



Investigation of artistic perceptions of middle school students in the context of art criticism and aesthetics learning area

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Abstract

In this research, it is aimed to examine the perceptions of artwork of middle school 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade students within the scope of Art Criticism and Aesthetics learning field acquisitions in the Visual Arts Curriculum. This research is a qualitative research and was designed in the general survey model, which is one of the descriptive research types. Middle school students in the study group of the research were selected according to the easily accessible sample type from the purposeful sampling strategy. Accordingly, the study group of the research consists of 100 students studying in the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades of a middle school in the 2020-2021 academic year. The data were collected through a form consisting of 11 questions prepared to determine the students' perceptions of artwork. Descriptive analysis method was used to analyse the data of the research. The data obtained were analysed in two stages; determining the frequency and percentage values according to the number of students choosing the pictures which are artwork or non-artwork, the density of the sentences in which the students stated the reasons for choosing the pictures, and the determination of categories and themes according to the answers given in accordance with the purpose of the research. Among the results of the research, it is seen that especially colour, perspective, composition and realism are effective in the selection of some works. While the sentences stating the reasons for the preference of the students who chose the work of art mostly developed in line with the field of art criticism and aesthetic learning, it was observed that the answers of some students were not conscious.

Keywords: Art criticism and aesthetics; visual arts; curriculum; artwork; kitsch

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1. Introduction

1.1. Introduce the problem

A work of art is a phenomenon with different structural features from other objects. It is a part of art to analyse what a work of art means, which has formal and intellectual properties, unlike other objects that only have a functional aspect.

In order to understand what a work of art is, it is required to identify the differences between an object and a work of art. According to Heidegger (2007:21-35), an object does not simply mean a formed material. Serving is the essential quality here. Both the shaping and the choice of material given with it, the dominance of material and form texture are woven in this service. Material and form are never simply the basic determination of the objectivity of the object. On the other hand, a work of art is like a mere object, formed by its own humble existence and not forced into anything. An artwork always shows objectivity, albeit in different ways. The subject of objectivity in the work is not explained until the stance of the work within itself is understood sufficiently. The real intention of an artist is that the work of art represents a different meaning from what it appears and causes other emotions. Therefore, when we are next to an artwork, we are somewhere other than where we are. The quality of a work of art is measured by the renewal or uniqueness of the language, the attractiveness of expressive power, and the implication of meanings. The functions of an art in civilization are to bring out the problems that are hidden in human and that cannot be seen in a conventional way. A work of art tends to come up with ideas to activate political and social feelings (Afatara, 2018:60). According to Gasset (2012:23), the public enjoys a work of art when they are able to be interested in one of the human destinies they find in themselves. For example, a landscape painting will seem “beautiful” to people only when it is worth seeing during a walk with the beauty or poignancy of the real piece of nature it shows. According to Ziss (2011:166), art should not be thought to reflect only beautiful phenomena in reality; art reflects life in the diversity of its beautiful and ugly, tragic and funny, sublime and vulgar phenomena. Therefore, the beauty of the work of art consists in the viewer's interpretation of the work according to the situation he/she is in. The explanations of the artists who create the artwork, which is seen as both more complex and more understandable, evoke an emotional reaction in the viewer, and as a result, how viewers evaluate a particular work of art associated with such expressions emerges (Specht, 2010:202).

These evaluations may change according to the conditions required by the era. Along with conceptual art, the fact that the perception of art is meaning and concept-oriented necessitated the meaning to come to life in the technological dimension with the development of technology (Uğurlu, 2008: 248). Art, for which reality was the criterion for a period, has now become the art where meaning and message are essential. Under the

influence of advertising and production, art also appears as a commercial tool. The social transformation experienced with the development of mass production in industry and the spread of mass media after the World War II also formed the basis of the consumer society. Pop Art, which emerged in the late 1950s, irreversibly changed the approaches towards fine arts (Hodge, 2013: 168). With this change, when industrial products or fabricated mass productions are involved, the aesthetic concern, which is a factor in the creation of the work of art, has left its place to commercial concern. The products created for this purpose are not considered as works of art, because a work of art is unique and emerges with aesthetic concern. As it is known, pleasure is not an individual feature, on the contrary, it is a system of aesthetic norms of a social nature and can be easily guided through society by using perception management (Zeybek, 2017:100).

After the industrial revolution, mass-produced designs, which devoid of craftsmanship and aesthetics, and which have lost their visual richness and include engineering product elements can be seen. In response to these designs, the Art and Crafts movement emerged (Kılınçarslan, 2010:27). When these designs are described as industrial products, the differences between them and the work of art are clearly noticed. The designs made to attract the attention of societies and increase consumption were prepared without aesthetic concerns. The concept of kitsch, which we encounter with postmodernism, is perceived as everything that is designed other than a work of art, tasteless and worthless. Kitsch products, which were despised and not seen as art in the modernist period, started to gain prestige, especially as a result of the use of all kinds of kitsch products by pop art artists in the postmodern period, and became the cornerstone of today's art. Kitsch aesthetics, which was humiliated for a long time with adjectives such as vulgar and tasteless, became legitimate in the postmodern period where art and non-art are mixed together (İlkyaz, 2015:2). Kitsch art has taken many forms, but its origins are firmly in the realm of bad taste, and the label of kitsch still arouses strong hostility among both critics and audiences. It is generally accepted that the kitsch is produced in series and is considered to be for public consumption (Yonts, 2018: 4-10). "There is a little bit of kitsch in any art," says Broch. What is not genuine depends on what is genuine, and in every art, the artist has even a little effort to do as the audience wishes (Cited: Pop, 2004: 12).

In this sense, if a work of art is accepted as the whole of the feelings and aesthetic concerns of the artist and the feelings of the viewer, it should be defined as a pattern of emotions and perceptions. The object other than this is a pure object that cannot go beyond being created for commercial purposes. On the other hand, kitsch, which emerged with industrialization, now appears as a concept of art and gives a new quality to this concept as it does not make people think, does not lead them to dreams, does not have any enigmatic features and is only a complete follower of the system. Therefore, the structure they offer neither leads you to other ideas nor makes you question the situations you live in. Their aim is only to be creations with forms that are easy to

recognize and which will immediately be appreciated by the consumer. Finally, it can be said that; in kitsch works/products, how the artist tells is much more important than what he/she tells (Akkuş Gündüz, 2021:718). Thus, the difference between the concept of not an artwork object and kitsch can be understood.

In this context, researches on the concepts of artwork, object and kitsch can be listed as; Pop, 2004; Smith and Reilly, 2007; Afatara, 2018; Specht, 2010; Oliver, 2007; Kingery-Page & Hahn, 2012; Muth, Heslinger and Carbon, 2015; Akkus Gündüz, 2021; Aslan and Eryılmaz, 2020; Kozlu, 2012; Geahigan, 2002; Sotiropoulou-Zormpala, 2012. These studies emphasize how objects become art objects, emphasizing the issue that the concept of kitsch is also the concept of art.

It is seen that objectives are determined in the curriculum about teaching these concepts in art education. Marsh (1997) defines the curriculum as a plan that includes the skills that students should acquire under the school guidance (Cited: Yurdakal, 2018:233). A very important purpose of art education is to help students realize this fact and gain the ability to aesthetically frame almost every aspect of the world (Heid, 2005:57). Accordingly, raising individuals who have visual literacy, perception and aesthetic awareness and who have knowledge, skills and understanding about basic concepts and practices in the field of visual arts are among the special objectives of the Visual Arts Curriculum (Visual Arts Curriculum, 2018: 8). There are three separate learning areas prepared in line with these objectives stated in the Visual Arts Curriculum. They are Visual Communication and Formation, Cultural Heritage, Art Criticism and Aesthetics. The objectives for understanding what a work of art is in the field of Art Criticism and Aesthetics learning are listed as follows:

- Use the concepts related to the visual arts and the knowledge they have learned about the creation process of artworks in the analysis of the artwork,
- Analyse and judge the power of an artwork in expressing feelings and thoughts, its capacity to communicate,
- Making a judgment about the meaning and value of art when examining the works of art,
- Realizing that an artwork has an economic value,
- Understanding that the views, thoughts and preferences about artworks may be different in the discussions about visual arts and learning to respect these thoughts (Visual Arts Curriculum, 2018: 12). Forming an idea in a student about what concepts such as what is a work of art?, who is an artist?, what is kitsch?, are along with the field of Art Criticism and Aesthetics learning.

In this direction, it is aimed to examine the perceptions of artwork of middle school 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade students within the scope of Art Criticism and Aesthetics

learning field acquisitions in the Visual Arts Curriculum. In line with the determined objective, the following sub-problems are listed:

- 1- Can middle school 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade students distinguish an artwork based on knowledge?
- 2- Do middle school 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade students prefer an artwork in line with the field of Art Criticism and Aesthetics learning?

2. Method

2.1. Model of the research

This research is a qualitative research and was designed with the general survey model, which is one of the descriptive research types. According to Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, and Demirel (2018:24), descriptive research in the field of education defines a given situation as precisely and carefully as possible. Descriptive studies can be carried out to determine the achievements and perceptions of various student groups in the field of education.

2.2. Study group

Middle school students in the study group of the research were selected according to the easily accessible sample type from the purposeful sampling strategy. According to Creswell (2017:111), the easily accessible sample type saves time, money and effort at the expense of information and reliability, which the researcher can easily access. In this direction, in the formation of the study group of the research, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th grade students studying in a middle school that the researcher preferred in accordance with the conditions during the application process of the research were determined in the selection of the easily accessible sample. It was based on the fact that the students in question were studying in the course content in accordance with the Visual Arts Curriculum and volunteering to participate in the research. In this context, the study group of the research was formed with the voluntary participation of 100 students studying in the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade of a middle school in the 2020-2021 academic year.

2.3. Data collection

In the process of obtaining the data, the students were asked to choose the picture they thought was a work of art from the pictures in the form given to them and to write sentences stating the reasons for their choice for each question. In the application of the survey questions, the questions with the pictures were reflected with a power point presentation, respectively and the students were asked to mark their preferences on the forms given to them and write their sentences in which they stated their reasons. The

time to answer each question was determined as 1 minute. During this process, the students did not have any interaction with each other.

2.3.1. Data collection tools

The data were collected through a form consisting of 11 questions prepared to determine the students' perceptions of the artwork. In the first part of this form, there is a section that will provide access to the demographic information of the students. The second part consists of 11 questions. There are two images in each question. One of these options is a work of art that has found a place in the history of art and whose works are accepted as a masterpiece by historians and critics; the other one is composed of pictures that are similar to the work of art in terms of form, colour and subject, but do not have a quality of art. At the end of each question, there is a section allocated for students to write sentences explaining the reasons for their choices. Below is a sample form presented to the student for each question.

Table 1. Data collection tool sample question pattern

Which of these paintings do you think could be a work of art?

A B

Why?

The validity and reliability of this form, which was prepared to determine the students' perception of the artwork, was ensured as follows: First, the works of the artists included in the Visual Arts Curriculum were listed and their order of importance was determined by taking the opinions of two experts in the field of art education. According to Merriam (2015:221), this method, which is called expert review/evaluation, includes interviews and discussions with colleagues about the working process, the compatibility of the raw data and the findings that have started to emerge, and the uncertain interpretations. After the list of works was created, works with similar subjects and compositions were removed and the number of questions was determined and tried to be minimized. After the artwork options reached a clear situation, images with similar composition and colour that do not qualify as an artwork were determined and a form was created. The created form was applied to 50 students other than the group planned to take part in the research. The pilot implementation process was carried out in the presence of an expert other than the researcher. Patton (2014:562) emphasizes that in this method, which he calls "expert supervised review", judgments can be made about the external audit, data collection and analysis by an expert other than the researcher. Therefore, this method was applied both in the preparation process of the data collection tool and in the data analysis, increasing the validity of the data collection tool and the research. As a result, there was no problem in the understanding and application of the form by the students, and thus the final version of the data collection tool was created.

2.4. Analysis of data

Descriptive analysis method was used to analyse the data of the research. Descriptive analysis is a type of qualitative data analysis that includes summarizing and interpreting data obtained by various data collection techniques according to predetermined themes. In this type of analysis, the researcher often includes direct quotations in order to reflect the views of the individuals he has interviewed or observed in a striking way. The main purpose of this type of analysis is to present the findings to the reader in a summarized and interpreted form (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005:224). The data obtained were analysed in two stages; determining the frequency and percentage values according to the number of students choosing the pictures which are works of art or not works of art, the density of the sentences in which the students stated the reasons for choosing the pictures, and the determination of categories and themes according to the answers given in accordance with the purpose of the research. According to Merriam (2015: 175), categories are determined through the aim of the study, the researcher's orientation, knowledge, and the meanings made clear by the participants.

3. Results

In this section, the findings were reached within the framework of the frequency table of the data about the visuals.

3.1. Results Regarding Question 1



Table 2. Distribution of students' perceptions of artwork in Question 1 in terms of categories

Q1	Category													
	Colour		Formal Feature		Expression		Experience		Taste		Composition			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Work of Art A	27	27,0	18	66,7	16	59,3	7	25,9	2	7,4	13	48,1	8	29,6
Not Work of Art B	Category													
	Colour		Formal Feature		Expression		Experience		Taste		Composition			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Total	73	73,0	63	86,3	36	49,3	11	15,1	2	2,7	11	15,1	34	46,6
	100	100,0												

According to Table2, 27 of the students (27%) who answered the question 1 chose the option given as a work of art (A); while 73 students (73%) preferred the not a work of art option (B).

In Question1, the category in which the work of art option is the most preferred was the colour category (66.7%); on the other hand, the least preferred (7.4%) one was the experience category. Some of the answers of the students who preferred the artwork because of its colours are as follows: “Because its colour harmony is better (S12)”; “I like harmony in colours (S19).”; “The colours are lighter (S52).” According to these examples, students gave answers based on knowledge about colours.

In Question1, the category in which the not a work of art image option is the most preferred was the colour category (86.3%); on the other hand, the least preferred (2.7%) one was the experience category.

Some of the answers of the students who preferred the non-art image because of its colours are as follows: "The colours are better (S54)"; “The colours are stronger (S56).”; “Stronger colours (S68).” According to these answers, it was observed that the students could not use the correct concepts about colours.

3.2. Results Regarding Question 2



Work of Art B	69	69,0	51	73,9	4	5,8	7	10,1	17	24,6	9	13,0	36	52,2	7	10,1
Category																
Not Work of Art A			Realism		Experience		Technique		Emotion		Figure		Colour		Interest Tendency	
Total	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
	31	31,0	7	22,6	5	16,1	4	12,9	16	51,6	-	-	18	58,1	4	12,9
	100	100,0														

According to Table4, 69 of the students (69.0%) who answered the question 3 chose the option given as a work of art (B); while 31 students (31.0%) preferred the not a work of art option (A).

In Question 3, the category in which the artwork option is the most preferred (73.9%) was the realism category; on the other hand, the least preferred (5.8%) one was the experience category. Some of the answers of the students who chose the artwork because of realism are as follows: “It looks more realistic (S54).”; “The reflection in the water is better (S67).”; “There are more details in this picture (S69)”. It can be seen from the answers that the students have theoretical explanations about realism.

In Question 3, the category in which the not a work of art image option is the most preferred was the colour category (58.1%); on the other hand, the least preferred (12.9%) ones were the technique and interest and tendency categories. The answers given by the students who chose the non-art image option about the colour are as follows: “The colours are compatible with each other (S73).”; “There are more beautiful colours (S92).”

3.4. Results Regarding Question 4



A



B

Table 5. Distribution of students' perceptions of artwork in Question 4 in terms of categories

Q4		Category													
				Experience		Technique		Emotion		Therapy		Colour		Landscape	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Work of Art A		75	75,0	4	5,2	16	20,8	26	33,8	6	7,8	44	57,1	9	11,7
		Category													
				Experience		Technique		Emotion		Therapy		Colour		Landscape	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Non- Work of Art B		25	25,0	2	8,7	4	17,4	9	39,1	1	4,3	16	69,6	2	8,7
Total		100	100,0												

According to Table 5, 75 of the students (75.0%) who answered question 4 chose the option given as a work of art (A); while 25 students (25.0%) preferred the not a work of work option (B).

In Question 4, the category in which the work of art option is the most preferred (57.1%) was the colour category; on the other hand, the least preferred (5.2%) one was the experience category. Some of the answers of the students who preferred the artwork because of its colours are as follows: “There is a nice combination of colour (S1).”; “A better colour depiction (S9).” These statements show that students present meaningful reasons for colour.

In Question 4, the category in which the not a work of art image option is the most preferred (69.6%) was the colour category; on the other hand, the least preferred (4.3%) one was the therapy category. Some of the answers given by the students who chose the non-art option about colour are as follows: “It is more colourful (S20).”; “Wow, so many colours! (S22).”; “Colourful (S27).” In these examples, a situation that is different in terms of colour in the other option is not emphasized. Since the students only gave the answer "colourful", a theoretical background is not perceived.

3.5. Results Regarding Question 5



Table 6. Distribution of students' perceptions of artwork in Question 5 in terms of categories

Q5		Category																	
		Formal Feature		Colour		Realism		Technique		Figure		Compositio n		Landscape		Image Meaning			
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Work of Art A		19	19,0	1	4,8	6	28,6	2	9,5	1	4,8	8	38,1	3	14,3	1	4,8	6	28,6
Not Work of Art B		Category																	
		Formal Feature		Colour		Realism		Technique		Figure		Compositio n		Landscape		Image Meaning			
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Total		81	81,0	19	24,1	36	45,6	22	27,8	10	12,7	26	32,9	21	26,6	12	15,2	19	24,1
		100	100,0																

According to Table 9, 39 of the students (39.0%) who answered the question 8 chose the option given as a work of art (A); while, 61 students (61.0%) preferred the not a work of art option (B).

In Question 8, the category in which the work of art option is the most preferred (43.9%) was the colour category; on the other hand, the least preferred (2.4%) one was the religious symbol category. It can be seen that there are statements based on knowledge about colours from the answers given by the students who preferred the work of art option such as; “More intense colours (S63)” ; “The colour contrast is good (S73).”

In Question 8, the category in which the not a work of art image option is the most preferred (47.5%) was the colour category; on the other hand, the least preferred (11.9%) one was the category of religious symbols. Some of the answers given by the students who chose the not a work of art option about colour are as follows: “Colours (S92).”; “It has more colours (S93).” In these statements, there is no theoretical justification for colours, but the focus is on the fact that the variety of colours is remarkable.

3.9. Results Regarding Question 9



Table10. Distribution of students' perceptions of artwork in Question 9 in terms of categories

Q9	Category															
	Field Knowledge		Popularity		Experience		Colour		National Culture		Realism		Taste Pleasure			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Work of Art B	87	87,0	15	16,7	28	31,1	12	13,3	45	50	2	2,2	20	22,2	24	26,7
Not Work of Art A	Category															
	Field Knowledge		Popularity		Experience		Colour		National Culture		Realism		Taste Pleasure			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Total	13	13,0	-	-	2	20	1	10	3	30	-	-	-	-	3	30

According to Table 10, 87 of the students who (87.0%) answered question 9 chose the option given as a work of art (B); while 13 students (13.0%) preferred the not a work of art option (A).

In Question 9, the category in which the work of art option is the most preferred (50.0%) was the colour category; on the other hand, the least preferred (2.2%) one was the national culture category. Some of the answers given by the students who chose the work of art option about colour are “There are more and more beautiful colours or light colours (S55)”; “bright colours that add value to the picture (S66)”. In these expressions, it is seen that the work of art is consciously chosen.

In Question 9, the categories in which the not a work of art image option is the most preferred (30%) were the categories of colour and taste and pleasure; on the other hand, the least preferred (10%) one was the experience category. The students who chose the option that is not a work of art gave the answer "There are blue tones in the picture (S100)" about the colour. The answer does not contain theoretical content.

3.10. Results Regarding Question 10



A

B

Table11. Distribution of students' perceptions of artwork in Question 10 in terms of categories

Q10		Category															
		Figure Posture		Anatomy		Detail		Historical Value		Realism		Experience		Knowledge			
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Artwork B		82	82,0	25	30,5	34	41,5	42	51,5	7	8,5	30	36,6	7	8,5	10	12,2
Non-Artwork A																	
Total		100		100,0													
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
		18	18,0	5	27,8	1	5,6	4	22,2	2	11,1	3	16,7	2	11,1	4	22,2

According to Table 10, 82 of the students (82.0%) who answered question 10 chose the option given as a work of art (B); while 18 students (18.0%) preferred the not a work of art option (A).

In Question 10, the category in which the work of art is the most preferred (51.5%) was the detail category; on the other hand, the least preferred (8.5%) ones were the historical value and experience categories. Some of the answers given by the students who chose the not a work of art option regarding the detail category are as follows: “It is carved more finely (S67).”; “The artist paid attention to details (S92).” It can be seen from these answers that more elaboration and workmanship are noticed.

In Question 10, the category in which the not a work of art image option is the most preferred (27.8%) was the figure posture category; on the other hand, the least preferred (5.6%) one was the anatomy category. Some of the answers given by the students who chose the not a work of art option about the posture of the figure are as follows: “It looks better as if it is bent (S40).”; “Weaker (S52).” It was observed that students who chose this option did not correctly evaluate the anatomical structure of the figure.

3.11. Results Regarding Question 11



Table12. Distribution of students' perceptions of artwork in Question 11 in terms of categories

Q11		Category																			
		Contemporary Art		Composition		Colour		Geographical Location		Experience		Writing		Language		Taste Value		Simulation			
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Artwork B		73	73,0	12	16,4	28	38,4	42	57,5	5	6,8	13	17,8	10	13,7	4	5,5	24	32,9	21	28,8
		Category																			
		Contemporary Art		Composition		Colour		Geographical Location		Experience		Writing		Language		Taste Value		Simulation			
Non-Artwork A		27	27,0	3	11,1	15	55,6	8	29,6	3	11,1	3	11,1	7	25,9	2	7,4	10	37,0	3	11,1
Total		100	100,0																		

According to Table 11, 73 of the students (73.0%) who answered question 11 chose the option given as a work of art (B); while 27 students (27.0%) preferred the not a work of art option (A).

In Question 11, the category in which the artwork option is the most preferred (57.5%) was the colour category; on the other hand, the least preferred (5.5%) one was the language category. Some of the answers given by the students who chose the work of art option about colour are as follows; “Its colours are brighter (S1).”; “Contrast colours are used a lot (S37)”. As can be seen from these statements, the students expressed the reasons for their choices in accordance with the theoretical background.

In Question 11, the category in which the not a work of art image option is the most preferred (55.6%) was the composition category; on the other hand, the language category was the least preferred (7.4%). The answers given by the students who chose the not a work of art option about the composition can be listed as follows; “I like asymmetry more (S8).”; “nice line-up (S40).” From these expressions, it is seen that no expression based on knowledge of the concept of composition is used.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

The following results were obtained from the findings regarding the first sub-problem of the research:

According to the results obtained from the findings of Question 1; it is seen that the students who participated in the research prefer the option which is not a work of art more. The most preferred reason for the visual, which is not a work of art, was the colour category. It can be seen that the choices made depending on the colours are not based on knowledge.

According to the results obtained from the findings of Question 2, it is seen that the students who participated in the research prefer the option which is a work of art more. It can be seen from the answers of the students that the colour category of the artwork option was chosen based on knowledge at the highest rate. In addition, it is seen that perspective, composition and realism were effective in the selection of Cezanne's work called *Fruits and Jug*.

According to the results obtained from the findings of Question 3, it is seen that the students who participated in the research prefer the option which is a work of art more. In Question 3, the most preferred reason for choosing the option with Claude Monet's *Bain à la Grenouillere* is seen as realism. As it is known, the work given in the question is an impressionist work. The students stated that this work is a realistic work because of the clarity of the places and figures in the work, and that's why they chose it. However, it cannot be said that the choice of this option was a conscious and knowledge-based choice.

Pavlou (2013) emphasizes that among the results of his research on aesthetic preferences of art educator candidates, most of the participants in his research make non-reflective judgments about artworks, and that there is strong attraction to the concepts of colours and realism in their preferences. This statement is in line with the results of the research mentioned above.

According to the results obtained from the findings of Question 4, it is seen that the students who participated in the research prefer the option which is a work of art more. In Question 4, the reason why the option with Claude Monet's "Girls in a Boat" is mostly preferred is the colour. At the same time, it is understood that elements such as brush stroke, which is called the technical category, are also effective in choosing this option.

According to the results obtained from the findings of Question 5, it is seen that the students prefer the option which is not a work of art more. It was the colour category in which the visual that is not a work of art was the most preferred. In addition, categories such as composition, formal features and technique were created in the light of the answers given. However, it was observed that there were no answers based on knowledge about these categories.

According to the results obtained from the findings of Question 6, it is seen that students prefer the option that is not a work of art. The colour category was also the most preferred in the image which is not a work of art. For the colour category, it was observed that there was only the response density for popular colours and the popular colours in makeup. However, answers about realism were received. These answers were in the direction of making the portrait more understandable, not the answers reflecting the realism movement as an artistic concept.

According to the results obtained from the findings of Question 7, it is seen that the students who participated in the research prefer the option which is a work of art more. In Question 7, it was the emotion category in which the artwork option was the most preferred. This result of the research coincides with the two results obtained by Prinz (2007) in his research. The first one of these results is that appreciation, that is, judgment is an emotional state, and the second one is that appreciation, that is, judgment is based on curiosity. In addition, realism and historical person categories emerged according to the student answers. It was observed that answers are given in accordance with the definitions of the realism movement. In addition, it can be seen that a knowledge-based choice was made according to the characteristics of the figure, which was likened to people who lived in history.

According to the results obtained from the findings of Question 8, it is seen that the students participating in the research prefer the option which is not a work of art more. In Question 8, it is the colour category in which the not a work of art option was the most preferred. From the answers given, it can be seen that the students chose this option only because of the calm and pastel colours.

According to the results obtained from the findings of Question 9, it is seen that the students who participated in the research prefer the option which is a work of art more. In Question 9, it is the colour category in which the artwork option was the most preferred. It can be seen from the answers given for this question that a conscious colour choice was made. In addition, it was observed that there were knowledge-based answers in the categories of field knowledge and popularity.

According to the results obtained from the findings of Question 10, it is seen that the students who participated in the research prefer the option which is a work of art more. In Question 10, it was the detail category in which the artwork option was the most preferred.

According to the results obtained from the findings of Question 11, it is seen that the students who participated in the research prefer the option which is a work of art more. In Question 11, it was the colour category in which the artwork option was the most preferred.

The following results were obtained from the findings regarding the second sub-problem of the research:

According to the results obtained from the findings of the research, it is seen that the students who participated in the research preferred the artwork option more in question 2, question 3, question 4, question 7, question 9, question 10 and question 11.

In Question 2, the categories created based on the sentences in which students stated the reasons for preferring the work of art are realism, cultural pattern, colour, composition, perspective, taste, experience and light and shadow. It is seen that the students use the knowledge they have learned about the concepts of art and the process of creating artworks in analysing the images in question 2. This objective is within the scope of Art Criticism and Aesthetics learning area. Demirel (2018) concluded in his research that after the art education given, students evaluate the work from a positive point of view, taking into account artistic terms such as colour, light-shadow, ratio-proportion, composition, balance or use of stain. This result obtained by Demirel (2018) in his research coincides with the result of the research.

The categories created based on the sentences in which the students stated their reasons for choosing the work of art in question 3 are realism, experience, technique, emotion, figure, colour and interest tendency. In this question, students emphasized realism, colour and figurative features in distinguishing the artwork. Danko-McGhee and Slutsky's (2011) research on the aesthetic preferences of young children aged 2-5 regarding their choice of picture book covers, aims to evaluate the nature of children's aesthetic preferences by examining which picture book covers they like (abstract, representational, colour and black and white drawings). The result shows that children tend towards book covers with representational, colourful and familiar images according to their age. This finding shows similarity with the result of the research. In this

direction, in question 3, the students made their choices in line with art criticism and aesthetic learning.

In Question 4, the categories of experience, technique, emotion, therapy, colour and landscape were created according to the intensity of students' answers. From the answers received, it is seen that the formal aspect of the artwork was emphasized by examining the work in the categories of technique, colour and landscape. The emotions of the students were at the forefront in the categories of emotion, therapy and experience. Heid's (2005) research on daily aesthetic experience with children concluded that it is necessary to teach students to use their senses and to care, in order to understand the qualities of what is perceived in everything. In this respect, it shows similar results with the results obtained from the research.

Question 7 includes the categories of nature, background, realism, technique, place, emotion, historical person and figure. It is seen that the foreground of the work was examined according to the answers given by the students in the categories of background, place and realism. It can be seen from the answers received that the detail and place perception of the work are emphasized in the categories of background, place, and realism. In the figure category on the other hand, a historical person and the meanings derived from the posture of the figure are emphasized.

Question 9 includes field knowledge, experience, colour, national culture, realism and taste and pleasure categories. In the field knowledge category, the students used expressions to indicate that they had knowledge about the artwork and its artist. In the colour category, the formal features of the work were prioritized. It is seen that the expressions of taste and pleasure are used due to the popularity of the work known in the category of taste and pleasure. This result is in line with the result of Pavlou (2013) in his research on the artistic preferences of pre-service art educators, "they chose the works of art because they thought of them as good works, because they thought they had personal tastes and educational value".

In line with the answers received from the students in Question 10, the categories of figure posture, anatomy, detail, historical value, realism, experience and knowledge were created. In the categories of anatomy, detail and realism, the students made statements that would emphasize the proportion based on the formality of the figure.

In Question 11, there are categories of contemporary art, composition, colour, geographical location, experience, writing, language, appreciation and simulation. Students emphasized the formal aspect of the work more in this question. Expressions in the colour, composition and writing categories are mostly in this direction. The students, who felt the western culture due to the words in the composition of the work, used their preferences in this direction with the effect of popularity. Kuscevic, Kardum, and Brajic (2014) in their study, which aims to investigate the differences in the visual preferences of 20th century paintings, emphasized that students prefer paintings made before the

20th century and paintings that have no artistic value. They concluded that regardless of the age of the students, they prefer works of fauvism, pop art and surrealism. This result is similar to the result of the research.

In line with the results obtained in the research, it is considered necessary to give detailed information about what a work of art is at the middle school level to the students in art activities. The concept of the work of art should be explained through examples of works of art and students should be allowed to talk about the works. In this way, the skills of increasing the knowledge, analysing and writing about works of art can be developed. Teachers should use conceptual expressions in the analysis of artworks. In this way, students' artistic language development is also ensured. Art criticism is essential in understanding a work of art. For this reason, a work of art related to each subject should be analysed through art criticism using artistic concepts and expressions. A work of art should be evaluated as a psychological, sociological and economic object. Apart from the material value of the work, the artistic value of it should be discussed and an awareness should be created on this issue. In this regard, it is possible to examine the original works of art in museums and galleries. In this context, activity plans can be prepared.

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