

Interdisciplinary Place and Importance of Printmaking Education in Turkish Universities that Give Art Education

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Abstract

This study asked the opinions of 25 professors from 10 universities all around Turkey about how highly the art of printmaking, which has an important place and history in realm of plastic arts, is regarded within the curricula, to what extent facilities are provided for printmaking, and how the interdisciplinary interaction is reflected in this realm, in order to determine the existing situation. The study consisted of 4 questions and was evaluated through open-ended answers. Thus, we analyzed the current situation and put forward some solutions based on the opinions of professors. Furthermore, findings came from different disciplines and selections were made from various regions from East to West in Turkey. As a conclusion, printmaking art education was deemed as necessary by almost all of participants. It was also recognized that technical applications of printmaking art education led to interaction in realm of plastic arts. Workshops and qualified instructors were considered as basic needs while the printmaking arts education in Turkey was in line with international standards.

Keywords: *art, art education, printmaking*

1. Introduction

As Benedetto Croce defined arts as a view or insight (Yılmaz, p:37), art has been a locomotive in human development and expression of feelings. In other words, this phenomenon has facilitated awakening by giving directions to ideas and feelings of each era. Awakening as a matter of education and process has gained acceleration particularly since the 19th century, for which the most important factor was the reflection of the industrialized society orders. In this context, personal attributes that can be considered important such as knowledge, skills, understanding, interest and attitudes in human behaviours have been a requirement for contemporary life order as an issue of education. J. Dewey underlined this point and suggested that education was "a tool for development in a process that is obtained through better experiences" (Johnston, p:70).

Education of arts that was given under a master-apprentice system until the 19th century have further developed and gained more importance in parallel with the new life styles of industrialization. The first example of today's art education was the Bauhaus School, which was established in early 20th century (1914) (Bektaş, p: 69). Individuals met the aesthetic needs of the modern era by specializing in areas such as architecture, graphics, handcrafts, ceramic, sculpting, textile and painting owing to the interdisciplinary curriculum of this school.

Since then, as the changing world order required versatility in development of human beings, curricula also progressed in the same vein. The need for art education and reflection of this need on to widely-thinking communities is important in Turkey as it is all around the world. In Turkey, academic education of art branches such as painting, printmaking, graphic, textile and ceramic that are under the scope of plastic arts has always aimed at training international artists. Curricula should therefore be developed to be free starting from the design in terms of their content and systematic.

In printmaking art education, improvement of designing skills of students is primary from the methodological perspective whereas it is equally important to provide students with physical conditions

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required. Nevertheless, if “creativity” and “originality” come first, then it shall be more appropriate to make evaluations on the process and general rules of art education.

Curricula that are defined for branches in universities are structured according to the credits of courses for a four-year period. However, in today's objective environment, interdisciplinary approach is more important in growing up free and critical individuals who are open for communication. Training students who receive education in any field of art such as painting, printmaking, sculpting or graphic only in their respective branches may fall short in ensuring that students acquire a sufficient artistic identity because arts require comprehensive and multi-dimensional thinking as a superstructure. For instance, as it is useful to benefit from scientific disciplines (philosophy, sociology, mathematics, social sciences and etc...) for questioning and awakening, it will contribute in rising a free and creative identity with high self confidence. It is also the case in plastic arts itself. One might think that fields such as painting, printmaking, sculpting, graphic, video-art, photographing, textile and ceramic require different curricula and applications. Nevertheless, when branches that have organic bonds with each other support one another, it leads to more creativity. Therefore, if branching in education is ensured through interdisciplinary interaction and accumulation of knowledge as a part of contemporary thinking, it shall gain more significance and be richer in functions.

This study on the place and importance of printmaking art education in Turkey aims at emphasizing how important and necessary this education is from an interdisciplinary perspective. We can touch upon its historical development and current situation in order to clarify this issue. The printmaking art dating back to the 16th century started to be a part of university education first when Stanislas Arthur Napier, who came from France, started academic studies in art education in the School of Fine Arts (*Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi*) that was established in 1882 upon the initiatives of Osman Hamdi Bey. Shortly after its establishment, they started their engraving works in the wood engraving workshop in 1892 (Özsezgin, p: 16).

Later, especially after 1937, as the number of academicians increased, new universities were established and they still operate today. However, the key point here is that, although plastic arts in western tradition and style started to be applied in our country only after centuries, priorities and sensitivities shown in curriculum during the establishment phase of the academy in 1882 made great contribution in development of today's contemporary art education at international levels in Turkey. Experts recruited from the West to lay the foundations of academic art education in Turkey considered printmaking art education necessary as one of the priority departments of plastic arts.

There were significant reform attempts in education in first years of Republic of Turkey. The Gazi Institute of Education, established in 1926, rendered great services as the first teacher education school in that era. Opening of the department of painting teaching in the establishment phase helped art education climb up to international levels because many artists with international connections worked there as instructors and trained their students with curricula that could enable students to get integrated with western countries. In the first years, Şinasi Barutçu and Hayrullah Örs encouraged students for printmaking applications, especially in fields of Wood-Linoleum Printmaking and Mono Printmaking. Artists trained in this institute such as Ferit Apa, Nevzat Akoral, Mustafa Aslier, Mürşide İçmeli and Muammer Bakır Türk pioneered the education of printmaking art in Turkey. (Aslier, p: 3)

In order to enlarge the structure of the Gazi Institute of Education, which was the only institute in Turkey for a long time, Department of Painting in İzmir Buca Institute of Education and Department of Painting in Istanbul Institute of Education were established in 1966 and 1967 respectively. In these institutes, in addition to painting workshops that were considered as a priority in art education, graphic and printmaking workshops were also opened soon afterwards. Therefore, such institutes rendered great

services in development of arts education in Turkey and climbing of contemporary painting art in Turkey up to international levels.

Plenty of art education institutes that amount up to 76 including the private universities in Turkey have printmaking workshops. Some of these universities make application in only one technique whereas some of them are well-equipped to apply all techniques. As known, physical environments and well-trained instructors are important factors to maintain printmaking art education soundly. Since all techniques can easily be applied in institutions where these two elements are provided, it provides courses for printmaking students as well as elective courses for students in other disciplines. Universities now recognize the importance of having these facilities and are in pursuit of accommodating them.

A student should be equipped in terms of technique and information at basic level in order to get education in field of printmaking art. For instance, design, composition, colour knowledge and handcraft are key in all disciplines as a pre-requisite to produce a piece of art. Printmaking art contain all this accumulation of knowledge as is the case in the arts of painting and graphic although they are different only in technical terms. Therefore, a printmaking course with technical discipline is an application that is very easy to be applied in all branches of plastic arts, and even it can enrich them. We see that students who complete their art education under such curricula produce art works both in painting art (or graphic, sculpting and etc...) and in printmaking art in future years. When we look at the history of art, there are numerous artists who conducted works in different disciplines.

Today in Turkey, necessity and validity of arts varies depending on socio-cultural values. Despite the fact that art is seen as a need in larger cities, it displays an amateur approach mostly in the eastern part of the country. Nevertheless, the limited demand by people for the art works in exhibitions although printmaking art education is rendered at universities discourages young artists and thus results in a decrease in the number of exhibitions. Furthermore, it starts to be perceived as if amateur productions were what the market demands for.

Since being produced as a work of art, printmaking has always been a worthy alternative to an original work of art of an artist. The fact that painting is expensive and that an artist is in need of a work of art, have made it a reason for preference for centuries. However, the sale price of an original work of art makes a painting an inexpensive product since it does not attract interest in Turkey as much as it should. A purchaser does not need to purchase a printmaking because of the fact that a work of art by an artist is easily accessible at a cheap price.

That a printmaking is deemed as an alternative and a cheap value results from the fact that its pattern is reproduced by print volume. For instance, we all know more or less what it costs to own a painting by Picasso. The cheapest and the sole way, therefore, to own a work of art of an artist is printmaking. In line with this perspective, some universities have carried out endeavors for education in printmaking. For instance, their curricula requires a master's thesis, articles, researches, workshops and contests in order to meet international standards.

In addition, the means of taking part in an event, a contest or a training practice anywhere around the world via internet, taking a look at and easily accessing to works of art by professional artists makes a major contribution to what is taught in schools for a student's self-improvement. In fact, feeling and absorbing instances of indefinite imagination re-shape in accordance with perceptions of an individual. It goes without saying that it is not that possible to have such a synergy through traditional education systems of the past.

To sum up, modern people have to create new resources for art and education in an effort to introduce an alternative to the current system the rules of which have been established in thick lines. They can do so to the extent they exchange and comprehend information and experience.

2. Method

The study adopted the method of interview out of the qualitative research methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Within the framework of this method, the study aimed at identifying the "Opinions of Scholars Pertaining to the Interdisciplinary Repercussion of Printmaking Art Education".

The study adopted the method of purposive sampling (Patton, 1990). As a part of the study, a series of interviews were conducted with willing scholars who work for selected faculties. The size of sampling depends on what one would like to know about, accessibility, benefit, time and resources (Patton, 2002 p. 244). The research data were collected through an interview form drawn up by the researcher. 25 scholars of ten individual universities opined in written. The expertise of the participants is composed of various disciplines and expertise (3 Deans, 1 Deputy Dean, 5 Heads of Department, 16 scholars). The participants of the study are composed of 11 women and 14 men. Their average age is 47.88 and the age range is 35 to 72. The respective expertise of the participants includes 3 in printmaking, 10 in painting, 4 in graphics, 1 in textile, 1 in ceramics, 1 in sculpture, 2 in printmaking-painting and 3 in printmaking-painting-graphics.

The researcher drew up the interview form after having made required corrections pursuant to expert opinions. The interview form asked for sex, age and expertise of the participants and looked for answers to the following questions:

- a. Write down your opinions on if printmaking art education and technical practices are necessary for faculties of art education.
- b. Express your opinions on if printmaking art education and technical practices have an impact upon interdisciplinary (in terms of plastic arts) studies and on what their repercussions would be.
- c. What qualifications do Faculties of printmaking art education need to possess? Write down your opinions.
- d. Express your opinions on if printmaking art education and technical practices in Turkey meet international standards (State your impressions making a comparison with international examples).

The data collection took 15 days. The period of time for filling out the forms that had been handed was 20 min. at the earliest and 45 min. at the latest. 4 of the forms submitted via e-mail were filled out within the very same day as others took 10 days at most. The reason why the study took 15 days results from some delays to make contact with some scholars.

Evaluations were carried out through the content analysis in accordance with the questions of the research. The content analysis includes various methods and techniques. Such methods and techniques vary on purposes and messages to be analyzed. The collected data were read for a few times, analyzed and encoded. Based on common points among codes, some themes had been established before the data were defined and revealed. The repetition frequency of the codes was interpreted in frequency and percentages (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2000).

Table 1: Opinions of Scholars Pertaining to the Interdisciplinary Repercussion of Printmaking Art Education

Theme	Definition	Exemplary Sentences	Codes	Repetition Frequency	
				%	f
Printmaking art	The importance of printmaking	"printmaking is an integral part of art education and a must as a course".	Necessary Alternative	100 72	25 18

education and technical practices	and technical practices in art education	"it is vital in terms of improving creativity". "it is one of the methods in art education to enhance skills". "it is one of the most important corner stones to find one's artistic identity". "reproducing his/her original work of art through various technical practices both enriches a student's quest for plastic arts and contributes to establish his/her own identity."	Educational Practice Expertise	28	7
Printmaking art education and plastic arts	Printmaking art education and interdisciplinary interaction in plastic arts	"I do not see why someone who is capable of gravure printing would not do the same in painting". "one can relate to photography other than painting". "a graphical art student can reproduce his/her work for his/her own field through gravure printing, too". "a student majoring in photography can learn about reproduction techniques, as well". "it is a technique required for fields such as painting graphics and photography etc". "Printmaking is a necessary educational practice since it enhances creativity through pattern collage or digital media techniques in fields such as painting, photography, textile and sculpture."	Effective Painting Graphics Textile Ceramics Sculpture Photography Digital media Design Collage	100 32 24 16 12 12 8 4 4 4	25 8 6 4 3 3 2 1 1 1
Printmaking technical practices in art education and higher education	The characteristics for faculties of printmaking technical practices in art education	"workshops have to be favorable for the practices of at least two techniques" "Technical practices call for full equipment such as printing machines, drying racks, exposure desks and technicians" "workshops have to be equipped with air conditioning, lighting and safe work environment" "a scholar has to possess sufficient know-how in terms of both technique and establishing a plastic discourse" "it is a must to hold activities such as contests, biennials, workshops and summer schools"	Workshop Well-Qualified Scholar Press machine Air Conditioning Activity Technician Security Lighting	80 40 28 24 16 12 8 8	20 10 7 6 4 3 2 2
Printmaking in art education and its technical practices and international standards	Printmaking in art education and the level of technical practices	"I think that printmaking techniques in Turkey meet international standards" "there are some Turkish institutions where one can put all techniques into practice whereas there are some others where only one single or no practice is conducted." "I think that Turkish schools are advanced in terms of technical capabilities when compared to schools in Germany, Italy, Russia, Bulgaria, Japan and Austria"	Meeting International Standards Developing No opinion	64 20 16	13 5 4

Table 1 points at 25 scholars who responded to the questions in the written interview form. The codes specified in the content analysis were turned into numbers and percentages as interpretations were made benefiting from the numbers and percentages. To begin with, the importance of printmaking and technical practices in art education was questioned. This puts opinions into perspective about how effective they are since all theoretical and applied teachings that are of importance in art education apply to printmaking, too. It is suggested that printmaking art education can support a student in finding his/her own artistic identity as an alternative practice (elective course) while he/she can find a unique identity through education in expertise alone.

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The findings of the study point out that the course is absolutely necessary and it is presented as an Alternative practice (f:18, %72) and Expertise (f:7, %28). The data suggest that a major part of the participants think that Printmaking should be an Alternative educational practice whereas very few are in favor of deeming it as an expertise. This might result from the fact that some scholars have not been trained in this respect before.

Second of all, Printmaking in art education and interdisciplinary interaction in plastic arts were questioned. Just like for the first question, all participants (f:25, %100) suggest that it is an integral part of interaction. This favors the opinion that the practices considered to be necessary for each branch of art education can be supported by various fields and thus contribute to enhance creativity. Printmaking makes a major contribution to a student's self-improvement no matter what he/she majors in since printmaking art education requires scores of skills in terms of plastic discourse and technical practices. This can be considered by a proof that modern educational practices are backed up by interdisciplinary interaction and that printmaking is one of the practices with most efficient results in this respect.

The first three fields that were interacted with are painting (f:8, %32), graphics (f:6, %24) and textile (f:4, %16) respectively. Among other fields are ceramics (f:3, %12), sculpture (f:3, %12), photography (f:2, %8), digital media (f:1, %4), pattern (f:1, %4), and collage (f:1, %4). To sum up, the data reveal that the discipline that has the closest ties with the printmaking art in terms of sense of aesthetics and technical practices would have more interaction with it.

In response to the third question about the characteristics of the faculties of printmaking art education and technical practices, the participants pointed to the need for workshops (f:20, %80) as a beginning. They asked for more than one workshop while having done so. It is beyond doubt that the most important need of the printmaking art education is workshops with technical equipments and favorable ambient conditions. The participants' list in this respect includes well-qualified scholars (f:10, %40), Printing machines (f:6, %28), Air conditioning (f:6, %24) Activity (f:4,%16), Technician (f:3,%12), Security (f:2,%8), Lighting (f:2, %8).

In sum, it is absolutely necessary to have a fully-equipped workshop that fits for the content of the course if art education is to be given in a faculty. The existence and scope of a workshop is of major importance since printmaking requires a highly complicated structure in technical equipments. It is concluded from the opinions that many institutions across Turkey have printmaking workshops whereas some others are not at a satisfactory level. In addition, incentive activities in this field are deemed important as an extension of education. As a conclusion, tailoring physical conditions in accordance with the requirements of each technique as well as sharing them will enhance the quality of education in this field and positively contribute to the interaction.

In response to the final question about whether printmaking art education and technical practices meet international standards, the participants mainly think that Turkey meets international standards in endeavors and products in terms of the global criteria. In other words, it is acknowledged that it meets international standards (f:16, %64). It is concluded from the data that Turkey, under current conditions, is at a professional level just like any other developed country is in printmaking art education and practices. This is concluded from their success when they take part in worldwide activities (biennials, art fairs, joint or individual exhibitions) in printmaking.

Suggesting that Turkey makes an effort to meet international standards, the participants believe that it is in progress (f:4, %16). The most important rationale of this suggestion results from the fact that some scholars have bigger expectations and argue that the conditions have to be much better. This argument is backed up by physical in capabilities and lack of well-qualified scholars in newly-founded universities.

The scholars, who did not opine about whether Turkey meets international standards in printmaking art education, stated No Opinion (f:4, %16). The reason why they did not so is the fact that the scholars with various expertise and no experience in printmaking have no knowledge with regard to this field.

3. Conclusion

The findings of the study were itemized.

1. Printmaking and its technical practices are an integral part of the art education.
2. Printmaking practices are of major importance for improving creativity and skills in art education.
3. Printmaking art education is deemed necessary as an interdisciplinary interaction since it makes contributions to other fields.
4. It is imperative to attach importance for faculties of printmaking art education to have physical capabilities and required equipments.
5. Just like in any other field, the most fundamental need of printmaking art education is well-qualified scholars. The scholars of the course in printmaking that includes various techniques are required to not only have an artistic identity but also command technical practices.
6. Carrying out printmaking art education in a professional workshop inarguably calls for a sufficient size of workshop, printing machines, air conditioning and technicians.
7. It is required to go for incentive educational practices. It is necessary to attach importance to and deem activities including contests, biennials, workshops and summer schools as a part of cultural activities.
8. Many Turkish institutions currently meet international standards in printmaking art education.
9. Some newly-founded universities have yet to reach to a desired level in terms of both scholars and physical capabilities.

The most obvious negative data acquired out of this study were about scholars. Some scholars were unable to express any idea on if printmaking art education in Turkey meets international standards. This might stem from the fact that they had not been educated well enough during the period of undergraduate and master studies. However, educational practices are required to meet international standards about all branches of plastic arts even if expertise varies.

In addition, the art education is of importance in terms of discipline and stability for fields the practice stage of which requires technical skills. The printmaking art education is a process that takes time and patience. In other words, an educational process in a professional manner needs to originate in technical skills and then be designed on improving creativity. It is because creativity and artistic identity can take on a dimension only by technical finesse of practices that are shaped in our minds.

In conclusion, it is concluded from the data of this study that both an artist and a scholar to be trained are likely to have more qualifications in a professional and disciplinary education system, and such practices would contribute to their artistic productivity.

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