Students' Approaches toward the Visual Arts Course Using Elements of Popular Culture[*]

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Abstract: This study aims to identify students' approaches toward courses lectured by visual arts teachers with elements of popular culture with a view to enabling students to attain 7th grade targeted achievements. To this end, the multiple-case design, one of the qualitative research methods, was utilized in the study. The sample of the study comprised 11 visual arts teachers working at secondary schools located in three central districts of the Bursa province of Turkey. As the data collection tools, two interview forms and document review were used. The obtained findings were evaluated through the thematic analysis technique and were compiled under the theme of 'implications on students'. As per the research results, it was discerned that there were certain differences in the students' approaches toward the course along with employment of elements of popular culture in the visual arts course. It may be alleged that, of these differences, the primary ones were attraction of students' attention to the course, active participation into the course and facilitation of comprehension.

Keywords: *Media, motivation, curriculum, games.*

Introduction

Popular culture represents not only beliefs and practices which are largely shared across a society but also objects around which these beliefs and practices are organized (Mutlu, 2005). Convictions whose origin is based on local traditions, people's beliefs and political and commercial centers are also accepted as constituent parts of popular culture (Cakir, 2014). For Fiske (2012) and Tuna (2008), popular culture means 'common among the society', 'appertaining to the people' and 'adopted by the people'. In its broadest sense, popular culture is the culture of daily life and is developed by most societies in accordance with societal needs.

The entire world of children is encircled by these popular culture elements with which individuals are constantly intertwined. However, children are asked to break away from these elements as soon as they start attending school. Actually, according to Thomas (2004), through integration of popular culture into the education of youngsters, easier transfer of lessons learnt to the world of youngsters may be attained. Additionally, according to Sarac (2018), by virtue of utilizing the technologies enjoyed by students, teachers may use the course period effectively and efficiently. All youngsters enjoy talking about their most favorite cartoon characters and getting dressed and acting like them. In their games, they pretend to be one of these heroes. Even the shyest child gets activated while being connected with popular culture as this connection allows children to share their cultural identities and explore common worlds (Scanlan, 2010). Stressing the importance of motivation in the education process, Taskesen (2019) defined motivation as the force which leads individuals to perform a behavior. Moreover, according to McCarthy et al. (2003), Stevens (2001) and Willett (2005), utilization of elements of popular culture in a course may be extremely motivating, and this motivation may tempt students to participate more actively and be more creative in the classroom.

According to Millard (2003), adopting and exploring popular culture at schools offers several advantages. Animated series such as Pokemon which might have no significance to an adult viewer may have significance in multiple ways to

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children who have admiration for them. In this direction, as indicated in the book review by Teichert (2015), listening to children's voices and valuing their out-of-school interests may motivate them in the learning process and enhance their critical thinking. Thomas (2004, p. 593) referred to the importance of popular culture through the following statement addressed to instructors: "It seems that, for us as instructors, it is an irresponsible act to neglect popular culture and retain the conventional nature of our educational system as far as possible."

The review of the domestic literature in Turkey which covers studies on the use of popular culture in education demonstrates that the study by Gunduz (2015) aimed to explore the effects of popular culture on students and its implications on students' drawings by establishing a connection between popular culture and visual arts. The research result demonstrated that a negative relationship existed between visual arts and popular culture, and popular culture restricted creativity.

As per examination of other articles in the field, the PhD dissertation by Bal (2016), 'The Use of Popular Culture Texts in Mother Tongue Education' deduced that the use of popular culture in course instruction was necessary according to the feedback obtained from Turkish language teachers and students' legal guardians. As the reason for this situation, the study proposed that students felt belonging to the school, and the use of popular culture affected the instruction process positively. Furthermore, the study put forward that Turkish language courses which were designed in a way to establish connections with texts of popular culture improved students' basic language skills and enabled students to develop a critical perspective on elements of popular culture.

Another study performed by Yilmaz (2018) analyzed the attitudes of 10th grade secondary school students toward the biology course in the context of utilization of popular media sources in the course. As per research findings, it was deduced that, in comparison to conventional instruction methods, course instruction in which popular media sources were employed created a more effective instruction setting as lessons became more concrete for students.

Moreover, upon the review of studies existing in the international literature, it is discerned that the study by Marsh et al (2005) argued that the use of elements of popular culture made education more productive by helping combine experiences obtained by students in and out of school. This study in general showed that integration of popular culture into instruction activities encouraged the participation of students in the course, and the transfer of experiences to the classroom setting helped students' academic aspirations move beyond expectations by transforming students into active learners. In another study, Parry (2014) stressed that popular culture was of importance to ensuring that students could elucidate and develop main concepts and highlighted that elements of popular culture did not only boost students' motivation to learn but also contributed to enhancement of their conceptual understanding.

By stating that teachers could make use of popular culture in order to facilitate learning, Cheung (2001) asserted that students became more eager to learn if the course content and activities were focused on examples derived from popular culture. Characterizing popular culture as an instruction tool in the sense of cultural pedagogy, Weiner (2001) admitted that popular culture does not only reflect the real world but also has educational effects. Students do not attend the school with empty brains ready to be filled up. They also bring their ideas, biases and delusions on board. Masterman (1985) advocated that an effective teacher should take this into account and start lecturing in the course by paying attention to the connection between the topic to be lectured and the media. As for Black (2008), incorporation of popular culture into instruction may bring students together, and students are likely to develop their relationships with instruction on the basis of their out-of-school interests. Furthermore, the existing knowledge base of students on popular culture may be employed to attract attention and set up connections between texts in the classroom (Parry, 2014; Shegar & Weninger, 2010). In the classroom, popular culture even acts as a tool capable of motivating students whose interests in general are incompatible with conventional instruction (Osier, 2003). In other words, the use of popular culture in instruction creates a setting conducive to promotion of learning. As the learning setting gets comfortable, the atmosphere of the classroom becomes better suited to learning, and students are likely to be more successful as they participate in activities they wish (Cheung, 2001; Koh, 2015).

According to Bamford (2007), the ability to interpret and create visual elements and use them instantaneously during communication can be instructed and taught. In courses, students' awareness may be raised along with the use of visual elements in the desired manner by teachers in diverse formations. Most visual elements to be employed during courses must be those which students frequently use in their daily lives and willingly include in their own worlds. According to Scanlan (2010), upon having some inputs from their life experiences and common worlds, students become more willing to take part in course activities, and this willingness entices them to be more innovative and productive. However, innovativeness requires students to have prior knowledge (Webb & Rule, 2012), and this prior knowledge comes into play if students are given the opportunity to use their out-of-school experiences in the classroom setting. In this direction, Wohlwend and Peppler (2015) suggested that students are more eager to take part in activities which they get acquainted with in their out-of-school experiences through games, favorite characters, media texts and other works.

Upon the review of previous research, it is discerned that international instructors used elements of popular culture more purposefully and incorporated them into their instruction plans. However, in the domestic literature, the insufficiency of research which explores students' approaches toward courses in which elements of popular culture

were used especially in the area of visual arts draws attention. In this context, the implications of popular culture elements used in visual arts education on students and what type of differences are observed in students by teachers make up the research problem.

Methodology

Objective

This study presents the detailed analysis of the following 4th question of the master's thesis which identified whether secondary school visual arts teachers used elements of popular culture in courses for the purpose of enabling students to attain 7th grade targeted achievements: "How do students approach the course in which elements of popular culture are utilized?". In this direction, the multiple-case design, one of the qualitative research methods, was utilized in this study to identify students' approaches toward the secondary school visual arts course following the use of elements of popular culture in the course. According to the definition by Creswell (2016), a multiple case study aims to put forward different viewpoints on a topic from multiple research grounds or on a single research ground through multiple research types after selecting a case to be studied. As for Merriam (2015), the reason for selection of multiple case study is the researcher's need for comprehending, exploring and interpreting a case. Thus, the researcher achieves focusing on a single phenomenon and is able to analyze this phenomenon in-depth.

As it is to be identified from definitions, the case study, the most distinct feature of which was to restrict the scope of the study and to analyze it deeply, was selected as it offered solutions well-suited to the objective of this research. As it is also known that case study basically aims to find answers to questions of how and why (Guler et al., 2015; Yildirim & Simsek, 2013), it is well-aligned with the research objective.

Sample

In identification of the sample in qualitative studies, several researchers acknowledge that the primary goal is not to generalize the research results to the population. An analogous situation is also applicable to multiple case studies (Creswell, 2016). Departing from this justification and without having the purpose of generalizing the results to the entire population, the research sample was created with the purposive sampling technique with a view of conducting a thorough research. In this study, different types of purposive sampling were utilized in the framework of application of *the 1st Interview Form* and *the 2nd Interview Form*. For specifying the sample for application of the interview forms, firstly, the *criterion sampling* method, which is a purposive sampling technique, was employed. Subsequently, *homogeneous sampling* was utilized for the 2nd Interview Form to designate participant teachers, in a way to satisfy the research purpose, from among group members specified through criterion sampling.

According to Patton (2018, p. 238), the criterion sampling method refers to "reviewing and analyzing all cases which satisfy criteria, the significance levels of which are previously specified". As for Yildirim and Simsek (2013), there exist certain previously identified criteria, and these criteria may be either specified by the researcher or acquired from the existing literature. In this study, criteria were identified by the researcher for designation of the sample to which the 1st Interview Form would be applied. These criteria were as follows:

- Participant Visual Arts Teachers who are involved in the instruction of the 7th grade visual arts course.
- Participant Visual Arts Teachers who have minimum 3 years of experience in the profession of teaching.

In the light of these criteria, the research sample comprised a total 6 secondary schools, 3 of which were public schools and 3 of which were private schools, in three central districts (Osmangazi, Yildirim, Nilufer) of the Bursa province of Turkey and a total of 11 visual arts teachers working at these schools in the school year of 2018-2019. Due to ethical considerations, the real names of the participants were not used in the research, and so, the participants were codenamed by the researchers. 9 of the 11 visual arts teachers were women, whereas the rest of them were men. The codenames were designated as Birsen, Gamze, Ayse, Betul, Handan, Gaye, Arzu, Cenk, Hulya, Sehnaz and Emre consecutively.

For designation of the teachers to whom the 2nd Interview Form would be applied, homogenous sampling was utilized. According to Patton (2018), in the data collection process of a study which covers a vast variety of participants, homogenous sampling is employed if more detailed information on a specific sub-group is needed. In this sense, four participant teachers responding positively to the 7th question of the 1st Interview Form which asked "In lectures, do you perform activities containing elements of popular culture? If yes, please give us an example." were required to answer the 6th question of the 2nd Interview Form which asked "In course activities in which you used elements of popular culture, what type of differences came into existence in students' approaches toward the course and in attracting their attention to the course?". Afterwards, whether these four participants would participate in application of the 2nd Interview Form on a voluntary basis was identified, and upon their confirmation to participate, four participants were asked to sign an official authorization form. Subsequently, the 2nd Interview Form was applied to them, and they were notified that they would be free to withdraw from the research at any time they requested. All these participants were females, and their codenames were Birsen, Gamze, Ayse and Betul.

Data Collection Tools

While deciding on tools to be used for data collection, attention was paid to the general objective of the research. In this respect, semi-structured interview forms were employed as the basic data collection tool, whereas the document analysis method was used as a supplementary data collection technique. 15 semi-structured interview questions which were prepared in two different formats and document reviews provided the data to be used in this study.

Semi-structured interviews. Performing two separate semi-structured interviews was preferred on the basis of the view that cases in which participants' thoughts and emotions cannot be clearly observed can be handled through interviews in a study (Briggs, 1986; Patton, 2018). In development of the semi-structured interview forms in this study, the content of the study served as the basis, and the interview questions were devised with the help of a detailed literature review undertaken in the context of the research objectives.

After devising the interview questions aligned with research objectives and research questions alongside the review of the literature, two faculty members who were experts on fine arts education and qualitative research methods at the Undergraduate School of Education of Uludag University in the Bursa province of Turkey were consulted, and arrangements required by the expert opinions and recommendations were made. Moreover, to check whether the interview forms served the purpose of the research, a pilot study was carried out.

Considering that emphasis was placed in studies by Glesne (2015) and Yin (2009) on the need to perform a pilot study with the participation of individuals who have the most analogous circumstances of prospective participants, a group who shared similar circumstances of the prospective participants was selected for the pilot study also in this study. The pilot study was applied to three teachers who did not partake in the sample of the study but worked in the field of visual arts. Along with the pilot study, questions deemed to be redundant were removed from the interview forms, missing questions were inserted, and certain changes were made in the interview forms. Changes made in the interview forms were submitted once again to the field experts for review, and approvals for the interview forms were received from the experts. Moreover, necessary permissions were obtained from the Ethics Council of Uludag University and the Provincial Directorate of National Education of Bursa.

Application of the 1st Semi-Structured Interview Form was intended for finding about the general views of the eleven participant visual arts teachers on popular culture. Through meetings held prior to the application process, the participant teachers were verbally informed that the participation in this process was on a voluntary basis, they would be free to withdraw from the research at any phase they wished, and the voices of the participants would be recorded during the interview. Afterwards, the 'Form of Authorization by the Participant Teacher' which included all information above was submitted to the participant teachers, and the participant teachers were asked to read the form carefully and sign it if they agreed with the terms of the form. Nine out of the eleven participant teachers signed the form by agreeing with all terms of the form including the one on voice-recording. However, as two participants did not agree with the voice-recording, all statements made by these two participant teachers were noted down in detail by the researcher. The 1st Semi-Structured Interview Form for which the necessary legal authorizations were received before being applied to the visual arts teachers included two questions on the participants' demographic characteristics and eight open-ended questions on popular culture. Table 1 presents some information on the application process of the 1st Semi-Structured Interview Form (Table 1).

Table 1. Information on the application process of the 1st Semi-Structured Interview Form

Interviewee's Code Name	Interview Date	Duration of the Interview	Venue of the Interview
Birsen	11 February 2019	25 minutes	Visual Arts Group Room
Arzu	12 February 2019	25 minutes	Teachers' Room
Gaye	19 February 2019	10 minutes	Visual Arts Workshop
Gamze	19 February 2019	25 minutes	Visual Arts Workshop
Ayse	20 February 2019	18 minutes	Civil Servants' Office
Cenk	21 February 2019	24 minutes	Visual Arts Workshop
Handan	21 February 2019	22 minutes	Visual Arts Group Room
Sehnaz	25 February 2019	20 minutes	Teachers' Room
Betul	27 February 2019	25 minutes	Library
Emre	01 March 2019	15 minutes	Visual Arts Workshop

The 2nd Interview Form which comprised seven open-ended questions was applied to the participant teachers who were selected based on the results of the 1st Interview Form. Appointments with all participant teachers were made prior to the interview. Table 2 provides information on the application process of this interview (Table 2).

Table 2. Information on the application process of the 2nd Semi-Structured Interview Form

Interviewee's Code Name	Interview Date	Duration of the Interview	Venue of the Interview
Birsen	19 March 2019	28 minutes	Visual Arts Group Room
Betul	20 March 2019	26 minutes	Teachers' Room
Gamze	21 March 2019	15 minutes	Visual Arts Workshop
Ayse	22 March 2019	16 minutes	Visual Arts Workshop

The 4th question of this research which asked "In course activities in which you used elements of popular culture, what type of differences come into existence in students' approaches toward the course and in attracting their attention to the course?" was directed to the participants as the 6th question in the 2nd Interview Form, and a detailed analysis was conducted on the basis of the answers given by the participants to this question.

Document analysis. In qualitative research, besides interviews, an important technique of presenting or handling circumstances in a realistic manner is the document analysis method. Additionally, diversification of data is essential to enhancement of the validity of research, and one of the ways to be used in this direction is to utilize written and visual materials (Bryman, 2004; Merriam, 201; Yildirim & Simsek, 2013). Annual course plans acquired from the participant visual arts teachers, as well as the curriculum of the Visual Arts Course obtained from the official website of the Ministry of National Education of Turkey, were among such materials used for enhancing the diversity and validity of data. In the context of document analysis, student achievements and activities relevant to popular culture were searched all through these sources.

Analysis of Data

According to Gibbs (2007, p. 48), thematic analysis is *'discovering how categories or thematic thoughts are represented through codes which change from case to case or setting to setting or situation to situation'*. In thematic analysis, researchers try to focus on critical findings by concentrating on codes from among the data (Glesne, 2015, p.259). Semi-structured interview forms which acted as the basic source of data served as the basis of this research and were analyzed through the thematic analysis method, and additionally, through depiction of document reviews, diversification of data was assured.

Findings

The theme of 'implications on students' which presents findings on the effect of popular culture on students was of importance to this research. Within the context of this theme, two categories were created. (see Table 3)

Table 3. The theme of Implications on Students, its categories and codes

IMPLICATIONS ON STUDENTS	
Getting Inclined Toward Learning	**Willingness to Work**
Areas of interests attracting attention	Willing participation
Preparedness	Solution in a short time period
Facilitated comprehension	Producing unique works

The first category of '*getting inclined toward learning'* refers to the case in which the instruction process allows the student to reach a solution in a short period of time, whereas the second category of '*willingness to work'* represents elements such as the student's state of being active, student's willingness to participate and student's motivation during the course.

The category of 'getting inclined toward learning' comprised three codes as '*Attraction of students' attention by using their interests', 'Preparedness'* and *'Facilitated comprehension'.* According to the visual arts teachers' views, it was found that the use of elements of popular culture in the course enticed students to pay more attention to the course and attend the course with prior knowledge and facilitated comprehension of topics by each group of students.

As per the more detailed review of the code of '*Attraction of students' attention by using their interests',* the statement by Handan who shared the views of four other participants, namely, Betul, Arzu, Hulya and Gamze, is presented below in the most detailed manner:

"It is possible to influence children and attract their attention by using elements of popular culture in the course. If we present this course using the standard way of lecturing, then the children do not pay attention to the course and get lost in it, and a chaotic situation comes into play during the course. That is, the positive effect of using elements of popular culture is that it attracts students' attention. However, of course, it is essential to mix elements of popular culture with the course

in the correct proportions. As you know, these children are active members of the information age, and they develop rapidly. If I as a teacher act passively, I fail to attract their attention, and so, I have to make use of popular culture and closely follow each novelty in one way or another (Handan, the 1st Interview)".

When Handan who made the statement above underlined that it is necessary to utilize elements of popular culture for attracting students' attention, she also stressed the importance of mixing elements of popular culture with the course in the correct proportions in this process. Moreover, she highlighted that, if the teacher acts passively, they will be incapable of attracting the attention of students. Handan asserted that she perceived the use of elements of popular culture as the easiest way to attract children's attention by once again underscoring her thoughts in this direction towards the end of the interview form by suggesting that "*As I told you, with the help of popular culture, you metaphorically invite children to the course as if you said 'come, come', this is the positive side of this endeavor, and so, popular culture should be utilized at its full potential (Handan, the 1st Interview).* Expressing her views in the same direction in the 2nd Interview Form by briefly noting that "*The use of elements of popular culture has a considerable effect on students. I am better able to attract their attention (Gamze, the 2nd Interview)*" and in the 1st Interview Form by commenting that "*We are able to attract more attention from children with the help of elements of popular culture. Moreover, as children live within popular culture, I think that it will be easier to reinforce comprehension of the course alongside popular culture. This is an opportunity for us teachers to attract students' attention (Gamze, the 1stInterview)*", Gamze emphasized that she could attract students' attention effortlessly thanks to elements of popular culture.

Based on review of the code of '*Preparedness',* answers given by the teachers to the 3rd question of the 1st Interview Form mainly suggested that students learnt about several elements in their social lives and attended the course with prior knowledge obtained in social life. The views of especially Sehnaz, Ayse, Betul and Cenk in this context were in parallel, and they referred to the preparedness of students through different examples.

Sehnaz agreed with other participants by stating that *''Yes, it can have positive implications on the education process. For instance, in my lecture on the Girl with a Pearl Earring, it happens to be the case that they sometimes say that 'Oops, teacher, this painting was on this and that advertisement', and this implies that they attend the course with prior knowledge, and when I mention the name of the artist of the painting, they are able to learn better, comprehension of the topic is reinforced, they get eager to work on the Girl with a Pearl Earring, and good results are attained (Sehnaz, the 1st Interview).*" Within the code of *'Facilitated comprehension'* which was the last code under the category of 'getting inclined toward learning', it was found through the interviews with the teachers that students learnt course topics more easily along with the use of elements of popular culture, and additionally, popular culture elements could be applied to several age groups due to being illustrated in color and hence would be effortlessly comprehended by students. According to the documents obtained from the teacher, students' studies on the Girl with a Pearl Earring were consistent with the teacher's view.

Alleging that "*It can be more easily comprehended by children as it is simple. We can effortlessly apply elements of popular culture even to relatively young age groups. Children are both mesmerized a lot by colors and able to draw them as they are just simple illustrations, and they also can be integrated into the instruction process (Ayse, the 1st Interview),*" Ayse whose views were well-aligned with Birsen, Arzu and Gamze set forth that popular culture was simple, and thus it could be easily comprehended by children, and teachers could reach positive results.

The category of '*willingness to work'* was composed of three codes as '*more willing participation'*, '*reaching the solution in a short period of time'* and *'unique works'*. As per the views of the visual arts teachers, it was found that the use of elements of popular culture induced students to have willingness to be involved in the course, bring materials to the course, continue to work after the end of course, approach topics positively, produce unique works on topics and reach solutions in a short period of time.

Within the code of '*more willing participation'*, it was found that the teachers declared that students willingly attended the course under no pressure or coercion and enjoyed being involved in the course.

Reporting that "*In my opinion, the main challenge for us as visual arts teachers is that we fail to tempt students to work. When it is time for practical application, the student prefers to be engaged in useless matters and does not draw pictures; especially if it is a conventional type of work, even those tempted to work stop working, get bored, and so, the course gets stuck. Even from their facial expressions, you can see that they reluctantly perform the work. However, if it is a topic which they enjoy, they enthusiastically listen to you and get involved in the practice with no coercion (Ayse, the 2nd Interview).*" Ayse commented that students are not actively involved in topics which they do not like, and they do not make drawings. However, if it is a topic which students enjoy, they themselves participate actively in the course and are happy to get engaged in practical applications.

Commenting that "*If it is about a topic that they like, even a child who does not bring course materials begins to work enthusiastically by asking that 'Teacher, can I get paper and paints from the workshop?' as the topic attracts the child's attention. Or else, another student asks that 'Teacher, can I take this with me home and continue to work on it there?'. Why is that? It is because the student wants to show it to his/her family or hang it on his/her wall at home. If they enjoy the topic on which they work, and if they have prior knowledge about the topic, they are likely to bring course materials*

(Gamze, the 2nd Interview)," Gamze who was employed at a private school alleged that students felt enthusiastic about topics that they liked and wanted to work on such topics, afterwards, they even shared their works of painting with their family members, and so, they eagerly participated in the course. As per the findings obtained from the views expressed by Ayse and Gamze, it was ascertained that, alongside the use of elements of popular culture in the course, students were tempted to participate in the course willingly.

Underlined by the teachers as a positive aspect of popular culture, the code of 'reaching solutions in a short period of time' pertains to the findings which asserted that students completed their works in a shorter period of time.

In this direction, by remarking that "*My students get stuck on certain topics, and even if it is a simple topic, they somehow fail to finalize the work. For instance, most of my students do not enjoy being involved in works of still-life painting at all. It is due to either being involved in such works constantly for a long time or not being attracted to this type of work, I have no idea. Unfortunately, even just a simple work of still-life painting which is supposed to be finalized in two weeks sometimes takes a month. If, on the other hand, it is an element that they like, especially if it is an element of popular culture in which they are interested, they achieve in completing in two weeks a work which is supposed to be completed in a month, and great works are produced. For instance, they happily and quickly complete a work on a hero, a celebrity or an object of a play that they like,*" Ayse asserted that students completed a painting including elements of popular culture that they liked and obtained positive outcomes in a shorter period of time. Upon the review of annual plans of Ayse, it was identified that the annual plans covered still-life painting and other topics which she asserted that students liked in the interview. Additionally, the Curriculum of the Ministry of National Education of Turkey for the Visual Arts Course just presents targeted student achievements without referring to a specific topic and implementation method, and teachers are free in the topic-selection in the light of the targeted student achievements in the curriculum.

Moreover, Betul confirmed that students would reach the solution in a short period of time by stating that "*They are able to complete their works in a shorter period of time* (Betul, the 2nd Interview)." Claiming that "*Certainly, students complete works that they like in much shorter periods. They also endeavor to prioritize completion of short-term painting works. However, they always refrain from finalizing works lasting very long* (Gamze, the 2nd Interview)," Gamze emphasized, unlike other participants, that students got bored during works lasting too long and failed to finalize such works, and added that, in a short period of time, students completed works that they liked.

Producing unique works. As per the research findings obtained from the interview forms, another topic was the uniqueness element whose findings were included in the code of 'uniqueness'.

Putting forward that "*In my opinion, the most positive effect of popular culture on students is that they are able to draw and produce different pictures. Actually, I base my opinion on the following: Students constantly see new objects, every place is full of stimulants. Seeing new objects expands students' horizons, and hence, they are happily able to produce new items. We restrain children later throughout life, actually they act like great inventors at early ages* (Betul, the 2nd Interview)," Betul stated that students are capable of producing new and unique objects by virtue of being constantly open to new stimulants. Stating that "In fact, we may say that it is more unique, we can make use of its uniqueness in education (Gaye, the 1st Interview)," Gaye referred to uniqueness and highlighted topics in a similar vein to those of Betul.

Noting that "*Each system has its pros and cons, I believe that children's horizons expand better at the present than in the past, they live in a wider world owing to the social media. Facilities provided by technology have of course many advantages, we are able to show videos and lecture course topics through smart boards at schools. On smart boards, we exhibit images liked by children and attract their attention. On a smart board, I allow students to watch films and I show them animations, I think they all are components of popular culture. From this perspective, lectures proceed pretty productively, and as students are subject to such a huge amount of visuals, their horizons are expanded, and they get empowered to produce novel items* (Emre, the 1st Interview)," Emre commenting on the system through an ideological approach mentioned that students' horizons were widened due to the high volume of visuals which students were subjected to, and so, students achieved in producing unique works.

Discussion

In this study which endeavored to reveal what sort of transformations students experienced in conjunction with the use of elements of popular culture, it was found that students got more encouraged to learn and became more willing to work. It was determined that students got encouraged to be more involved in the course along with the use of elements of popular culture.

Biggs (1995), who highlighted that students were open to learning only the lessons which were important and meaningful to them, argued that, as elements of popular culture motivated students, students paid more attention to the course. Furuhata-Turner (2013), who alleged in their research that factors motivating students and interests attracting their attention were identical, argued that it was essential for a student to get motivated so as to achieve in learning a lesson, and thus, they allowed the use of the Mangala game as an element of motivation for language learning. Likewise, in the study by Ladson-Billings (1995), it was stated that the use of popular culture was a factor

likely to attract the attention of students. Through also the teacher views obtained in the context of this research, it was identified that the use of elements of popular culture raised the interests of students in the course.

Another finding obtained from the analysis of research data was that students' preparedness levels increased by the virtue of popular culture. Although some participants welcomed this situation, some other participants asserted that, if erroneous information was already obtained by students, it would be hard to correct it later during the course. Stating that students attended the school with a certain level of preparedness due to the knowledge base which they acquired in their social lives, Cheung (2001) asserted that, along with introduction of new knowledge to students by relying on their previous knowledge base, students' learning was facilitated, and they became more interested in learning. From the data of this research, it was found that, if the focus was placed on examples derived from popular culture with respect to course contents and activities, students would be more motivated to learn.

A finding of this study on the category of 'willingness to work' was that students become more willing to work along with the use of elements of popular culture. In this direction, if certain elements from students' own life experiences and worlds exist in activities performed during the course, students become more eager to participate in the course, and this eagerness empowers them to be more creative and productive (Altintug & Debreli, 2017; Scanlan, 2010). On the top of all these positive effects on students, there exist participant views suggesting that elements of popular culture enabled students to reach solutions in their works in a short period of time.

Upon the review of the findings of this research and the relevant literature, it was discerned that activities instilled with elements of popular culture were characterized as innovative approaches and transformed the learning settings of students into an entertaining atmosphere. In this direction, McCarty et al. (2003) argued that popular culture had a deep impact on children, and it was essential to incorporate it into the curricula of schools. Additionally, they emphasized that instructors should closely follow the novelties in popular culture.

Conclusion

This study, which was conducted for the purpose of identifying students' attitudes toward secondary school visual arts courses as response to the use of elements of popular culture in the course, came to a conclusion by finding positive effects in general. Acting as the basis of this study, the theme of 'implications on students' pertained to the research question which asked "*In courses in which elements of popular culture are used for lecturing, is any difference observed in students' approaches toward the course?*", and addressed differences in students' approaches toward the course in which elements of popular culture were used for lecturing.

The primary result coming to the forefront in the category of 'getting inclined toward learning' under the theme of 'implications on students' was that students get prepared for learning along with the use of elements of popular culture in the course. In this connection, the use of elements of popular culture by teachers in the course enables students to concentrate their attention on the course, and elements of popular culture can be effortlessly comprehended by students due to being well-suited to all levels of age. Furthermore, as students constantly interact with elements of popular culture in their social lives, they succeed in developing a vast knowledge base and thus attend the school with high levels of preparedness. It may be suggested that having a high level of preparedness is beneficial for students to guarantee that lessons learnt stick to their minds along with the instruction of course topics.

In relation to the category of 'willingness to work' under the theme of 'implications on students', it was found that, along with the use of elements of popular culture in the course, students participated in the course enthusiastically and played active roles, and alongside this willingness, students made the utmost efforts and moved forward to create unique works in their artistic practices. Additionally, it was discerned that students succeeded in reaching solutions in a short period of time and wanted to display their works to other people as a consequence of this practice process which proceeded in the direction of their interests.

Upon a general overview of the results obtained in relation to the theme of 'implications on students' and its relevant categories, it was ascertained that, in tandem with the use of elements of popular culture, students' approaches toward the course changed. It may be asserted that such changes are primarily important to attracting students' attention to the course, assuring students' active participation in the course and facilitating students' comprehension of the course.

Recommendations

In view of the advantages of using elements of popular culture in the course, incorporating it into curriculums of all grade levels and integrating it into the course plan can be achieved.

Even though courses on popular culture are offered by certain departments at universities in Turkey, no course on this topic exists at departments of art teaching. An elective course may be offered by art teaching departments with the theme of 'Popular Culture in Visual Arts Education', and thus, it can be achieved that teachers of the new generation become capable of following up the needs of this era.

Today, as it is known that students spend most of their time spans on popular culture, the use of popular culture as a teaching tool may help teachers make this time span spent more productively by students. It should be born in mind that incorporation of popular culture into the course would have negative side-effects besides positive effects on students, and teachers assuming the role of guides should take steps towards this issue in a cautious manner.

The data obtained from this study contained answers given by visual arts teachers who worked within the boundaries of the Bursa province of Turkey in 2019. The research was conducted in six weeks, and elements of popular culture were limited to the latest elements derived from the teachers' findings. Research which will be carried out for the purpose of receiving student views about the use of popular culture elements in visual arts courses and conducting these studies in different provinces of Turkey will contribute to the field.

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