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Art Appreciation: Ability, Development and Components Relating

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Abstract

According to our research, modern educational system is characterized by a bias towards the exact and natural sciences. Subjects related to art are on the sidelines usually.

We raised the question in our study: What specific components are surrounding art appreciation. How values, emotional intelligence, perception of beauty relate to Art Appreciation

As the purposes of the study, we chose to reveal the relationship between personal characteristics such as values, emotional intelligence, perception of beauty on the one hand, and the personal characteristics of the ways of perceiving art, and painting in particular, on the other.

The following methods were used in the study: the Schwartz Value survey (PVQ-RR, 19 Values), Engagement with beauty scale (EBS 2.0), The videotest of emotion recognition, phenomenological interview, structured interview. Multiple regression analysis, content analysis and the mix methods methodology was used in data processing.

Individual ways of art appreciation are qualitatively differ from each other and correlate differently with personal characteristics such as emotional intelligence, values and engagement with beauty. The most appropriate way to explore such complex subject is using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The phenomenological approach provides valuable qualitative data, which improves the ecological validity of the study.

The art appreciation is specific internal activity. The creation of conditions for the development of such activity should be one of the tasks of the educational environment. This will systematically influence human development at all levels, from the development of emotional intelligence to the formation of values. The most appropriate educational methodology is existential - phenomenological paradigm.

Keywords: Art appreciation; Empirical aesthetics; Artistic development

1. Problem Statement

The question to develop the ability of the art appreciation is raised in connection with the following issues, which characterize the current state of the education system:

1. According to the traditional view of the hierarchy of subjects, the exact and natural sciences - mathematics, languages, etc. - occupy a more prominent position They are mostly "left hemisphere" items "Right-brain" subjects, such as music, art and other creative subjects are usually perceived as less important for the child's development and future careers (Robinson, 2006).

2. Even though art education is available, it is more often conducted from mechanistic positions. It is assumed that a work of art is a ready and established form and an objective fact created by a particular Author's intention and designed to make a definite and certain impact on a recipient, a viewer. Accordingly, a viewer's task is to accept the work of art "correctly" (according to the Author's intention).

All this may be described as not meeting the needs of a society at the present stage and restricts significantly the human ability to develop in perfect harmony. First of all, the traditional education system was created in the 18th and 19th centuries to solve problems related to the industrial society. In the modern and post-industrial society, "right brain" creative competence plays a key role as it offers opportunities for the holistic vision, creation and innovation in all spheres of human activity.

At to the methods of art education, the mechanistic approach "design-work-perception", which firmly entrenched at the level of common sense and everyday consciousness, can be countered by understanding the perception of art as a specific internal activity. For example, in the 30-ies of the 20th century, L. Vygotsky expressed an idea that an aesthetic act is committed by means of a serious internal activity, the perception of works of art is a "difficult and tedious psychological work", and "work of art is not seen with one's eyes or ears, but through complex internal activities" (Vygotsky, 1991).

We believe that such particular activity should begin developing during the education period.

What scientific area is responsible for studying the perception of art? Quite a number of researches on the art appreciation were carried out when psychology existed as an independent science. However, today the psychology of art isn't uniform either in terms of its subject or the method. Therefore, we can speak about several approaches in the psychology of art with various directions. Even the name for this field of knowledge has not been yet settled: art psychology, psychological esthetics, empirical esthetics, etc.

Briefly, we can outline the main sphere of the psychology of art. What should be considered as the subject of the art psychology? At least three subjects may be distinguished:

1) Creativity (How is the art created?);

2) Beauty (What is considered to be beautiful?);

3) The art itself (How is the art perceived and estimated? What are the art preferences for people?) (Martindale, 2000).

2. Research Issues

In our research, we plan to concentrate on the third option of the subject. So, if one accepts the scheme "an author — work — a recipient", our main sphere of interests is concentrated on the recipient, his processes of perception and impact of the art. We intend to consider the human as a subject of activity to communicate with art. Thus, we have some factors which may be considered in our research. These are factors related to the following: a) personal values; b) certain personal traits, which are responsible for the beauty perception; and c) emotional intelligence as the ability to understand human feelings and emotions.

3. Goal of the Study

The goal of the study is to reveal the relationship between personal characteristics, such as values, emotional intelligence, beauty perception, on the one side, and personal characteristics for perceiving the art and painting, in particular, on the other side.

As far as we cannot determine, with certainty, dependent and independent variables at this stage of our research, we have to identify the existing correlation between several independent variables.

4. Research Methods

As we have already noted before, today specialists involved in empirical art studies using the exact methods published an impressive number of results of their studies of perception. However, regardless of all variety of these studies, we can see a considerable "distortion", which is peculiar to many researches within the strict scientific psychology on a natural scientific sample. It becomes apparent in studying the perception of elementary items of which the fine art painting consists (lines, colors, simple forms, etc.). This was detrimental to studying the perception of complete works, as a whole. The stimulus material in the experiments revealing esthetic experiences is most often too simple and artificial. This forced the researchers to turn to measurements of measurable things and they started "from below", with most elementary properties. They remained "below" and were not able to establish more complex regularities in full influence of works of art. However, what is exposed to researches in this situation? These are elements withdrawn from the full context. As we know, the perception of identical elements in different contexts varies, and we can't get effect of the whole by just summarizing its parts (Pinna, 2007).

Expressive means of the art which are withdrawn from the context of holistic works of art lose their specificity and cannot be considered as objects of the aesthetic perception. If an attempt to study the "aesthetic" perception is made at such a basic level, its aesthetic specificity disappears because it is localized at higher levels, and even most carefully "estimated" elements are not equal to the solid picture, and their cumulative impact or artistic effect.

Studies of an effect which a work of art has on the holistic personality face difficulties of another kind: obtained results are more ecologically valid, but less clearly interpretable, not to mention the fact

that planning of researches of this kind is extremely difficult. However, these problems derive from essential characteristics of the art and its influence on the personality, and thus, are unavoidable. The development of the mixed methods methodology allows overcoming this contradiction and capturing the holistic impact of the art on an individual.

In our research, we are interested in a holistic process of perceiving works of art, as a unique subjective experience of a particular person, and as phenomenological experience. This is a great source of qualitative data. The data will be used subsequently for quantitative methods, factorization, and searches of correlations.

In our empirical research, we intend to create conditions which are as close as possible to the natural process of perceiving real works of art; to create an opportunity for free choice of works from among a big majority for free description, and phenomenological interviews. This will create maximum conditions for the manifestation of that specific individual method of interaction with the artwork, which is distinctive for a particular person.

So, the mixed method was implemented. Qualitative data were obtained by means of the phenomenological interview.

The participants were invited to choose 4 of 33 paintings; 29 of them were the most important paintings in the history of the world art and 4 were outstanding works of the Kazakh art. They were offered to describe their perception of each painting in a free form. The data were audio-recorded and then converted to a written text, which was exposed to the procedure of content analysis.

 Based on the literature review, we have selected the following two categories of content analysis:

1. Edward Bullough's types of attitudes (certain state of mind) (Funch, 2007):

- Practical – this type considers an object in terms of its utility.

- Scientific – this attitude has a retrospective explanatory attitude. It looks back in time in an attempt to find a rational explanation for an object.

- Ethical – this attitude is the prospective finality. An ethical person works to achieve certain goals attempting to bring the good into being.

- Aesthetic – this attitude is immanent and contemplative. Experiencing an individual object is more important than making comparisons or trying to understand its origin or purpose.

2. Individual strategies of the perception of painting by Belonogova (2003).

1. "Living" – Words and judgments representing a picture as a piece of real life, expression of thoughts and feelings of characters.

2. "Graphic" – Words and judgments representing a picture as a framed image, a statement and summary of the image with the viewer's position.

3. "Author" – Words and judgments indicating the Author's intention, in the Author's state of mind and   life.

4. "Cultural" – Words and judgments characterizing a picture in the cultural context, references to other works of the same or other Authors.

5. "Impressive" – Words and judgments describing a specific impact of a picture or its individual parts.

6. "Associative" – Availability of associations for various topics caused a picture and discussion on general issues.

7. "Emotional" – Words and judgments transmitting sensations and feelings caused by a picture containing a direct emotional evaluation of painting.

8. "Stylistic" – Words and judgments marking artistic means and techniques that reveal their purpose and indicate a particular style.

9. "Summary" – Generalized characteristic pattern, interpretation of the total content, essence, meaning, interpretation of a general work idea.

10. "Metaphorical" – Use of metaphors in description, symbols and comparisons.

Quantitative data were obtained by means of the following:

1. The Schwartz Value survey (PVQ-RR, 19 Values) (Schwartz & Butenko, 2013, 2014)

2. Engagement with beauty scale (EBS 2.0) (Diessner R., 2008), Russian translation by Pavel Sabadosh

3. The videotest of emotion recognition (Lyusin & Ovsyannikova, 2015)

As far as this research is considered to be pilot, we have limited the sample by 6 individuals. We invited the persons who are competent in two spheres (psychology and painting) concurrently to participate in the research. We have suggested it expedient because such combination of competences allows obtaining a full-fledged reflection of own perception of performing painting.

5. Findings

5.1 Frequency of using various styles of painting description

According to the frequency, E. Bullough provides various settings:

Table 1. Frequency of manifestation of different attitudes (Bullough)

	Practical	Scientific	Ethical	Aesthetic
Amount	4	2	19	32
%	7,02	3,51	33,33	56,14

We can see that the Aesthetic attitude is the most frequent. We may assume that this is caused by the sample characteristics.

According to the frequency of using the individual strategies, and perception of painting, we have an opportunity to compare the frequency of the data obtained in our research with the data obtained by E. Belonogova.

Table 2. Frequency of manifestation of different painting perception strategies

	Living	Graphic	Author	Cultural	Impressive	Associative	Emotional	Stylistic	Summary	Metaphorical
E. Belonogova's research (% of usage)	6	15	3	5	13	10	17	10	11	11
Our research (% of usage)	6	8	3	2	26	4	16	26	5	5

The Spearman's rho between the data of two researches is .630 (P = 0.05).

5.2. Correlations between the data of different methods

Based on the total amount of the correlations (60 in total, of which 45 with P = 0.05 and 15 with P = 0.01), we demonstrate only P 0.01. The calculation was made with SPSS 23, one-way Spearman. Correlations and their possible interpretation are observed below:

5.2.1 Correlations between the results of Content Analysis and PVQ

1. The Author's strategy is negatively correlated with the values of Hedonism (-.904) and Benevolence – Dependability (-.926).

The significance of this relationship lies in the fact that hedonism implies the focus on oneself, own interests and needs; Benevolence – Dependability implies the focus on interests and needs of a group, while the Author's strategy requires to go beyond own or group needs and manifests the interest to the Author, his life or personality.

2. The Living strategy is negatively correlated with the value of Power Dominance (-.933). This strategy involves the perception of a picture "from within", from a participant's position, while we believe that the Power Dominance assumes the position "under".

3. The Emotional strategy is negatively correlated with the value of Power Resources (-.924). The Emotional strategy supposes an immediate sensory and emotional reaction to a picture, while the Power Resources attitude involves the "external" position.

4. The Impressive strategy is positively correlated with the value of the Conformity Rules (-.882).

This may be explained by the fact that in both cases we deal with a tendency to be effected by some external things. An external locus of control may dominate in tendencies for following rules and laws, and experiencing different kinds of emotional changes and mental state under the influence of the entire picture or its individual parts.

5. The Associative strategy is positively correlated with four values: Self-direction Thought (-.939), Conformism – Interpersonal (-.939), Humility (-.890), and Benevolence – Care (-.926). This strategy demonstrates the tendency for building an association, starting from a picture, in the context of his personal experience or on broader issues. We believe that in case of the value of Self-direction Thought, the connection consistents with the essence of the value itself: the freedom to develop own ideas. We can see that three other values are associated by a social focus, but we could not offer an adequate explanation of the relationship between these values and the associative strategy at this stage of the study.

6. The Emotional strategy is negatively correlated with the Universalism – Tolerance value (-.893). We believe that this relationship can be explained by the fact that tolerance as an ability to understand and accept those who differ from you is often based on the ability to restrain and rethink their immediate sensory and emotional reaction. To be exact, this is the essence of the Emotional strategy.

7. The Aesthetic attitude is negatively correlated with the Benevolence – Care value (-.984). This value is featured by the devotion to the group and well-being of its members. That is rather a sign of ethical type (according to Bullogh), while the Aesthetic type perceives the object directly, without demonstration of any concern about what happened before and what comes after.

8. The Practical attitude is positively correlated with the Domination – Power value (.885). That is, people who value power and influence through control of others tend to view paintings from

the position of their utilitarian value. It can be assumed that in both cases a tendency towards the subject-object relations exists: people and works of art as a resource.

5.2.2 Correlations between the results of PVQ and videotest of emotion recognition

1. Universalism – Nature is negatively correlated with the index Accuracy of emotion recognition of (-.883). The Universalism – Nature value in this aspect implies a concern for the preservation of the natural environment, that is, the higher the value of the concern nature, the less precisely the other person recognizes emotions.

5.2.4 Correlations between the results of PVQ and EBS scale

1. The Face value is negatively correlated with the index of moral beauty EBS scale (-.955). This means the value of protection and influence by maintaining the public image and avoiding the humiliation. Ideas opposite to these indicators may be explained through the idea that behavior evaluated as morally beautiful may require an ability to ignore and even to sacrifice somebody's own reputation. The Face value is linked with an external image, while the moral beauty is of immanent nature.

6. Conclusions

As we can see, the art appreciation is a specific complex internal activity, which is associated with various layers of human psychology. Further research in this area will allow us to identify and use different relations between various components of the art appreciation. In particular, teaching and development of art appreciation abilities may help to clarify, form and develop personal values. Creation of conditions for such activity development should be one of the tasks set by the educational environment.

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