation of the research instruments. To measure the reliability of the tool, the researcher would assign some copies of the instrument to some respondents. In this case, twenty-two copies of the instrument would be administered on the representative and the scores would be tested against the instrument to ensure its reliability using Cronbach Alpha. The data collected was analyzed with the use of descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation) to answer the research questions raised, while inferential statistics (PPMC) were used to test the hypothesis formulated.

The results of the findings are shown below:

Research Question 1: *What are the benefits of integrating aesthetic expression into the curriculum across different grade levels in schools in Ilorin South LGA?*

In order to ascertain the benefits of integrating aesthetic expression into the curriculum across different grade levels in schools in Ilorin South, LGA, mean of responses of the teachers to each items on the questionnaire were computed, having four likert scale format of Strongly Agreed (4 points), Agreed (3 points), Disagreed (2 points), and Strongly Disagreed (1 point). In other to get the cut-off mark, the average of the total point was calculated to be 2.50 (That is; $4+3+2+1 = 10$; $10/4 = 2.50$). Therefore, any mean point below 2.50 was tagged negative while mean score above 2.50 is tagged positive. The result is presented in the table below:

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation showing the benefits of integrating aesthetic expression into the curriculum across different grade levels

S/N	ITEMS	X	Rank	Remarks
1.	Aesthetic expression enhances pupils' overall academic performance.	2.77	1 st	Positive
2.	Aesthetic expression trains pupils' sense of coordination.	2.59	7 th	Positive
3.	Pupils who engage in artistic activities tend to perform better in their studies.	2.67	2 nd	Positive
4.	Exposure to art and aesthetics improves pupils' critical thinking skills.	2.52	11 th	Positive
5.	Pupils who participate in arts gets distracted from their other academic subjects.	2.49	12 th	Negative
6	Aesthetic expression encourages pupils to explore different academic subjects.	2.61	4 th	Positive
7	Pupils who engage in artistic activities exhibit higher levels of academic curiosity.	2.60	6 th	Positive
8	Exposure to aesthetic expression makes pupils playful.	2.48	14 th	Negative
9	Aesthetic expression encourages pupils to think outside the box, positively impacting their academic performance.	2.61	4 th	Positive
10	Expose to aesthetic expression develops the pupils' abilities and imagination.	2.57	8 th	Positive
11	Aesthetic expression gives the pupils opportunities for developing manipulative skills.	2.63	3 rd	Positive
12	Pupils who actively participate in artistic expression demonstrate improved problem-solving abilities.	2.55	9 th	Positive
13	Aesthetic expression does not necessarily enhance pupils' performance.	2.47	15 th	Negative
14	Aesthetic expression improves pupils' attention span and concentration in class.	2.55	9 th	Positive
15	Aesthetic appreciation negatively impacts pupils' motivation to excel academically.	2.49	12 th	Negative
Weighted Mean		2.57		

Table 1 above revealed the benefits of integrating aesthetic expression into the curriculum across different grade levels in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State. The evidence on the benefits was seen from the table above from the mean value of all the items which are all greater than 2.50 except items 5, 8, 13, and 15 which are less than 2.50. From the teachers' response, it was revealed that aesthetic expression; enhances pupils' overall academic performance, makes pupils perform better in their studies, gives the pupils opportunities for developing manipulative skills, encourages pupils to explore different academic subjects, encourages pupils to think outside the box; positively impacting their academic performance, exhibit higher levels of academic curiosity, trains pupils' sense of coordination, and develops the pupils' abilities and imagination. These were ranked 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th respectively in accordance with their mean values from the highest to the least. The overall mean value of 2.57 which is greater than the cut-off mean of 2.50 indicated that integrating aesthetic expression into the curriculum has great value and benefits on pupils' academic performance in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State.

Research Question 2: *What are the challenges of implementing aesthetic expression in primary school curriculum in Ilorin South LGA?*

In order to find out the challenges of implementing aesthetic expression in primary school curriculum in Ilorin South LGA, mean of responses of the teachers to each items on the questionnaire were computed, having four likert scale format of Strongly Agreed (4 points), Agreed (3 points), Disagreed (2 points), and Strongly Disagreed (1 point). In other to get the cut-off mark, the average of the total point was calculated to be 2.5 (That is; $4+3+2+1 = 10$; $10/4 = 2.5$). The result is presented in the table below:

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation showing the challenges of implementing aesthetic expression in primary school curriculum.

S/N	ITEMS	X	SD	Remarks
1.	Insufficient funding.	2.66	0.89	Positive
2.	Limited access to art supplies and resources	2.77	1.12	Positive
3.	Lack of trained art and music educators	2.56	1.14	Positive
4.	Inadequate infrastructure and facilities for artistic expression	2.58	1.06	Positive

5.	Parental preferences for traditional academic subjects over aesthetics	2.49	1.06	Negative
6	High student-to-teacher ratios	2.55	1.06	Positive
7	Socioeconomic disparities	2.56	0.64	Positive
8	Absence of a cohesive National Policy for aesthetic education	2.68	0.73	Positive
9	Cultural resistance and stereotypes	2.59	0.73	Positive
10	Limited exposure to diverse aesthetic expressions and arts	2.71	0.75	Positive
Weighted Mean		2.62		

Table 2 above revealed the challenges of implementing aesthetic expression in primary school curriculum in Ilorin South LGA. The evidence from the teachers was seen from the table above where the mean value of all the items are greater than 2.50 except item 5 which is less than 2.50. From the teachers' response, it was agreed that the major challenges of implementing aesthetic expression in primary school curriculum are; limited access to art supplies and resources, limited exposure to diverse aesthetic expressions and arts, absence of a cohesive National Policy for aesthetic education, insufficient funding, cultural resistance and stereotypes, and inadequate infrastructure and facilities for artistic expression. This were all ranked 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th respectively in accordance with their mean values from the highest to the least. The overall mean value of **2.62** which is greater than the cut-off means of 2.50 indicated that all the above items listed are the challenges facing the implementation of aesthetic expression in primary school curriculum in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State.

Testing the Hypothesis

One research hypothesis was formulated to guide the study and was tested using Pearson's Product Movement Correlation (PPMC).

HO₁: *There is no significant relationship between aesthetic expression and pupils' academic performance in Ilorin South LGA.*

Table 3: Summary table of PPMC showing the relationship between aesthetic expression and pupils' academic performance

Variables		Aesthetic Expression	Performance
Aesthetic Expression	Pearson Correlation	1	.71
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.03
	N	100	100
Performance	Pearson Correlation	.71	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.03	
	N	100	100

Table 3 above showed the relationship between aesthetic expression and pupils' academic performance in primary school pupils in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State. The table above revealed that there is positively high relationship between aesthetic expression and pupils' academic performance. This is as a result of the correctional value of 0.71 which is positive and on high level. This result above also revealed that, there is significant relationship between aesthetic expression and pupils' academic performance. This was evident by the Sig value of .03 obtained which is less than Alpha value of .05. This implies that, integration of aesthetics expression will significantly improve pupils' academic performance. It can therefore be affirmed that there is significant relationship between aesthetics expression and pupils' academic performance in primary school in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State.

Discussion of Findings

It was revealed from the findings that integrating aesthetic expression into the curriculum has great value and benefits on pupils' academic performance in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State. This was seen from the teachers' responses to all the items on the list where it was clearly revealed that there is great benefits of aesthetics expression if well implemented. This was as a result of the usefulness of aesthetic expression in boosting up the pupils' academic performance. This corroborates the submission of Winner and Cooper (2010) who submitted that the benefits in integrating aesthetic expression include positive self-esteem, group cohesiveness, and students respect for themselves and each other as artists. A curriculum that includes aesthetics will enhance the opportunities for teachers to provide students with an in-depth experience in visual art, offering the typical student an opportunity to acquire expressive skills through stepped instruction. As students develop skills at various levels of achievement, they can use what they have learned to produce works that possess great artistic merit.

Also, it was also revealed from the findings above that the major challenges of implementing aesthetic expression in primary school curriculum are; limited access to art supplies and resources, limited exposure to diverse aesthetic expressions and arts, absence of a cohesive National Policy for aesthetic education, insufficient funding, cultural resistance and stereotypes, and inadequate infrastructure and facilities for artistic expression. This was seen from the teachers' responses to all the items on the list where it was affirmed that there are lots of barrier impeding the implementation of aesthetic expression in primary school. This thus makes its implementation unachievable and makes it loses its value added contents. This goes in line with the assertion of Alasa (2013) who asserted that lack of infrastructure as a major factor challenging the development of visual arts in schools when he opined that lack of infrastructure facilities like classrooms, lecture theatres, laboratories, studios and workshops

are the major hindrances to students' enrolment, effective, efficient teaching and learning in schools at all levels of education in Nigeria.

In addition, it was confirmed from the findings that there is significant relationship between aesthetics expression and pupils' academic performance in primary school in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State. This was revealed by the significant value of 0.03 obtained from the response which is less than the alpha value of 0.05. This shows that aesthetic expression if well implemented, has great value in improving pupils' academic performance. This was supported by the opinion of Melnick (2011) who revealed in his findings that there are many cognitive advantages from art education like higher academic achievement, creativity, imagination, self-expression, rouses the mind of students and stimulates the brain. He further suggested art education as a future model for useful educational hopes and practices.

Conclusion

From the findings, it was concluded that there are great benefits of aesthetic expression if properly integrated into primary school curriculum and well implemented, and the major challenges facing the implementation of aesthetic expression are limited access to art supplies and resources, limited exposure to diverse aesthetic expressions and arts, absence of a cohesive National Policy for aesthetic education, and insufficient funding. Also, it was concluded from the findings that there is significant relationship between aesthetics expression and pupils' academic performance in primary school in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State.

Recommendations

Base on the results of the findings, the following recommendations are proffered;

1. Curriculum planners should ensure the integration of aesthetic expression into primary school curriculum.
2. School management should ensure proper implementation of the aesthetic expression so as to make sure that its usefulness is unfold.
3. School management should ensure that the barriers that may impede the implementation of aesthetic expression is taken care of.

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