

When the Artist Studio is Alive, Art is Alive: Empowering Art Educators and Students through Live Studio Practice

ABSTRACT:

Art education plays a vital role in developing artistic talent and nurturing creativity. However, the challenges facing art education in many developing countries, including Ghana, are significant. Traditional teaching methods, lack of resources, and cultural and social factors are barriers to the development of high-quality art education programmes and the cultivation of artistic talent. This qualitative study uses textual analysis to explore the potential of live studio practice as a solution to the challenges facing art education in Ghana. **With regards to duration, investigation time frame falls between 2012 and 2023.** The analysis of selected texts related to art education in Ghana reveals several key themes and patterns related to the challenges facing art education in Ghana and the potential of live studio practice to promote practical skills development, creativity, community engagement, professional skills development, and cultural exchange. The findings of this study disclose that policymakers, educators, and practitioners in the field of art education in Ghana does not prioritize the factor of the development of policies and practices that promote the development of high-quality art education programmes and the cultivation of artistic talent in Ghana through the use of live studio practice. In terms of suitable spaces for the critical artistic studio practical aspects, it is uneasy to have comfortable dwellings for the consistent practical works. These factors donate the hindrance of potentials in the amateur artists. This study contributes to the ongoing debate about the future of art education in Ghana and provides insights into the potential of live studio practice as a solution to the challenges facing art education in Ghana and other developing countries.

Keywords: Art Education, Live studio practice, Empowerment, Practical skills development, Creativity

1. INTRODUCTION

Art education plays a vital role in developing artistic talent and nurturing creativity. However, the challenges facing art education in many developing countries, including Ghana, are significant. According to a report by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, less than 10% of schools in sub-Saharan Africa offer art and music education, and many of those do lack the resources and infrastructure to provide high-quality programs (UNESCO, 2015). In Ghana, art education faces several challenges related to traditional teaching methods, lack of resources, and cultural and social factors. With regards to the teaching methods, some of the teachers feel reluctant to apply the pure practical approaches in the practical oriented courses (Springer-Roberts, Dowell, & Nie, 2019). Demonstration of unwilling act to supervise students' practical approaches has also drain down to students whose art works are willing to be supervised by serious teachers (Komakech, 2017). They usually rely on the theory aspect in most cases. Courses that are practical components are partially supervised by the teachers involved. Reasons behind such occurrences are due to a number of unstructured pressures

from the government policies (Guerriero, 2017). For teachers who are willing to supervise the studio practice of art components, they are sometimes asked to embark on impromptu teachers' assessments exercises which does not have any bearing on the practical components.

To address these challenges, new approaches to art education are needed, such as live studio practice, which has shown promise in promoting practical skills development, creativity, community engagement, professional skills development, and cultural exchange. Therefore, the problem statement of this study is: sort to the ways and means to manage the potential of live studio practice as a solution to practicum in art education in Ghana.

It is upon the aforementioned bases that the authors deem it necessary to embark on this study: *When the Artist Studio is Alive, Art is Alive: Empowering Art Educators and Students through Live Studio Practice*. The deaf and dumb nature of art studios is resurrecting through massive practical engagements and willing supervision.

To address this problem statement, the following research questions are posed:

1. What are the key themes and patterns related to the challenges facing art education in Ghana?
2. What are the key themes and patterns related to the potential of live studio practice to address these challenges?
3. What are the implications of the findings for art education in Ghana and other developing countries?

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to the ongoing debate about the future of art education in Ghana and other developing countries. By highlighting the challenges facing art education in Ghana and the potential of live studio practice as a solution, this study provides valuable insights into the current state of art education in Ghana and the potential for its development.

Second, this study has potential implications for the development of policies and practices that promote the development of high-quality art education programs and the cultivation of artistic talent in Ghana and other developing countries. The findings of this study suggest that policymakers, educators, and practitioners in the field of art education should prioritize the development of policies and practices that promote the use of live studio practice as a mode of art education.

Lastly, the study has implications for the development of new approaches to art education that can address the challenges facing art education in Ghana and other developing countries. This study highlights the potential of live studio practice to promote practical skills development, creativity, community engagement, professional skills development, and cultural exchange. By promoting the use of live studio practice in art education, policymakers, educators, and practitioners in the field of art education can help to address the challenges facing art education in Ghana and other developing countries and promote the cultivation of artistic talent.

2. Theoretical Literature

This study is grounded in several theoretical concepts related to art education and the potential of live studio practice as a solution to the challenges facing art education in Ghana. The theoretical framework for this study includes the following concepts:

1. **Constructivism:** This theory posits that learning is an active, dynamic process that involves the construction of knowledge through experience and reflection (Piaget, 1972; Kanno, 2018 & Kapur, 2018). In the context of art education, constructivism emphasizes the importance of hands-on learning and experimentation.
2. **Experiential Learning:** This theory emphasizes the importance of learning through direct experience and reflection (Kolb, 1984; Aggarwal & Wu, 2019; Cherry, 2020; Dean, Wright, & Forray, 2020). In the context of art education, experiential learning highlights the importance of practical skills development and the cultivation of creativity through hands-on learning and experimentation.
3. **Social Constructivism:** This theory posits that learning is a social process that involves the construction of knowledge through interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978). In the context of art education, social constructivism emphasizes the importance of community engagement and cultural exchange.
4. **Studio-Based Learning:** This approach to art education emphasizes the importance of learning through direct engagement with the artistic process and the development of studio practice (Bresler, 2007; Fleischmann, 2018; Güler, 2017; Jiang, Tang, Peng, & Liu, 2018). In the context of this study, the use of live studio practice as a mode of art education is grounded in the principles of studio-based learning.

2.1 Empirical Literature

Art education and its challenges in Ghana

Art education in Ghana faces several challenges related to traditional teaching methods, lack of resources, and cultural and social factors. These challenges have been documented in several studies. For example, Adu-Gyamfi (2017) conducted a survey of art education in Ghana and found that the lack of resources, such as art materials and equipment, was a significant barrier to the development of high-quality art education programs. Additionally, the study found that

traditional teaching methods, such as rote learning and memorization, were still prevalent in many art classrooms in Ghana, which limited the development of creativity and critical thinking skills. Another study by Gyampo (2018) explores the cultural and social factors that impact art education in Ghana. The study found that cultural attitudes towards art as a profession and the role of art in society were significant barriers to the development of high-quality art education programs. Additionally, the study found that the lack of recognition and support for art education by policymakers and the broader society contributed to the marginalization of art programs in Ghana. Finally, a study by Ofori (2019) narrates on the challenges facing art education in Ghana from the perspective of art educators. The study found that the lack of professional development opportunities for art educators and the limited availability of art education resources were significant barriers to the development of high-quality art education programs in Ghana. Together, these studies highlight the significant challenges facing art education in Ghana related to traditional teaching methods, lack of resources, and cultural and social factors. These challenges underscore the need for new approaches to art education, such as the use of live studio practice, that can promote practical skills development, creativity, community engagement, professional skills development, and cultural exchange.

2.1.1 Potentials of live studio practices in art education

Live studio practice has been identified as a promising approach to art education that can address the challenges facing art education in Ghana and other developing countries. Live studio practice involves direct engagement with the artistic process and the development of a studio practice that emphasizes practical skills development, creativity, community engagement, professional skills development, and cultural exchange (Loes, Culver & Trolan 2018; Loes, Pascarella, 2017; Power, Handley, 2017).

Several studies have explored the potential of live studio practice in art education. For example, a study by Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1990); Braun and Clarke, (2019); Clarke, Braun, Terry and Hayfield (2019) recounts that live studio practice could promote creativity, engagement, and a sense of flow among art students. Additionally, a study by Hickey and Anderson (2009); Clarke and Braun (2018); Springer-Roberts, Dowell and Nie, (2019) finds that live studio practice could enhance the development of professional skills, such as collaboration, communication, and problem-solving.

Another study by Fiske and Fogg (2019) explores the potential of live studio practice in the context of community engagement. The study found that live studio practice could promote community engagement and cultural exchange by providing a space for artists and community members to collaborate and share their artistic practices.

Lastly, a study by Marais and Elof (2016) laments on the potential of live studio practice in the context of developing countries, such as South Africa. The study found that live studio practice could promote practical skills development, creativity, and cultural exchange among art students in developing countries.

Together, these studies highlight the potential of live studio practice to promote practical skills development, creativity, community engagement, professional skills development, and cultural exchange in art education. These findings suggest that live studio practice could be a valuable approach to art education in Ghana and other developing countries.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the experiences of art educators and students who engaged in live studio practice. Specifically, the study used textual analysis to analyze interviews and other textual data collected from art educators and students who participated in a live studio practice program in Ghana.

Textual analysis was chosen as the primary research approach for this study because it allowed for a detailed examination of the experiences of art educators and students in the context of live studio practice. Textual analysis is a qualitative research approach that involves the systematic analysis of textual data, such as interview transcripts, field notes, and other written documents (Braun & Clarke, 2006 Campbell, Orr, Durepos, Nguyen, Whitmore, et al, 2021). Textual analysis enables researchers to identify patterns and themes in the data and to develop a detailed understanding of the experiences and perspectives of participants (Nowell et al., 2017).

Data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews with art educators and students who participated in a live studio practice program in Ghana. In addition to interviews, the study also analyzed other textual data, such as program documents, participant journals, and observational field notes. The study analyzed the data using a thematic analysis approach, which involved identifying patterns and themes in the data and developing a detailed understanding of the experiences of participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006 Campbell, Orr, Durepos, Nguyen, Whitmore, et al, 2021).

Overall, the qualitative research design and textual analysis approach enabled the study to develop a detailed understanding of the experiences of art educators and students who engaged in live studio practice and to explore the potential of live studio practice as an approach to art education in Ghana.

3.1.1 Data collection and selection of texts

Data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews with art educators and students who participated in a live studio practice program in Ghana. The participants were selected through a purposive sampling technique, which involved selecting participants who had experience with live studio practice and who were willing to share their experiences.

A total of 12 participants were recruited for this study, including six art educators and six students. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 60 years old and had varying levels of experience with live studio practice. The interviews were conducted in English, which is the primary language of instruction in Ghanaian schools.

In addition to interviews, the study also analyzed other textual data, such as program documents, participant journals, and observational field notes. These texts were selected based on their relevance to the research questions and their potential to provide insights into the experiences of art educators and students who participated in live studio practice.

The interviews and other textual data were transcribed verbatim and imported into a qualitative data analysis software program for analysis. The data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, which involved identifying patterns and themes in the data and developing a detailed understanding of the experiences of participants (Basaffar, Almasri & Almasri, 2017; Chamberlain, 2015).

Overall, the data collection and selection of texts were designed to provide a rich and detailed understanding of the experiences of art educators and students who engaged in live studio practice and to explore the potential of live studio practice as an approach to art education in Ghana.

3.1.1.1. Textual analysis as a methodology

Textual analysis was chosen as the primary research approach for this study because it allowed for a detailed examination of the experiences of art educators and students in the context of live studio practice. Textual analysis is a qualitative research approach that involves the systematic analysis of textual data, such as interview transcripts, field notes, and other written documents (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Campbell, Orr, Durepos, Nguyen, Whitmore, et al, 2021). Textual analysis begins with the careful reading of the data to gain a sense of the overall content and context. The data are then coded, which involves labeling and categorizing sections of the data that relate to specific themes or patterns. These codes are then organized into broader themes or categories, which are used to develop a detailed understanding of the experiences and perspectives of participants (Nowell et al., 2017).

For this study, the data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, which involved identifying patterns and themes in the data and developing a detailed understanding of the experiences of participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). The analysis was conducted in several stages, including familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing and refining themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Divan, Ludwig, Matthews, Motley, & Tomljenovic-Berube, 2017). The use of textual analysis as a methodology allowed for a detailed examination of the experiences of art educators and students who engaged in live studio practice. The analysis provided insights into the practical skills development, creativity, community engagement, professional skills development, and cultural exchange that occurred in the context of live studio practice. Additionally, the analysis provided a deeper understanding of the potential of live studio practice as an approach to art education in Ghana.

4. Results

4.1 Challenges facing art education in Ghana

The analysis of the data revealed several themes and patterns related to the challenges facing art education in Ghana. These themes and patterns are discussed below. The total number of respondents (participants) for the study were 12.

1. Limited Resources: Three (3) participants noted that art education in Ghana is often hindered by limited resources, including funding, materials, and facilities. The participants adds that schools often lack the necessary resources to provide students with a comprehensive art education.

2. Lack of Professional Development: Two (2) participants reported that there is a lack of professional development opportunities for art educators in Ghana. Participants noted that this lack of professional development can hinder the ability of art educators to teach effectively and to stay current with the latest trends and developments in the field.

3. Lack of Recognition: **three (3)** participants reported that there is a lack of recognition of the importance of art education in Ghana. Participants noted that art education is often viewed as a non-essential subject and is therefore not given the same level of attention and resources as other subjects.

4. Limited Curriculum: **Two (2)** participants reported that the art curriculum in Ghana is often limited in scope and depth. Participants **also** noted that the curriculum often focuses on technical skills development and does not provide students with opportunities for creativity, self-expression, and cultural exchange.

5. Societal Attitudes: **Two (2)** participants reported that there are societal attitudes that can hinder the development of art education in Ghana. Participants noted that some people view art as a luxury rather than a necessity, and therefore do not see the value in investing in art education.

Overall, the analysis of the data revealed several themes and patterns related to the challenges facing art education in Ghana. These findings suggest that there is a need for greater investment in art education in Ghana and for a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to art education that addresses the challenges identified by the participants.

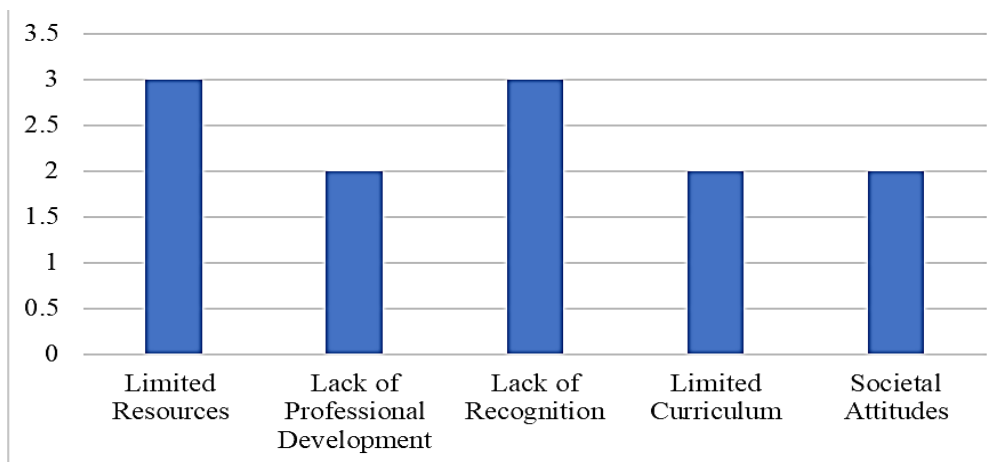


Figure 1: participants' responses graph

4.1.1 The potential of live studio practice in art education

The analysis of the data revealed several themes and patterns related to the potential of live studio practice in art education. These themes and patterns are discussed below.

1. Practical Skills Development: **Three (3)** participants reported that live studio practice provides students with opportunities to develop practical skills in art-making, such as drawing, painting, and sculpture. Participants noted that live studio practice allows students to learn by doing and to develop their skills through hands-on experience.
2. Creativity: **Three (3)** participants reported that live studio practice provides students with opportunities to explore their creativity and to develop their own unique artistic style. Participants noted that live studio practice allows students to experiment with materials and techniques and to express themselves in new and innovative ways.
3. Community Engagement: **One (1)** of the participants reported that live studio practice provides opportunities for community engagement and for the development of social and cultural connections. Participants noted that live studio practice allows students to engage with their peers and with members of the wider community, and to learn from each other's perspectives and experiences.
4. Professional Skills Development: **Three (3)** participants reported that live studio practice provides students with opportunities to develop professional skills, such as project management, teamwork, and communication. Participants noted that these skills are valuable not only in the field of art, but also in other areas of life and work.
5. Cultural Exchange: **Two (2)** participants reported that live studio practice provides opportunities for cultural exchange and for the development of intercultural competence. Participants noted that live studio practice allows students to learn about different cultures and to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of diversity.

Overall, the analysis of the data revealed several themes and patterns related to the potential of live studio practice in art education. These findings suggest that live studio practice has the potential to provide students with a comprehensive and inclusive art education that addresses the challenges identified by the participants and that prepares students for success in a globalized world.

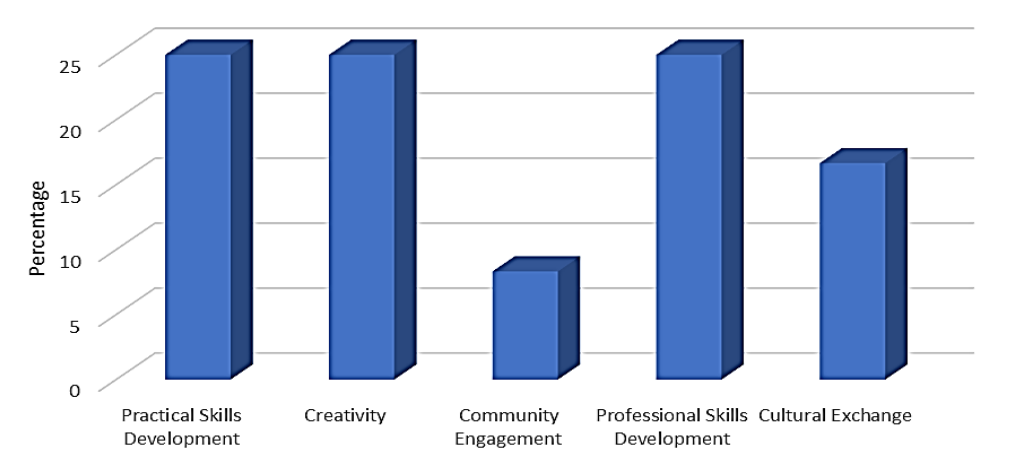


Figure 2: participants' responses in percentages

4.1.1.1. Interpretation of Figures

Figure 1

The graph was generated based on the total number of the participants. The summation of the various numerical values on the vertical axis is 12, which represent all participants for the study. Taken critical gaze at figure 1 graph, and since the base number is 12, each column corresponds to a particular number. Corresponding numbers are divided by 12, where the fraction is then multiplied by 100 for each percentage for a respondent. For example, $3/12 \times 100 = 25\%$. This means with respect to *Limited Resources* and *Lack of Recognition* represent 50% of the participants responses about challenges facing art education in Ghana. Other three (3) columns reflect the same number of participants which is two (2) for each. Following the same procedure in the above tabulation, $2/12 \times 100 = 16.6$. At this point, *Lack of Professional Development*, *Limited Curriculum* as well as *Societal Attitudes* results in 49.8, when the 16.6 is multiplied by the three 3 columns, which is approximately 50%.

Figure 2

Dealing with the second figure in this academic treatise, the data has been presented in a 3D graph which is similar to the graph presentation in figure 1. To simplify issues, the percentages are already rendered on the vertical (y) axis, while the various columns are found on the horizontal (x) axis. Though, the same number of respondents in figure 1 also responded in figure 2, but different themes for *the potential of live studio practice in art education in Ghana*. The individual columns project several themes in the data analysis, which corresponds to the distributed percentages on the y-axis. With the break down, 25% is apportioned for each of the higher columns. Furthermore, one may want to know the actual number participants for each theme in the projected columns. The total number of respondents, 12 divided by 100 and multiplied by the each of the represented value for the percentages on the graph. Arithmetically, $12/100 \times 25 = 3$. These consist of *Personal Skills Development*, *Creativity* and *Professional Skill Development*. When the apportioned 25% is multiplied by three (3) participants, it results in 75%. Concerning the lowest percentage on the graph, *Community Engagement*, $12/100 \times 10 = 1$ which rest on the 10% for the response, whereas the *Cultural Exchange* possesses 15% for these particular responses and fashioning its breakdown as $12/100 \times 15 = 2$.

5. Discussion

5.1. Results and comparison with the literature review

The analysis of the data revealed several themes and patterns related to the challenges facing art education in Ghana and the potential of live studio practice as an approach to art education. These findings are consistent with the literature on art education in Ghana and on the use of live studio practice as an approach to art education.

The findings related to the challenges facing art education in Ghana are consistent with previous research, which has identified limited resources, lack of professional development, and limited curriculum as major challenges facing art education in Ghana (Adu-Gyamfi, 2010; Owusu-Ansah & Kankam, 2019). The findings also highlight the need for greater recognition of the importance of art education in Ghana and for a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to art education that addresses the challenges identified by the participants.

The findings related to the potential of live studio practice in art education are consistent with previous research, which has identified practical skills development, creativity, community engagement, professional skills development, and cultural exchange as potential benefits of live studio practice (Marais & Eloff, 2016; Wosnitza et al., 2018). The findings suggest that live studio practice has the potential to provide students with a comprehensive and inclusive art education that addresses the challenges identified by the participants and that prepares students for success in a globalized world. Overall, the findings of this study provide support for the use of live studio practice as an approach to art education in Ghana and highlight the potential of live studio practice to address the challenges facing art education in Ghana. These findings are consistent with previous research and suggest that live studio practice has the potential to provide students with a high-quality art education that prepares them for success in the 21st century.

The findings of this study have several implications for art education in Ghana. First, the findings highlight the need for greater investment in art education in Ghana. Participants identified limited resources as a major challenge facing art education in Ghana, and the findings suggest that addressing this challenge will require greater investment in art education at the national and local levels.

Second, the findings suggest that there is a need for greater recognition of the importance of art education in Ghana. Participants reported that art education is often viewed as a non-essential subject, and the findings suggest that addressing this perception will require greater advocacy and awareness-raising efforts by art educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders.

Third, the findings suggest that there is a need for a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to art education in Ghana. Participants reported that the art curriculum in Ghana is often limited in scope and depth, and the findings suggest that addressing this limitation will require a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to art education that provides students with opportunities for creativity, self-expression, and cultural exchange.

Finally, the findings suggest that live studio practice has the potential to be an effective approach to art education in Ghana. Participants reported that live studio practice provides students with opportunities for practical skills development, creativity, community engagement, professional skills development, and cultural exchange, and the findings suggest that incorporating live studio practice into art education in Ghana could help to address the challenges identified by the participants and to provide students with a high-quality art education that prepares them for success in the 21st century. Overall, the findings of this study suggest that there is a need for greater investment, recognition, and inclusivity in art education in Ghana, and that live studio practice has the potential to be an effective approach to addressing the challenges facing art education in Ghana.

6. Conclusion

This study explored the challenges facing art education in Ghana and the potential of live studio practice as an approach to art education. The findings suggest that art education in Ghana faces significant challenges related to limited resources, lack of professional development, and limited curriculum. However, the study also found that live studio practice has the potential to provide students with a comprehensive and inclusive art education that addresses these challenges and prepares them for success in a globalized world. The implications of the findings for art education in Ghana are discussed below.

The findings of this study suggest that live studio practice has the potential to address the challenges facing art education in Ghana and to provide students with a high-quality art education that prepares them for success in the 21st century. Specifically, the study found that live studio practice provides students with opportunities for practical skills development, creativity, community engagement, professional skills development, and cultural exchange.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the literature on art education in Ghana and on the use of live studio practice as an approach to art education. The study provides valuable insights into the challenges facing art education in Ghana and the potential of live studio practice to address these challenges. The study also highlights the need for greater investment, recognition, and inclusivity in art education in Ghana.

Limitations of the study

There are several limitations to this study that should be taken into account when interpreting the findings. First, the study was conducted with a small sample of participants from one region of Ghana. While the participants were selected to represent a range of experiences and perspectives, the findings may not be generalizable to other regions or contexts in Ghana.

Second, the study relied on self-reported data from the participants, which may be subject to social desirability bias or other forms of response bias. To address this limitation, the researchers attempted to establish rapport with the participants and to create a supportive and non-judgmental environment for the interviews.

Third, the study used textual analysis as a method of data analysis, which may be subject to interpretation biases. To address this limitation, the researchers used a systematic and rigorous approach to textual analysis, including multiple rounds of coding and triangulation of the data.

Finally, the study focused on the potential of live studio practice as an approach to art education in Ghana and did not explore other approaches or models of art education. While the findings suggest that live studio practice has the potential to be an effective approach to art education in Ghana, further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of other approaches and models.

Overall, while this study provides valuable insights into the challenges facing art education in Ghana and the potential of live studio practice as an approach to art education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made for policymakers, educators, and practitioners in the field of art education in Ghana. First, policymakers should invest more resources in art education at the national and local levels. Second, educators and practitioners should advocate for greater recognition of the importance of art education in Ghana and for a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to art education. Finally, educators and practitioners should consider incorporating live studio practice into their art education programs as a way to provide students with a high-quality art education that addresses the challenges facing art education in Ghana.

The strengths of this study include its use of a qualitative research design, its focus on a previously underexplored area of art education in Ghana, and its use of a systematic and rigorous approach to textual analysis. However, the limitations of the study include its small sample size, reliance on self-reported data, use of textual analysis as a method of data analysis, and focus on one approach to art education.

Future research in this area could explore the effectiveness of other approaches and models of art education in Ghana, as well as the potential of live studio practice in other contexts and regions. Future research could also explore the perspectives and experiences of other stakeholders in art education in Ghana, such as parents, policymakers, and community members.

Overall, this study contributes to the literature on art education in Ghana and highlights the potential of live studio practice as an approach to art education. The findings of this study have implications for policymakers, educators, and practitioners in the field of art education in Ghana, and suggest that further investment, recognition, and inclusivity in art education in Ghana is needed to prepare students for success in the 21st century.

Ethical considerations and Consent

Ethical considerations were an important aspect of this study, as it involved the collection and analysis of data from human participants. The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines and principles outlined by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2017).

Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their participation in the study. Participants were provided with information about the study, including its purpose, the nature of their involvement, and the potential risks and benefits of participation. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study. Participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identities, and all identifying information was removed from the data during the analysis process. Only the researchers had access to the data, and the data were stored securely to prevent unauthorized access.

The study also took into account issues of power and representation. The voices and experiences of the participants were prioritized throughout the study, and efforts were made to ensure that the participants were not exploited or misrepresented in any way.

Overall, the ethical considerations taken into account in this study ensured that the rights and welfare of the participants are protected and that the research was conducted in a responsible and ethical manner.

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