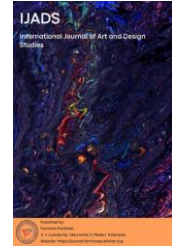




INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ART AND DESIGN STUDIES (IJADS)



Homepage: <https://journal.formosapublisher.org/index.php/ijads/index>
ISSN: 2808-5639 (Online)

Research Article

Volume 2, No 4, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55927/ijads.v2i4.11683> Page: 243–252
November (2023)

Reforming Pakistan's Art Education: Integrating Traditional Practices with Modern Curricula Amongst Colonial Influences

Zohaib Hassan Sain^{1*}, Tiara Agustine², Uthman Shehu Lawal³

¹Superior University, Pakistan

²IKIP Siliwangi, Indonesia

³Kaduna State University, Nigeria

Corresponding Author: Zohaib Hassan Sain; Email: zohaib3746@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Art Education, Colonial Influence, Curriculum Reform, Pakistan, Traditional Arts.

Received : 10, October

Revised : 28, October

Accepted : 17, November

©2023 Sain, Agustine, Lawal :

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



ABSTRACT

Art education in Pakistan is influenced by colonial legacies that have shaped its curriculum and teaching practices, often sidelining traditional art forms. This research aims to examine these influences, evaluate current art education practices, and explore ways to integrate traditional arts with modern approaches. A mixed-methods research methodology was employed, combining qualitative analysis (thematic coding and content analysis) and quantitative techniques (descriptive statistics and comparative analysis) to examine curricula and gather perspectives from educators and students. Findings reveal that 65% of art curricula focus on Western techniques, with only 25% dedicated to traditional practices. Furthermore, 78% of students desire greater inclusion of indigenous content, and disparities between public and private institutions highlight the need for standardization. The study concludes that reforms are needed to create a balanced and culturally relevant art education system that respects heritage while meeting modern needs. These findings have implications for curriculum designers, policymakers, and art educators, suggesting a shift towards a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to art education in Pakistan that aligns with cultural heritage and global perspectives.

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century has seen the introduction of several trends in the cultural economy, such as globalisation, the proliferation of creative industries, visual culture, art-based commerce, and a more expansive virtual realm. Art has acquired increased importance within

sociocultural settings in this changing environment owing to its inherent and external attributes. Contemporary art education has progressed beyond conventional drawing and painting to include fields such as pottery, weaving, textiles, and digital arts and crafts. British colonial dominance in the Indian

subcontinent significantly affected several regional cultural aspects. Seventy years post-independence, Pakistan persists in bearing a colonial heritage, evident in several social and cultural elements, including art education. This education embodies both beneficial and detrimental practices of the past. Art education in Pakistan is shaped by colonial art ideas and teaching methodologies, highlighting the need for curricular and practical changes that correspond with 21st-century issues.

Upon gaining independence in 1947, Pakistan had just one university and one art institution, all located in Lahore. There are more than 180 public and private universities nationwide, along with three specialised art schools, and art departments are present in almost all institutions (Higher Education Commission, 2017). The academic examination of art is sometimes seen as a colonial legacy, given that indigenous art forms in Pakistan and India were profoundly embedded in craft technologies. Around 53 universities and institutions presently provide degrees in the arts and other disciplines (Eduvision, 2017). In its updated curriculum draft for Fine Arts, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan acknowledged two significant issues: the dominance of Western pedagogical approaches in art education and the oversight of traditional arts and crafts (Khan, 2014). Despite this acknowledgement, the HEC has not yet offered a viable answer, resulting in the ongoing dependence on antiquated pedagogies.

The education system in Pakistan consists of school, college, and university levels, which are further divided into primary, secondary, upper secondary, undergraduate, and postgraduate stages. As an unstructured endeavour, art is taught in the elementary and secondary stages in both public and private educational institutions. At the upper secondary level, art is available primarily

at female institutions, with just a limited number of male schools providing comparable programs (institutions, 2017). Specialised art institutions provide undergraduate and postgraduate education in the arts within both public and private domains. This study examines the roots of art education in Pakistan and the curriculum provided at the upper secondary, undergraduate, and postgraduate levels. The curriculum material and teaching approaches were examined, and the results were given descriptively. The curriculum is standardised at the upper secondary level, but it differs considerably across institutions at the bachelor and postgraduate levels, reflecting a deficiency in standard teaching procedures. The study utilises primary and secondary materials, personal experiences, and field questionnaires.

Art education is a multifaceted discipline that offers extensive opportunities for personal, cultural, and intellectual growth. At the tertiary education level, it not only provides opportunities for study and artistic appreciation but also enhances our understanding of human development. Moreover, it contributes to the overarching advancement of culture and civilisation, making it an essential component of a well-rounded education. The genesis of art is embedded in human awareness, spanning from primitive cave inhabitants to modern civilisations. Historically, artistic expression has transformed via many forms, thoughts, materials, and processes. In contrast to earlier times, when art was mainly an individual endeavour, contemporary art production has evolved into a multifaceted and organised process supported by formal institutions. Art has evolved from a solitary pursuit to a collaborative endeavour taught inside formal institutions led by qualified instructors. Contemporary art education includes several fields, such as art production, research, psychology,

criticism, history, therapy, and pedagogy. Whereas early painters depended only on drawing and painting, contemporary art education encompasses a wide range of disciplines under the overarching category of Art and design, illustrating millennia of creative development.

Assessing the extent and evolution of art in Pakistan is a formidable challenge owing to its intricate regional history and cultural heterogeneity. Art education in the West became a formal discipline in the late 18th century with the Industrial Revolution, with structured institutions emerging in the early 20th century. This time, it highlighted the significance of art in early childhood education, associating it with children's cognitive and motor development (D. Gaitskell, 1975). Despite the limited number of schools for advanced art education at that time, the significance of making art education accessible to the broader public was promptly acknowledged. The 19th century saw swift scientific and social developments that influenced art. Originating from the workshops of individual painters who mentored apprentices, art academies in 16th-century Italy established the groundwork for early art schools, a movement that progressively disseminated across Europe (Academic Art, 2017). The proliferation of European colonial powers transmitted social and scientific concepts to other continents. As Britain's colonial expansion increased, its educational concepts also influenced the territories it governed. Beginning in the 17th century, art education in British academies prioritised anatomy and geometry, forming formal institutions such as the Royal College of Art (1837) and The Slade School of Art (1868), which provided organised foundational courses for prospective artists.

The Indian subcontinent, influenced by British colonialism, adopted several social and educational innovations in Britain. Following independence, Pakistan swiftly developed a

comprehensive educational framework, including art instruction. This system primarily relied on specific colonial practices, emphasising academic drawing and painting. Given Pakistan's present economic circumstances, significant progress may be made by reinvigorating the art-industry collaborations established by the British, which have been neglected since the post-independence era.

The study examines the enduring impact of colonial art education practices on modern Pakistani art institutions, which continue to affect the curriculum, pedagogical approaches, and general framework of art education. Despite the expansion and variety of art programs in universities and specialised colleges, the curriculum is mainly shaped by Western methodologies, marginalising indigenous Pakistani arts and crafts and constraining the establishment of a culturally relevant educational framework. This has resulted in a disjunction between contemporary art education and the vibrant indigenous creative traditions that formerly flourished in the area. The absence of standardisation in undergraduate and postgraduate art programs has led to uneven teaching approaches, obstructing the establishment of a unified art education system. Such a system is crucial for addressing the varied demands of students and society, and for fostering a more cohesive and effective approach to art education.

This research is significant for its analysis of the discrepancies between existing educational procedures and the cultural environment of Pakistan. This study examines art education's content and pedagogical approaches across different academic levels, emphasising the need for a balanced curriculum that integrates modern global viewpoints and traditional local arts. Rectifying these deficiencies is essential for establishing an inclusive art education framework that promotes creativity, critical analysis, and cultural consciousness. These changes may improve the quality of art education

and foster the cultural and economic growth of Pakistan by encouraging creative practices that are locally grounded and internationally aware. The research seeks to provide insights and suggestions for developing a more effective, culturally attuned art education system that corresponds with the nation's socio-economic conditions and fosters sustained development in the creative sectors.

The study seeks to rigorously analyse the framework, curriculum, and teaching methodologies of art education in Pakistan, especially considering its colonial legacy and the need for changes to better correspond with modern cultural and economic contexts. It aims to ascertain the degree to which colonial effects persist in contemporary educational frameworks and investigate how integrating traditional Pakistani art forms and modern global viewpoints might enrich the learning experience. The report outlines critical areas for possible enhancements to create a more culturally appropriate and complete art education system.

The Indian subcontinent is characterised by its vast and rich arts and crafts tradition. This area has hosted ancient Neolithic civilisations, including Mehrgarh in Balochistan, the Indus Valley Civilisation in Sindh, Pakistan, and subsequent cultural centres such as Gandhara in northwest Pakistan. These early societies had a sophisticated aesthetic sensibility, creating exceptional art and craftsmanship that reflected their superior skills. After the 6th century A.D., the subcontinent boomed with Hindu and Jain art, followed by notable contributions from Sultanate and Mughal art starting in the 13th century. These eras exemplify a longstanding legacy of pedagogy and craftsmanship in the arts, underscoring that the genesis and instruction of art are profoundly embedded in the historical context of this area. Masterpieces in stone sculpture, miniature painting, calligraphy, and

applied arts illustrate that the concept of art education predates colonial influence and existed long before the British period.

Contrary to the belief that art instruction was absent in the pre-colonial subcontinent, there were established methods for creating aesthetically pleasing crafts and massive structures. Creative families, referred to as "gharana" in Urdu, continue to transmit their creative traditions to subsequent generations, preserving the continuity of skills and artistry. Historically, art teaching has occurred outside official institutions, using apprenticeships, coaching, and practical training—methods that precede formal education and continue to exist alongside established educational systems in contemporary Pakistan and India.

Before the ascendance of the Mughal empire in the 16th century, painting on the subcontinent was mostly confined to murals and palm leaf images. The onset of the Mughal reign in 1526 initiated a revolution in aesthetic principles and a notable enhancement in art and craft output. During this period, they facilitated robust interactions between Indian and Islamic traditions, enhancing several fields of knowledge, such as religion, philosophy, fine arts, painting, architecture, mathematics, medicine, and astronomy (V.K. Maheshwari, 2017). Elementary schools, known as maktabas, were founded to instruct in languages and arithmetic, while court libraries were created to save manuscripts on many topics. Literary sources and the lives of Mughal rulers demonstrate a profound admiration for the arts ("funoon") among the region's elite, including the upper classes and religious organisations. Monumental architecture, including Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist temples and Islamic mosques, was often ornately embellished, necessitating the expertise of experienced artists and artisans.

The atelier of Mughal Emperor Akbar is distinguished, where skilled painters produced album paintings and other

designs. The creation of art in these environments was a collaborative endeavour, including several painters, illuminators, and calligraphers working under the supervision of a "ustad" (teacher) inside organised scriptoriums (Rogers, 2006). These settings mirrored early art institutions, emphasising technique-oriented instruction in areas such as "chaapa kari" (tracing), "naqashi" (ornamental design), "khattati" (calligraphy), "wasli making" (paper manufacture for painting), "musawari" (painting), "jild sazi" (bookbinding), and colour mixing.

The deterioration of the Mughal Empire and the establishment of British control in 1858 resulted in a transformation of indigenous art production methodologies. While admiring the brilliance of indigenous arts and crafts, the British aimed to harness local talent for their manufacturing industry. In the early 20th century, the British endorsed artists inspired by European forms, resulting in a nationalist art movement to reclaim traditional creative heritage (Ali S., 2000). Nonetheless, these movements were mainly propelled by individual initiatives since institutionalised pro-Indian arts instruction was deficient, with the prevailing institutions generally endorsing British principles.

Artistic practices in 19th-century England underwent a tremendous transformation. During the Victorian period, art instruction became more structured, including a curriculum segmented into 23 levels, from basic to advanced (Kerry Freedman, 1998). Students' advancement was contingent upon their progression through these stages, and those who did not succeed often returned to instruct at primary levels, which sometimes compromised the quality of art education. The curriculum emphasised intricate drawing activities centred on replication and shading, aimed at enhancing visual abilities for the industrial sector.

In 19th-century Europe, art instruction was intricately linked to the psychological maturation of young students, prioritising expression-oriented techniques (D. Gaitskell, 1975). In contrast, British art education was founded on a technique-oriented methodology, starting at the primary level. The mid-19th century economic slump compelled politicians to improve manufacturing, elevating art instruction's significance (Freedman, 2003).

In the 19th century, formal British art education was based on academic art principles, including extensive instruction in the replication of great masters' works and the study of anatomy. Despite the industrialisation of art education and the introduction of free-arm sketching in the early 20th century during the Victorian era, the emphasis persisted on cultivating skilled labour for the industrial sector. This transition enhanced the stature of art from a mere industrial topic to an academic field, especially during the educational reforms of 1914 and 1918 (Kerry Freedman, 1998).

The academic emphasis of art education in Britain profoundly influenced the curriculum throughout Europe, notably in Britain, by adhering to principles of reason, visual imagery, historical topics, and impactful messages (Academic Art, 2017). These beliefs shaped art education methodologies in the Indian subcontinent under British colonial authority. The scriptoriums and ateliers of the Mughal period evolved into formal art institutes, emphasising observational drawing and other European techniques. The founding of the Department of Fine Arts at the University of the Punjab, Lahore, in 1940, under the direction of Mrs. Anna Molka Ahmad, demonstrated this effect by prioritising academic instruction for female students (Ali et al., 1984). Located next to the Mayo School of Arts (founded in 1875), both schools exemplified the British endeavour to formalise art instruction.

The Mayo School of Arts adhered to a technical style of art education consistent with 19th-century British tendencies. However, the Punjab University department integrated humanistic and academic methodologies grounded in intellectual art education. The University's Fine Arts program was standardised to facilitate personal growth and prepare graduates for education and the arts professions. The Mayo School prioritised freehand and geometrical design for industrial arts, evolving into the National College of Arts in 1958 and broadening its curriculum to include arts and design disciplines.

Following independence in 1947, the subcontinent experienced a surge in art education; however, it remained influenced by colonial norms. In Pakistan, art education has been closely linked to Western art history and academic methodologies, especially at the intermediate level. Art education evolved to become more conceptually driven and emancipated at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, prompting students to investigate modern pedagogical approaches. Even with this advancement, colonial legacies continue to affect standardised art curricula, pedagogical methodologies, and the association of art with industrial output, resulting in little integration of indigenous art traditions. The British colonial era profoundly influenced the structure of Pakistan's art education system, impacting its evolution for over seventy years.

METHODOLOGY

This research aims to critically examine the influence of colonial legacies on contemporary art education practices in Pakistan and propose ways to integrate traditional art and craft methods into modern art curricula. A mixed-methods approach is adopted, combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques to comprehensively analyse art education's structure, pedagogy, and curriculum in Pakistan. The research

methodology includes the following steps:

Research Design: A descriptive and exploratory design aims to provide an in-depth understanding of historical, cultural, and pedagogical influences on art education in Pakistan. The research will explore the current status of art curricula at higher secondary, undergraduate, and postgraduate levels and identify challenges in standardisation and reform.

The comparative study analyses past and present educational practices to understand the impact of colonial influences and the need for culturally responsive art education.

Population: The target population includes educational institutions in Pakistan that offer art education, including specialised art colleges, university departments, and higher secondary schools with art programs.

Sampling Method: A purposive sampling technique is used to select a representative group of institutions across various regions of Pakistan. The sample includes public and private universities, specialised art colleges, and schools to ensure diversity in the data collected.

Sample Size: Approximately 15-20 institutions are chosen for in-depth analysis, including:

- a. 3 major art colleges (e.g., National College of Arts)
- b. 5-7 university art departments across different provinces
- c. 7-10 higher secondary schools offering art education

Data Collection Methods

Document Analysis: The primary data collection method involves analysing the selected institutions' syllabi, curricula, and policy documents. These documents are reviewed to assess how colonial educational practices have shaped contemporary art education's content, teaching strategies, and learning outcomes.

HEC Curriculum Drafts: Review the latest Higher Education Commission (HEC) curriculum drafts and guidelines for Fine Arts to understand the standardisation process and policy orientation.

Archival Research: Explore historical records, educational policies from the colonial period, and manuscripts to understand the evolution of art education and its colonial legacy.

Interviews and Surveys

Semi-Structured Interviews: Conduct semi-structured interviews with faculty members, art educators, and curriculum developers to gain insights into teaching practices, challenges faced in curriculum development, and integrating traditional and contemporary art methods.

Student Surveys: Use structured surveys for students across different academic levels (higher secondary, undergraduate, and postgraduate) to gather their perspectives on the effectiveness of the art education they receive, their exposure to traditional and modern art techniques, and perceived gaps in the curriculum.

Field Observations: Conduct on-site observations of art classes and workshops across different institutions to understand the teaching environment, methodology, and student engagement. Attention is paid to using studio spaces, teaching materials, and hands-on craft practices.

Data Analysis Techniques

Qualitative Analysis

Thematic Coding: The qualitative data from interviews, curriculum reviews, and field observations are analyzed using thematic coding to identify recurring themes, concepts, and patterns. This helps us understand the influence of colonial art practices, current pedagogical approaches, and the role of traditional arts and crafts in education.

Content Analysis: Syllabi and curriculum documents are analyzed to identify the extent of Western

methodologies, the representation of traditional Pakistani art, and the scope for modern reforms. The analysis explores how art education objectives align with or diverge from cultural needs and contemporary global practices.

Quantitative Analysis

Descriptive Statistics: The survey data collected from students are analysed using descriptive statistics (percentages, mean, and mode) to evaluate their perspectives on their art education's effectiveness and cultural relevance.

Comparative Analysis: A comparative analysis of data from different institutions (e.g., public vs. private, school vs. university) is carried out to identify variations in curricula, teaching methods, and challenges faced in standardisation.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical Considerations: Ethical considerations are strictly observed throughout the research process. Informed consent is obtained from all participants before conducting interviews or surveys. The confidentiality of participants is maintained, and data are anonymised to protect identities. The research abides by the ethical guidelines for educational research, ensuring that data analysis and presentation do not harm any individual or institution.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of the Study: The study acknowledges limitations such as the accessibility of curriculum documents, the potential bias of interview participants, and the challenge of representing a comprehensive overview of art education across all regions of Pakistan.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of colonial influences on Pakistan's current art education system

while also exploring the scope for integrating traditional arts and crafts with contemporary practices. The qualitative data analysis, utilizing Thematic Coding and Content Analysis, revealed key themes around curriculum structure, pedagogical gaps, and the representation of traditional Pakistani art. Meanwhile, the quantitative data analysis, which involved Descriptive Statistics and Comparative Analysis, highlighted students' perspectives on art education's effectiveness, the incorporation of traditional elements, and variances across public and private institutions. The tables below showcase the summary of these analyses.

Table. 1 Qualitative Data Analysis Techniques

Qualitative Analysis Techniques	Key Themes/ Findings	Examples from Data
Thematic Coding	Influence of Colonial Practices	"Our curriculum is rooted in Western techniques" - Art Instructor
	Need for Culturally Relevant Curriculum	"Traditional art forms are sidelined" - University Professor
	Challenges in Standardization	"Different institutions have varying methods" - HEC Official
Content Analysis	Curriculum Review of Art Institutions	65% of curriculum content focused on Western art techniques
	Representation of Traditional Art	Only 25% of courses include indigenous art and craft practices
	Policy Documents Analysis	Lack of specific guidelines on

		incorporating traditional crafts
--	--	----------------------------------

The qualitative data highlights a significant influence of colonial practices, with a need to diversify curricula by including more culturally relevant content. The variation in teaching methodologies and lack of standardization emerged as significant challenges across institutions.

Table. 2 Quantitative Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative Analysis Techniques	Results/ Findings	Percentage/ Value
Descriptive Statistics (Student Survey)	Satisfaction with Art Curriculum	52% found curriculum only moderately satisfying
	Desire for More Traditional Art Content	78% expressed the need for more indigenous content
	Perception of Skill Development	60% felt they developed technical skills but lacked creative freedom
Comparative Analysis	Public vs Private Institutions (Traditional Content)	Public: 20% focus on traditional art Private: 35% focus
	Higher Secondary vs University Level (Teaching Methods)	Secondary: 80% technique-driven University: 50% idea-driven
	Gender Differences in Art Education	65% of art programs at higher secondary

	Access	level offered only to female students
--	--------	---------------------------------------

The quantitative data reveals that most students see room for improvement in the curriculum, particularly in integrating traditional art content. Comparisons between public and private institutions indicate a discrepancy in focus on indigenous art, and teaching methodologies vary considerably across educational levels. Additionally, gender disparities in access to art education highlight the need for broader inclusivity.

The qualitative and quantitative analysis underscores the pressing need for reform in art education to create a balanced curriculum that marks traditional practices while also adapting to modern methodologies. Integrating these findings into practical solutions will foster an art education system in Pakistan that embraces its cultural heritage and meets contemporary educational standards.

CONCLUSION

The research findings indicate that colonial legacies have significantly influenced Pakistan's art education system, impacting the curriculum, teaching methods, and institutional frameworks. While formal art education has enhanced skill development and provided opportunities for professional advancement, the predominant focus on Western art techniques has marginalized traditional Pakistani art forms. This underscores the necessity for reform to incorporate indigenous arts and crafts into the curriculum, fostering a more culturally relevant and inclusive approach to art education. Furthermore, the need for uniformity in teaching methods among institutions and the divergent emphasis on traditional content between public and private entities highlight the need for policy-level interventions. Both students and educators acknowledge the importance of blending technical proficiency with creative freedom, indicating a shift towards a balanced curriculum that respects historical and

artistic traditions while nurturing contemporary and global perspectives. The research underscores the potential for a reformed art education system in Pakistan that aligns with cultural heritage and addresses the challenges and demands of the 21st century, promoting a more comprehensive development of artistic talent and preserving the country's rich artistic legacy.

REFERENCES

Ahmad, A. M., (1957). Exhibition of Painting & Sculpture, Lahore: Punjab University Press.

Ali, S. A., (1984). An Artist; an Institution. Islamabad: Idara Saqafat e-Pakistan.

Ali, S., (2000). Painters of Pakistan. Islamabad: National Book Foundation.

Ali, S., (2008). Journey of the Spirit. Karachi: Foundation for Museum of Modern Art.

Anon., (2003). Official Chronicle of Mayo School of Art. Lahore: National College of Arts.

Anon., (2016). Retrieved from: www.uslegal.com

Anon., (2017). Academic Art. Retrieved from: www.visual-arts-cork.com

Anon., (2017). Eduvision. Retrieved from: www.eduvision.edu.pk

Anon., (2017). Higher Education Commission. Retrieved from: www.hec.gov.pk

Colleges, D., (2017). Number of Colleges in Punjab [Interview] (25 August 2017).

D.Gaitskell, C., (1975). Children and their Art: Methods for the Elementary School. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, INC.

Fleming, M., (2010). Arts in Education & Creativity: A Literature Review. Newcastle: Arts Council England.

Freedman, K., (2003). Teaching Visual Culture. New York: National Art Education Association.

Kerry Freedman, F. H., (1998). Curriculum, Culture and Art Education: Comparative Perspective. New York: State University of New York Press.

Khan, M. S. A., (2014). The Changing Perspectives of Art in Pakistan. Peshawar, University of Peshawar.

Rogers, J., (2006). Mughal Miniatures. London: The British Museum Press.

Smith, P., (1996). The History of American Art Education. Learning About Art in American Schools. London: Greenwood Press.

V.K.Maheshwari, (2017). Education during Medieval Period in India. Retrieved from: www.vkmaheshwari.com