



The Impact of Employing Visual Arts in Enhancing National Identity among Primary School Students in the United Arab Emirates: A Field Study Using Statistical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the effect of visual arts usage on national identity among first cycle students in the United Arab Emirates will be evaluated. It should be noted that today visual arts became an effective way of informing youth about their cultural values, sense of belonging to their nation, national heritage and values. Nowadays when there are a lot of social and cultural problems, schools should make great efforts in helping students to establish their national identity through creativity. This research is conducted using the methodological framework of descriptive-analytical approach and explores the effect of visual arts on students' national identity. For the purpose of this study, a questionnaire has been created and distributed among the target audience of first cycle students in order to analyze students' perspectives on visual arts effects on their sense of national identity, their culture and national values. Moreover, the impact of certain demographic factors like gender, grade, and academic background has been explored. The results have been obtained using statistical tools like frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, t-test, one-way ANOVA and Pearson's correlation coefficient. The research suggests that visual arts have a positive effect on students' national identity as it encourages students to appreciate and recognize their national culture, belonging to their nation and values, as well as create something based on those.

Keywords: Visual Arts ▪ National Identity ▪ Art Education ▪ Cultural Heritage ▪ UAE Students ▪ Citizenship ▪ Visual Culture

1. INTRODUCTION

The current age is characterized by drastic changes in both culture and technology, which have had effects on people's patterns of thinking, values, and attitudes, especially among the younger generation and the students. As a result, national identity has come to be one of the issues getting attention from educational and cultural institutions. National identity refers to the system by which an individual is associated with his/her native land, as well as his/her cultural, historical, and civilizational aspects. National identity can also be described

as a factor that enhances social unity and cultural stability [7].

With regard to the changes caused by the process of globalization and cultural and technological transformations, there has been an urgent need to discover new methods in education and culture that would help foster national identity in students in relation to the current age. The field of visual arts is seen to be among the most important of these strategies as far as its power is concerned for impacting individuals' mental, emotional, and behavioral aspects [3], [16].

Through different artistic activities, including drawing, designing, photography, Arabic calligraphy, and digital arts, one gets the chance to portray his/her national symbols and heritage in a way that he/she will be able to comprehend and express his/her nationality effectively. Through visual arts, it also becomes possible for one to showcase his/her patriotism and national belongingness through creative expressions that demonstrate the civilization aspect of society [14], [12].

There has been an emphasis in many studies conducted in recent times about the importance of including visual arts in education, which enhances the formation of civic values and belonging to the nation, along with developing knowledge about their history and culture [4], [13].

Based on this notion, this research focuses on evaluating the effect of incorporating visual arts in promoting national identity among students through fieldwork involving questionnaires and statistics. It will help in producing scientific results that can help in formulating educational and artistic programs for developing national identity in educational settings [3], [9].

2. RESEARCH GAP

A literature review of the previously done work shows that there is a rising trend of scholarly interest in the role that arts play in helping to develop citizenship values, cultural awareness, and social belongingness among children. Many scholars have investigated the effects of art and arts education on the development of students' emotions, cultures, behaviors, and the significance of educational activities in promoting social unity and cultural preservation [13], [14]. Nevertheless, although numerous studies have been undertaken in the area, several crucial gaps still exist.

First, previous studies have generally treated artistic activities or arts education broadly without focusing on the visual arts as a distinct educational and cultural activity. Although much focus has been paid to artistic activities, particularly within the broader topic of citizenship education and cultural awareness, few attempts have been made to determine the significance of the role played by visual arts, including drawing, designing, painting, photography, and digital arts, in enhancing the national identity of children.

Second, the existing studies mostly concentrated on the general aspects of citizenship values, social belongingness, or cultural awareness instead of paying attention to the multidimensionality of national identity, encompassing emotional, cultural, symbolic, and behavioral aspects. Hence, more specific research is needed in order to identify the way visual arts can help to build students' national identities.

Among other topics, the current study focuses on exploring whether using visual arts can have positive outcomes for shaping national identity in the course of education of first cycle students in the UAE. The choice of this topic is justified by the current need for stimulating the development of national identity in the younger generation along with identifying novel ways of achieving this aim. In order to reach the goals mentioned above, the present research used a combination of descriptive and analytical approaches to research along with collecting data via a questionnaire administered to several students enrolled in educational activities.

The findings of the research prove that visual arts have great impact on shaping students' national identities by encouraging them to develop their connection with the country and appreciation of national culture through its symbols and artistic representation. Moreover, according to the results, participation in artistic activities, exposure to the visual representation of the national cultural heritage, involvement in art exhibitions held at schools may turn into a significant source for expressing one's identity and cultural interactions. Also, there is a direct correlation between engagement in artistic activities and students' awareness of and loyalty to the national culture.

Thus, one should acknowledge the current research as an important contribution to the field in terms of its ability to provide new information concerning the effects of visual arts on the development of national identity. Apart from stressing the educational role of artistic activities, the research highlights their significance for preserving national culture and promoting national identity. Consequently, one can consider using the findings of the current study for shaping further actions in educational institutions and promoting students' social, cultural, and national identity.

Taking all the identified gaps into account, the current study attempts to provide a valuable contribution to the body of literature on the influence of implementing visual arts activities on the development of national identity of the first cycle students in the United Arab Emirates. The current study becomes distinct from the rest of the researches through its focus on visual arts, its target population, as well as the applied research design involving a quantitative approach, such as survey based on the use of questionnaires.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to conduct an examination of the effect of using visual arts in developing the national identity of the first cycle students in UAE. Due to the growing necessity to create national identity in young learners, the research hopes to identify empirical information concerning the use of visual arts in promoting national identity of children.

In order to fulfill the objective, this study will be carried out in several stages. First, there will be provided an introduction into the topic under consideration. Then, the research will provide the statement of the problem together with objectives, significance, and research questions. Following that, there will be discussed theoretical concepts related to the topic and provided the review of previous researches conducted on the topic of visual arts and national identity development. Afterwards, the research methodology will be elaborated. It will include the identification of the study population and sample, research instrument, process of instrument validation and reliability testing, as well as statistical tools used in data analysis. Finally, the results will be discussed together with the related literature..

3. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The current societies are experiencing a number of challenges emanating from globalization and digitalization processes that have resulted in certain symptoms of declining national culture and cultural identity among young people and students [2]. In addition, increased utilization of digital tools

together with contact with foreign cultures have had adverse impacts on values and orientations, thus increasing the need for active involvement of educational institutions in promoting national identity among students through contemporary means of education.

The visual arts are recognized as one of the media in the educational process capable of effectively influencing students' consciousness and attitudes owing to their symbolic images and artworks representing the heritage and values of the society. There is however a need for scientific research in order to ascertain whether utilizing visual arts could be an effective way of reinforcing national identity among students, and if yes, how useful artistic activities would be in cultivating national identity and feelings of belonging [13].

In this regard, the problem of the current research is stated in the following research question:

What is the impact of using artistic activities in visual arts on national identity among the first-cycle students in UAE?

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study helps add value to the existing academic works on the issue of visual arts and national identity. First of all, the study reveals the link between art education and the development of national affiliation among students. Second, the findings of the research help establish the concept of the place of visual arts in relation to fostering national culture. The results of the study will be helpful in designing artistic programs aimed at developing the notion of national identity in the context of educational institutions. The research can guide policymakers towards encouraging art education among students in such educational institutions.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

5.1 Aims of the current research

1. To investigate the effect of using visual arts for improving national identity among first cycle students.
2. To explore the effect of artistic activities in the cultivation of national affiliation values.
3. To determine the correlation between involvement in visual arts activities and improvement in national identity among first cycle students.
4. To explore any statistically significant differences in the responses of the study sample by demographic factors.
5. To make some recommendations for developing artistic programs supporting national identity.

6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research will try to address the following research questions:

1. What are the effects of visual arts activities on improving students' national identity?
2. What is the role of artistic activities in fostering the sense of national affiliation?
3. Is there any statistically significant correlation between visual arts activities and improvement in national identity?
4. Are there any statistically significant differences among the

responses of the research participants, specifically in terms of?

- a. Gender?
- b. Educational level?

7. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. The existence of statistically significant linkage between involvement in visual arts activities and boosting the sense of national identity of the students.
2. The occurrence of statistically significant differences in the answers of the research respondents on account of their gender.
3. The presence of statistically significant differences due to the educational level.
4. The existence of positive correlation between involvement in artistic activities and national belongingness.

Literature review

The issue of visual arts and its contribution in terms of promoting national identity has gained much attention recently due to the vital importance of visual arts in terms of creating student's awareness and fostering their sense of belonging and social affiliation. A great number of Arab and foreign studies have been devoted to the question of the influence of artistic activities and visual art education upon forming the values of citizenship, sense of belonging, and awareness of national heritage.

Reference [2] identifies the role of visual arts in enhancing students' national identity. Specifically, the author analyzes the extent to which artistic activities contribute to fostering the values of belonging and national pride among students. To conduct the research, he uses the descriptive-analytical approach and a questionnaire as the main instrument for collecting data. The results show that visual arts positively affect students' formation of national identity and their affiliation to the national culture and heritage. Also, they prove that participation in artistic activities fosters creativity of students in expressing their patriotism. This study can be linked to the current study in the issues raised and methodology used. However, there is one difference between both studies; the current paper examines behavioral and value dimensions of national identity and provides statistical analysis of the study sample.

In a similar manner, Reference [3] investigates the impact of artistic activities on fostering the values of citizenship and national belonging among students of secondary schools. In particular, he investigates how the participation of secondary school students in artistic activities impacts the development of national values among them. According to his research, artistic activities significantly enhance national affiliation of students. Moreover, he stresses the necessity of combining artistic activities with national and cultural celebrations in educational institutions. This paper relates to the current paper in the aspect of focusing on the importance of participating in artistic activities. Yet, the paper under consideration concentrates on the problem of visual arts.

Furthermore, in this context, Reference [6] stressed the importance of the visual art exhibition at school in instilling a sense of national belonging among students. The results proved

that visual arts activities associated with heritage and national symbols played a significant role in cultivating a sense of pride and allegiance towards the homeland. Moreover, the research proved that an educational setting was critical in directing learners towards expressing their cultural and national identity through arts. In this regard, the current study supports this idea about the educational role of visual arts but differs from it in its specific concern about visual arts' impact on students' national identity through the measurement of their perspectives through a field questionnaire and statistical methods.

On the international front, Reference [14] stated the significance of visual culture in shaping learners' awareness of their culture and society. The results revealed that visual arts were not merely aesthetic but had another important function that consisted of helping form learners' cultural and social identity in educational settings. In addition, it was found that images, symbols, and artistic productions had a direct effect on the perception of the learners of their culture and society. This study supported the idea of the current study about the significance of visual arts in identity formation; however, it differs in its special focus on national identity in the Arab context.

Finally, Reference [16] examined the relationship between art education and students' national identity to measure the impact of engagement in artistic activities in forming a sense of national belonging. The findings revealed that students who engaged in artistic activities were better off compared to others in terms of developing national affiliation and loyalty. Moreover, it was proven that art helped in expressing the identity of the learner. On this point, the current study supported this finding about the beneficial relationship between arts and national identity. Nevertheless, it differed in its special focus on visual arts teachers and their activities associated with national events.

However, Reference [13] stated that arts education is a significant factor in developing the cognitive, affective, and socio-personal domains of students and that the arts can contribute to creating a well-rounded personality that is able to convey culture and national affiliations. In addition, he added that the visual arts allow learners to see the symbolic representation of their cultures and interact with them. The current research was influenced by the above theory in understanding the relationship between visual arts and the improvement of students' national identity.

The review of previous studies reveals that all of them agree on the significance of visual arts and artistic activities for reinforcing national affiliation and developing cultural consciousness among students. All studies also indicate that schools are ideal locations for utilizing visual arts for promoting national identity and preserving cultural heritage. However, the current study attempts to make a scientific contribution in terms of emphasizing the effects of visual arts on enhancing students' national identity through empirical research and statistical analysis of participants' data, in addition to exploring the affective and behavioral aspects of the topic under discussion.

The Proposed Framework

This research project draws from a theoretical approach that

focuses on the connection between visual arts education and the development and enhancement of national identity in students. In the current educational literature, national identity is considered one of the most important dimensions necessary for maintaining social cohesion, cultural continuity, and retention of collective values by societies [9]. On the other hand, visual arts are increasingly seen as influential educational and cultural means that affect cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of the learning process via symbolism and creative expression [13].

National identity can be defined as a feeling of belonging, loyalty, and affection to one's home country, together with a sense of pride in its heritage, history, values, symbols, and culture. It is a manifestation of the shared consciousness among members of a nation and helps develop social and cultural values [15]. National identity is not only related to a person's political views but also to cultural, linguistic, historical, and other dimensions that help shape people's attitude towards the homeland and community they belong to.

Education plays a critical role in promoting national identity among young people in terms of instilling in them an understanding of cultural traditions, national accomplishments, and values of society [9]. In this regard, visual arts can be considered an excellent tool in helping students come into contact with the symbols of their national identity and communicate their patriotism in a creative way.

Visual arts can be defined as art processes that rely mostly on visuals to convey various messages such as values, feelings, opinions, beliefs, and cultures. Some examples of visual arts include painting, drawing, designing, photography, sculpting, Arabic calligraphy, and digital arts [8]. Apart from aesthetics, visual arts represent cultural and educational tools through which people learn about social life, culture, and cultural symbols and develop a sense of cultural identity [14].

In the educational context, participation in visual arts enables learners to express themselves creatively and emotionally as well as think critically. Moreover, participation in such activities allows students to make connections between abstract national concepts (e.g., citizenship, cultural identity, etc.) and visual objects such as flags, national landmarks, historical monuments, and events [12].

The connection between visual arts and national identity arises from the fact that artistic expression represents one of the main ways of conveying culture and developing collective consciousness [16]. Art activities allow people to explore aspects of their national culture visually.

Here are some of the reasons why visual arts play a role in building national identity among learners. To begin with, visual arts allow learners to emotionally engage with their country's symbols and culture by participating creatively in the activity. Moreover, the practice of arts encourages learners to express their feelings of loyalty and belonging to their motherland using visuals. In addition, engaging in visual arts helps create cultural awareness by connecting students to their cultural narratives and occasions [14], [13].

Engaging in artistic practices during such national events like National Day celebrations, heritage festivals, and patriotism art competitions allows students to further develop their sense

of loyalty and pride towards their country. Thus, besides the aesthetic role, visual arts act as an educational and cultural tool in shaping citizen values and promoting national solidarity [9].

The current study could also be explained with reference to Social Identity Theory formulated by Henri Tajfel and Turner, which states that an individual’s identity derives from a group affiliation. This means that people form their self-concept partly on account of the fact that the groups they belong to make them feel proud, a sense of belonging and emotional safety.

In the educational setting, students’ engagement in visual art projects focused on their country’s national symbols, history, and cultural values will help to build a sense of belonging to the country. The process of artistic practice helps learners incorporate culturally shared meanings and turn them into their own experience. As a result, visual arts can be seen as a tool used to construct students’ national identities socially and emotionally.

Moreover, there is yet another basis that confirms this research from Visual Culture Theory. According to it, visual images, symbols, and arts play a significant role as components required for the development of certain perceptions of culture [12]. Visual culture shapes the self-perception of each person, his vision of society and culture as a result of the interaction with visual representations in the course of education.

Moreover, art and visual activity promotes the development of national identity since in the process of this activity, students have an opportunity to interact with various visual images and symbols that embody the values and traditions related to their home country. Visual art practices and drawing contribute to the development of visual representation of the culture of the native nation [14].

In addition, there is yet another theory that supports visual art practice, namely, Art-Based Learning, which emphasizes the role of artistic experience in developing meaningful learning, engagement and reflection skills among students [13]. Art-based learning encourages learners to take part in the process of creating and not merely to acquire knowledge by themselves.

Moreover, visual art practices provide students with a variety of emotional experiences related to the issues of citizenship and heritage.

In light of these theories, this current study postulates that visual arts activities constitute a very good means of education and culture that can help foster national identity among learners. Interaction with artistic symbols, involvement in national artistic events, and discussions of heritage-related subjects help instill a sense of belongingness, pride, cultural consciousness, and sense of duty toward one’s native land.

Visual arts are thus seen here as more than just aesthetic educational activities; they are seen as very important pedagogical instruments used in fostering students’ emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of national identity.

The conceptual framework of this current study shows the connection between visual arts activities and national identity development among first-cycle students. It is assumed that visual arts activities are very important in national identity

development because of certain interrelated dimensions such as heritage and culture consciousness, national belongingness and loyalty, artistic expression of national identity, visual arts teacher, and national values and behaviors.

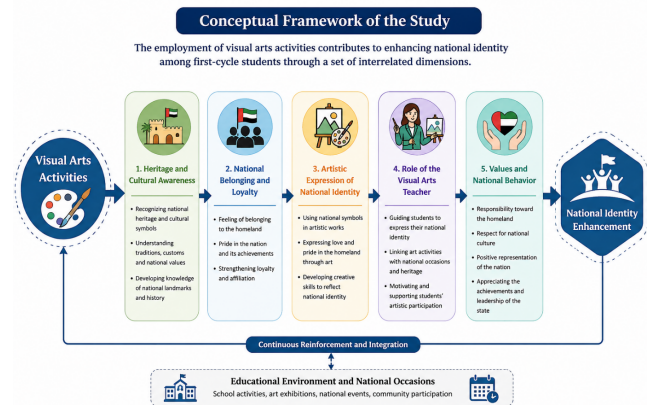


Figure 1. The proposed Framework impact of employing the visual arts in enhancing national identity among primary school students

As can be seen in Figure 1 below, the research is predicated on the assumption that the application of visual arts activities in the educational setting helps positively develop the students’ national identity. The diagram above shows how interlinked the roles of art, culture, education, and behavior are in building students’ national identity.

8. THE USED METHODOLOGY IN THIS STUDY

The present study will only consider the impact of using visual arts in fostering national identity. For the purpose of the study, there will be 307 students who have been enrolled for the study ranging from grade one to grade four. The participants will all come from Al Sila Kindergarten and School. The study will be carried out in the academic year 2025 -2026.

Since this particular study involves the examination of the effect of the usage of visual arts in fostering national identity of first-cycle students in the United Arab Emirates, the descriptive and analytical methodological approach will be employed. The reason why this particular approach will be used is because it is the best suited methodology in carrying out such a study. The description and analysis of the interrelationship between variables included in the study shall be undertaken in order to achieve the objectives of the study.

Description and analysis are some of the most commonly applied approaches in social sciences especially in educational studies. This particular approach involves conducting research into a given phenomenon in reality through the collection of data and information about the phenomenon. These data will later be analyzed in order to make generalizations that can eventually be put into action [5]. It also enables the researcher to conduct a study about the attitudes of the subjects towards a given matter employing scientific means such as questionnaires, interviews, and observation [11].

First of all, data collection in this study has been performed using a questionnaire as an effective tool for reaching this aim. The structure of the questionnaire has been compiled in accordance with the aims and objectives of this research and related research questions, including such significant issues as the

role of visual arts in developing national identity, encouraging people’s consciousness about their national heritage and culture, artistic reflection of the national identity, etc. Also, particular attention has been paid to studying the impact of visual arts on national values and behavior of students.

Besides, the obtained data have been subjected to statistical analysis with the help of various methods, among which there are such indicators as frequencies, percentages, arithmetic means, and standard deviations. Such an approach has been selected in order to achieve a high degree of accuracy of scientific results interpreting the phenomenon under research. Thus, the strength of the applied approach lies in the opportunity of describing, analyzing, and interpreting different relations between variables connected with this phenomenon and revealing scientific insights into using visual arts to enhance national identity of students.

As regards the choice of the approach for studying this topic, the reason is the nature of this study as well — studying the influence of visual arts on enhancing national identity of students based on field data and its statistical analysis.

8.1 5.1 Study Population and Sample

The study population consisted of students who participated in the questionnaire concerning the impact of employing visual arts in enhancing national identity. A total of 307 valid responses were obtained and deemed suitable for statistical analysis.

Table 1. Table 1. The study sample was distributed according to grade level

| Grade Level | Number of Students |
|--------------|--------------------|
| First Grade | 91 |
| Second Grade | 76 |
| Third Grade | 70 |
| Fourth Grade | 70 |
| Total | 307 |

The table indicates that the sample included students from the first four grades, with relatively greater representation from first-grade students.

The study employed a questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was designed to measure the impact of employing visual arts in enhancing students’ national identity.

The survey included several dimensions, among which are:

1. Loyalty to the Homeland.
2. Culture consciousness.
3. Nationality expression through the arts.
4. The visual arts teachers’ contribution towards the development of students’ sense of nationality.
5. The effect of the arts on behavior and values.
6. An open-ended question about the case where the students expressed their nationality through an artwork or a certain situation.
7. The questions included in the questionnaire were closed-end questions that were aimed at investigating the degree of association between visual arts and expressions of belonging

to nation, cultural heritage, and nationality through arts.

8. In order to validate the instrument, the dimensions of the questionnaire were developed bearing in mind the research objectives and questions in such a way as to cover all the main aspects relating to the use of visual arts and promoting nationalism.

9. Another way through which the validity of the tool can be ensured is presenting it to a number of specialists of art education, curriculum and instruction, and social sciences so as to judge its appropriateness, relevance, and clarity.

10. Concerning reliability, it can be measured statistically using Cronbach’s Alpha after coding the answers.

8.2 5.2 Statistical Methods Used

Descriptive statistical methods were employed to analyze the responses of the study sample, including:

- Frequencies.
- Percentages.
- Descriptive means for the questionnaire dimensions.
- Content analysis of the responses to the open-ended question.
- At a later stage, more advanced statistical tests may also be utilized, such as:
 - T-test.
 - One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).
 - Pearson correlation coefficient.
 - Regression analysis.

8.3 5.3 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

In order to assure the validity and reliability of the research tool employed for assessing the effectiveness of using visual arts activities in developing national identity in first cycle students within the United Arab Emirates, the current study explored both validity and reliability aspects of the questionnaire used.

8.4 Validity of the Research Instrument

Validity can be defined as the degree to which the research instrument accurately reflects the underlying variables and constructs that it is designed to measure. In the current study, validity of the questionnaire was confirmed through face validity and content validity approaches in order to make sure that the research instrument reflects the aims of the current study.

8.5 5.4 Face Validity

Face validity was assessed by reviewing the questionnaire items to determine their clarity, readability, and suitability for the targeted age group. Special attention was given to the linguistic simplicity of the statements and their appropriateness for first-cycle students to ensure that the participants could understand and respond to the items accurately and meaningfully.

8.6 5.5 Content Validity

To establish content validity, the initial version of the questionnaire was submitted to a panel of experts and specialists in art education, curriculum and instruction, educational psy-

chology, and social sciences. The reviewers were asked to evaluate the questionnaire in terms of:

- The clarity and linguistic accuracy of the statements.
- The appropriateness of the items for the study sample.
- The relevance of the statements to the dimensions of the study.
- The extent to which the questionnaire items reflected the objectives and research questions of the study.

The comprehensiveness of the questionnaire dimensions in measuring the relationship between visual arts and national identity.

Based on the comments and suggestions provided by the panel of experts, several modifications were made to improve the quality of the instrument. Some statements were linguistically revised for greater clarity, certain items were reworded to avoid ambiguity, and the order of a number of statements was reorganized to improve the logical sequence and overall coherence of the questionnaire. These modifications contributed to enhancing the clarity, accuracy, and appropriateness of the instrument for data collection.

The final version of the questionnaire consisted of several dimensions addressing the major aspects related to the enhancement of national identity through visual arts activities, including national belonging and loyalty, awareness of heritage and culture, artistic expression of national identity, the role of the visual arts teacher, and the impact of visual arts on values and behavior.

8.7 5.6 Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of the instrument in measuring the intended variables. To verify the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient was used to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire dimensions after coding the responses and converting them into numerical values suitable for statistical analysis.

Cronbach’s Alpha is considered one of the most widely used statistical measures for assessing the reliability of educational and social research instruments. High values of Cronbach’s Alpha indicate a strong degree of internal consistency among the questionnaire items, suggesting that the instrument is reliable and suitable for application in the study.

Table 2. Table 2. The reliability coefficients for the questionnaire dimensions

| Dimension | Cronbach’s Alpha |
|--|------------------|
| National Belonging and Loyalty | 0.89 |
| Heritage and Cultural Awareness | 0.87 |
| Artistic Expression of National Identity | 0.85 |
| Role of the Visual Arts Teacher | 0.91 |
| Values and National Behavior | 0.88 |
| Total Instrument | 0.93 |

As seen from the results shown in Table 1, all the reliability coefficients measured by Cronbach’s Alpha method have been found to be relatively high and varied between 0.85 and 0.91. Moreover, the total reliability coefficient of the whole questionnaire was found to equal 0.93, which denotes high internal consistency.

Accordingly, the above-described results prove that the developed questionnaire demonstrates satisfactory consistency, which is consistent with scientific standards. Thus, the questionnaire can be used as a tool of data collection within this study. It can be stated that the reliability of the instrument is also caused by the appropriateness of its items in measuring the dimensions of the impact of visual arts on national identity of students.

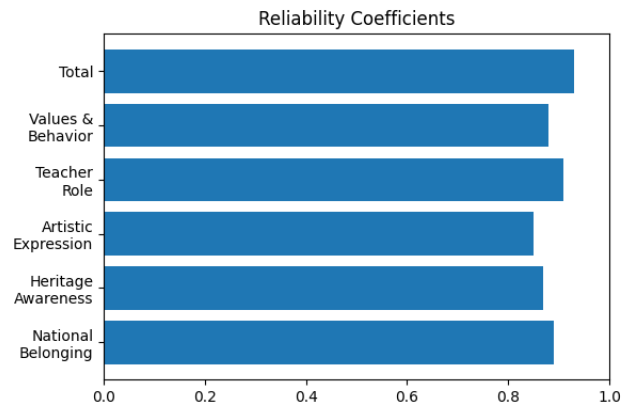


Figure 2. Reliability Coefficients

8.8 5.7 Presentation and Analysis of the Study Results

8.9 First Dimension: Belonging and Loyalty to the Nation

Table 3. Table 3. The questionnaire results indicated that the majority of students expressed a positive association between visual arts and feelings of national belonging. The findings were as follows:

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| I feel proud of my belonging to the United Arab Emirates. | 265 | 86.3% |
| I feel happy when participating in national artistic activities. | 213 | 69.4% |
| I enjoy expressing my love for homeland through artistic activities. | 207 | 67.4% |
| Artistic activities strengthen my feelings of loyalty and belonging to the Homeland. | 181 | 59.0% |

The findings of the first dimension indicate that students demonstrated high levels of national belonging and loyalty associated with participation in visual arts activities. The highest percentage was recorded for the statement related to pride in belonging to the United Arab Emirates, reflecting a strong sense of national identity among students. The results also suggest that artistic activities provide students with meaningful opportunities to express patriotic feelings and strengthen their emotional connection to the homeland. These findings support the assumption that visual arts play a positive role in fostering national belonging and loyalty among students, these results indicate that visual arts contribute significantly to enhancing students’ feelings of pride and belonging, particularly when artistic works are associated with the homeland, its symbols, and its national occasions.

The results of the second dimension demonstrate that visual arts activities contribute effectively to enhancing students’ awareness of Emirati heritage and culture. The highest percentage was associated with the role of visual arts teachers in introducing students to the heritage of the United Arab Emirates, highlighting the important educational role of teachers

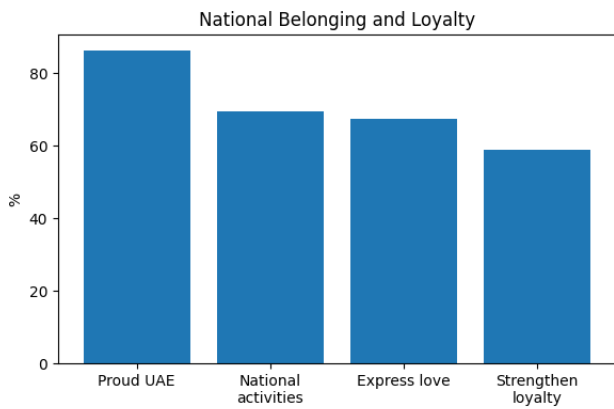


Figure 3. National Belonging and Loyalty

Table 4. Table 4: Second Dimension: Awareness of Heritage and Culture

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Visual arts teachers help me learn about the heritage of the United Arab Emirates. | 255 | 83.1% |
| Artistic activities help me understand the cultural identity of Emirati society. | 210 | 68.4% |
| Through art, I learn about Emirati customs and traditions. | 193 | 62.9% |
| I am able to express elements of Emirati heritage in my artistic works. | 173 | 56.4% |

in connecting artistic activities with national culture and heritage.

The findings further indicate that artistic activities help students better understand the cultural identity of Emirati society and provide them with opportunities to learn about local customs and traditions through artistic expression. Moreover, more than half of the students reported their ability to incorporate elements of Emirati heritage into their artistic works, reflecting the effectiveness of visual arts in promoting cultural awareness and strengthening national identity.



Figure 4. Heritage and Cultural Awareness

The results of the third dimension reveal that students per-

Table 5. Table 5: Third Dimension: Artistic Expression of National Identity

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| I am able to express national identity through drawing or design. | 235 | 76.5% |
| I use national symbols such as the flag, leaders, and landmarks in my artistic works. | 208 | 67.8% |
| I believe that art is an effective means of expressing love for the homeland. | 208 | 67.8% |
| I prefer creating artistic works that address national themes. | 165 | 53.7% |

ceive visual arts as an effective means of expressing national identity. A high percentage of students indicated their ability to express national identity through drawing and design, reflecting the important role of artistic activities in providing students with opportunities for creative and emotional expression.

The findings also show that many students incorporate national symbols—such as the flag, national leaders, and landmarks—into their artistic works, which demonstrates the strong connection between artistic expression and national consciousness. In addition, the majority of students viewed art as an effective medium for expressing patriotism and attachment to the homeland. These results confirm the role of visual arts in strengthening national identity through symbolic and creative representation.

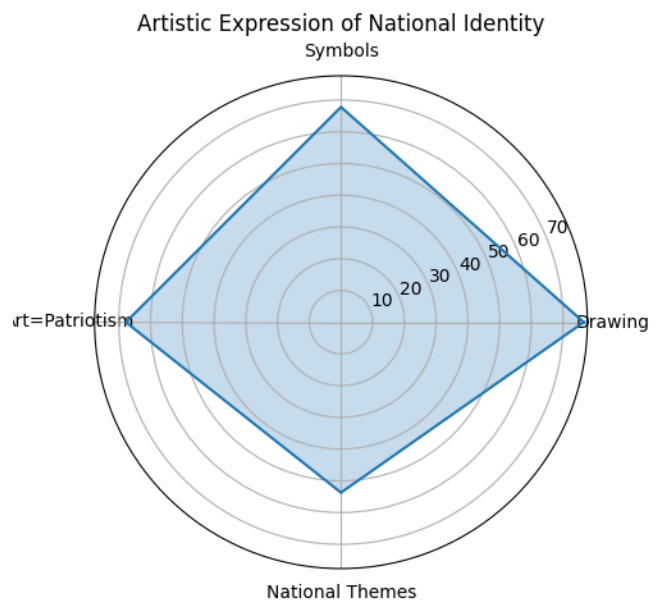


Figure 5. Artistic Expression of National Identity

Table 6. Table 6: Fourth Dimension: The Role of the Visual Arts Teacher in Enhancing National Identity

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| The visual arts teacher encourages me to express national identity through art. | 270 | 87.9% |
| Artistic activities are linked to national occasions such as National Day. | 201 | 65.5% |
| Visual arts teachers guide me to highlight national identity in my artistic works. | 197 | 64.2% |
| Artistic competitions and exhibitions contribute to strengthening my love for the homeland. | 169 | 55.0% |

The findings of the fourth dimension demonstrate the significant role played by visual arts teachers in enhancing students' national identity. The highest percentage was associated with the statement indicating that visual arts teachers encourage students to express national identity through artistic activities, reflecting the influential educational role of teachers in fostering patriotic awareness among students.

The results also indicate that linking artistic activities to national occasions, such as National Day celebrations, contributes to strengthening students' sense of belonging and national pride. Furthermore, visual arts teachers play an important role in guiding students to incorporate elements of national identity into their artistic works. Artistic competitions and exhibitions were likewise found to contribute positively to reinforcing students' love for the homeland by providing opportunities for national and cultural expression through creative artistic production.

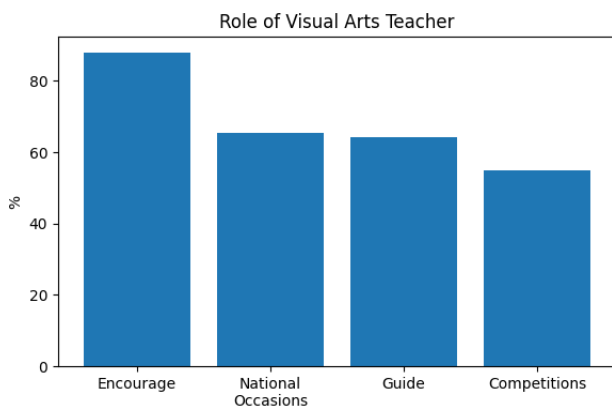


Figure 6. Role of the Visual Arts Teacher

Table 7. Table 7: Fifth Dimension: The Impact of Visual Arts on Values and Behavior

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Visual arts have helped me appreciate the achievements and leadership of the state. | 236 | 76.9% |
| I feel a sense of responsibility toward my homeland through my participation in artistic activities. | 217 | 70.7% |
| I strive to represent my homeland positively in my artistic works. | 206 | 67.1% |
| Artistic activities have increased my respect for my homeland's culture. | 193 | 62.9% |

The results of the fifth dimension indicate that visual arts have a positive influence on students' values and behaviors related to national identity. A high percentage of students reported that visual arts helped them appreciate the achievements and leadership of the state, reflecting the role of artistic activities in strengthening students' awareness of national accomplishments and patriotic values.

The findings also demonstrate that participation in artistic activities enhances students' sense of responsibility toward the homeland and motivates them to represent their country positively through artistic expression. In addition, artistic activities were found to increase students' respect for their national culture, emphasizing the important role of visual arts in promoting positive values, cultural appreciation, and socially responsible behavior associated with national identity.

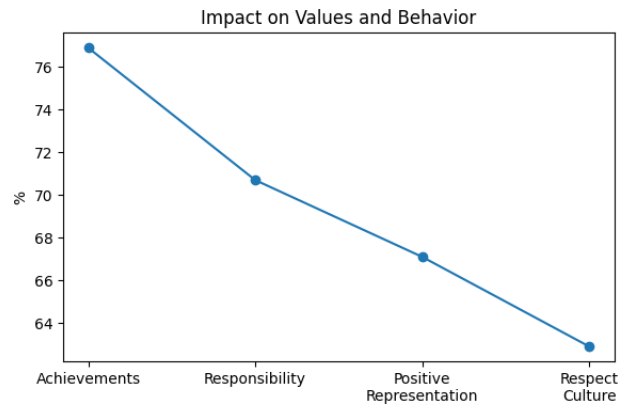


Figure 7. Impact on Values and Behavior

9. 6. ANALYSIS OF THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTION

The questionnaire included the following open-ended question:

“Mention a situation or an artistic work through which you expressed your national identity, and explain how you felt about it.”

Table 8. Table 8: Students' responses revealed a variety of situations and artistic experiences. The most frequently recurring themes included:

| Recurring Theme | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Expressing the homeland, the United Arab Emirates, or national identity | 172 | 56.0% |
| Using the flag or National Day themes in artistic works | 169 | 55.0% |
| Expressing feelings of pride, happiness, and honor | 109 | 35.5% |
| Expressing Emirati heritage | 15 | 4.9% |

The analysis of the open-ended responses indicates that students frequently associated their artistic expression with themes related to the homeland, the United Arab Emirates, and national identity. A considerable proportion of students referred to the use of national symbols, particularly the flag and National Day celebrations, in their artistic works, reflecting the strong symbolic role of visual arts in reinforcing patriotic awareness.

The findings also revealed that many students expressed feelings of pride, happiness, and honor while participating in artistic activities connected to national themes. In addition, a smaller proportion of students highlighted Emirati heritage in their artistic expression, demonstrating the role of visual arts in preserving and promoting cultural heritage. Overall, the responses suggest that artistic activities provide students with meaningful opportunities to express their national identity creatively and emotionally.

13/9 Samples of the Implemented Artistic Works:

10. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Indeed, the current research findings show that visual arts activities have played a key role in developing national identity among first cycle students in the UAE. Specifically, the research results indicate a very high level of agreement among participants concerning the importance of artistic activities

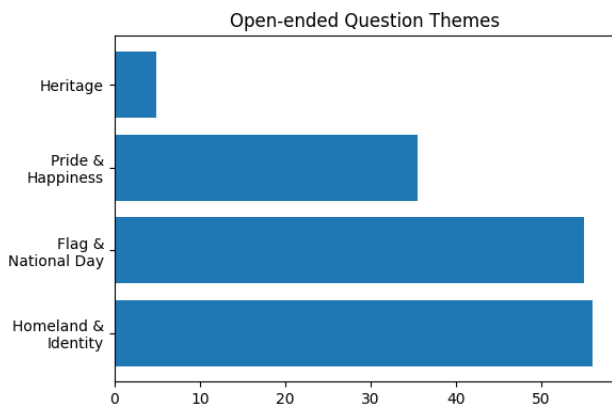


Figure 8. Open-ended Question Themes



Figure 9. Samples of implemented artistic works: portrait-oriented student artworks.



Figure 10. Samples of implemented artistic works: heritage and national identity themes.

in developing feelings of national belonging, pride, cultural awareness, and patriotism towards their country.

In particular, the current research findings coincide with the findings reported in [2], which indicate the contribution of visual arts to the consolidation of national identity as a factor allowing students to express their patriotic feelings and thoughts through creative means of artistic representation and practice. The current research findings also confirm the conclusions reported in [3], which state that there is a direct positive correlation between participation in artistic activities and national belonging/citizenship among students.

Such positive correlations can be attributed to the very nature of visual arts as a means of instruction allowing using various symbols, images, and colors capable of making a more profound impact on the emotional and cognitive domains of students' personality than other methods of teaching. In this way, through drawing, design, exhibition, and other forms of participation in artistic activity associated with their homeland, cultural heritage and customs, students get involved in the representation of their national and cultural identity.

The research findings also indicate the high level of awareness of Emirati cultural heritage, traditions, customs, and national symbols due to involvement in artistic activities. These results prove the claims of Reference [14] about the important role played by visual art and culture in terms of forming learners' cultural and social identity.

Moreover, it was found that the visual arts teacher played an essential part in the process of developing students' national identity through visual arts practice. Students stated that they were prompted by teachers to make use of symbols of national importance, cultural heritage, and patriotism when completing artistic tasks, especially during national events like UAE National Day celebration. Such findings allow claiming that, apart from teaching visual art skills, teachers play a vital role in transferring national values and making a student feel emotionally attached to his/her native country.

In addition, it was discovered that practicing visual arts positively affects students' values and behavior; more specifically, the latter includes responsibility towards the homeland, respect of national culture, acknowledgment of the achievements made by the nation, and positive representation of the state's interests. Such results agree with the theoretical expectations formulated by Reference [13] stating that art education is crucial for developing students' personal qualities and creating balanced personalities ready to communicate cultural and social values.

Additionally, the analysis of students' open questions provided insights into the issue of the link between visual arts and national values. It was found that students associated their artistic work with the use of such symbols of national importance as the flag of the UAE, national heroes, heritage monuments, and celebrations of National Day. Moreover, many of them reported feeling proud and happy working on artistic tasks of a patriotic character.

In relation to the Emirati educational system, these results gain a special importance due to the fact that the state is strongly preoccupied with maintaining cultural traditions and ensuring the growth of national consciousness in future generations. In fact, the United Arab Emirates has dedicated

considerable attention to the introduction of national and cultural values into educational curricula and extra-curricular activities. Thus, the results obtained from this research provide evidence for the relevance of existing educational programs which seek to use art education as an instrument to develop citizenship and social unity under the influence of globalization and technological progress.

All in all, it can be stated that visual arts education is not to be perceived as an exclusively aesthetic and recreational type of education. Instead, it can be seen as an effective means of enhancing national identity, creating feelings of national pride, and preserving cultural identity.

10.1 7.1 Study Findings

In light of the analysis of the responses of the study sample regarding the impact of employing visual arts in enhancing national identity among first-cycle students, the study reached several significant findings, as follows:

10.2 Positive Impact of Visual Arts on Enhancing National Identity

The findings demonstrated that visual arts contribute significantly to strengthening students' feelings of national belonging and pride. Most participants expressed agreement with statements related to patriotism and pride in national identity through artistic activities.

10.3 Contribution of Artistic Activities to Developing Awareness of National Heritage and Culture

The results indicated that artistic activities help students become more familiar with cultural heritage, customs, and national traditions. They also contribute to enhancing students' understanding of national symbols and heritage landmarks in a more interactive and creative manner.

10.4 Students' Use of National Symbols in Artistic Expression

The findings revealed that a large proportion of students incorporate national symbols such as the flag, national leaders, and national landmarks into their artistic works, reflecting the close relationship between art and national identity among the study participants.

10.5 The Effective Role of the Visual Arts Teacher

The results confirmed that the visual arts teacher plays an important role in strengthening national identity by encouraging students to express their national belonging and by linking artistic activities to national occasions and cultural heritage.

The Influence of Visual Arts on National Values and Behavior

The study showed that visual arts contribute to the development of several positive values and behaviors among students, including:

- A sense of responsibility toward the homeland.
 - Respect for national culture.
 - Representing the homeland positively.
 - Appreciation of the achievements and leadership of the state.
- The Relationship between Visual Arts and Students' Emotional Responses

Responses to the open-ended question revealed that students experience feelings of pride, happiness, and honor when participating in national artistic activities, particularly those associated with national occasions such as National Day celebrations.

Effectiveness of National Artistic Activities within the Educational Environment

The findings further demonstrated that art exhibitions, competitions, and activities linked to national occasions play an important role in strengthening national belonging and reinforcing students' cultural identity.

These findings may be interpreted in light of the considerable capacity of visual arts to influence students' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. Visual arts help students express their patriotic feelings creatively and contribute to reinforcing national symbols and values in ways that are often more impactful than traditional instructional methods.

The findings also emphasize the importance of the educational environment in utilizing artistic activities as educational and cultural tools that support the construction of national identity, particularly in light of contemporary cultural challenges resulting from globalization and digital openness

11. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

In light of the findings, the study recommends the following: Strengthening the integration of national identity themes into visual arts activities.

Organizing school art exhibitions focusing on heritage and national symbols.

Encouraging students to use digital arts, drawing, and design as means of expressing patriotism and love for the homeland.

Training activity teachers on the effective use of artistic activities to support the values of citizenship and national belonging.

Linking art classes to national occasions such as National Day celebrations.

Providing greater opportunities for students to participate in national artistic competitions.

12. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

In particular, the present study was designed to find out about the potential benefits of utilizing visual arts for developing national identity in the context of education of first cycle students in the UAE. This research is justified by the current need for stimulating the growth of national identity in the society's younger generation, as well as the exploration of innovative educational measures to foster it. In order to accomplish its goals, the present study employed the descriptive analytical method of research combined with the use of a questionnaire to collect data from a number of students involved in the process of educational activities.

According to the results, visual arts play a critical part in fostering national identity through developing the sense of belonging to the country, awareness of national culture, and appreciation of its symbolic aspects. Specifically, the research demonstrates that artistic activities, the visual expression of the national cultural heritage, national symbols, and art exhi-

bitions at schools can become important sources of expressing one's identity and interacting with their cultural surroundings. Besides, the analysis shows a positive correlation between participating in artistic activities and increasing awareness of and loyalty to the national culture among students.

Thus, the current research makes an important contribution to the existing literature on the subject area through providing new evidence related to the influence of visual arts on national identity. In addition to revealing the educational significance of artistic activities, the research indicates their importance for the preservation of national heritage and the development of national identity. Based on the above findings, one could suggest further implementation of such measures in educational institutions and encourage students' social, cultural, and national growth.

In the conclusion, the following recommendations for further investigation have been provided.

First, it can be suggested conducting research related to the utilization of digital arts and innovative technologies in relation to the enhancement of national identity in the context of digitalization processes in education. Those studies will probably be rather fruitful concerning digital drawing, animation, artificial intelligence in the art classes, and similar topics.

Second, it is reasonable to carry out comparative research on how public schools and private ones conduct visual arts activities and influence the development of the national identity of students and their cultural awareness.

Third, researches can cover not only students of one and the same education level but also those attending secondary schools and universities to detect dissimilarities between the process of artistic self-expression and the development of the notion of national identity.

Fourth, further investigations should use not quantitative methods only but also qualitative ones, namely, interviews, observation in art classrooms, focus group discussions, and analyzing art works created by students.

Finally, future researches might concern the effectiveness of art-based education programs or art projects in relation to promoting citizenship and building social cohesion.

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