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Visual Culture As a Teaching Practice in Visual Arts Education in Turkey: Practitioner Inquiry

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Abstract: The present research investigates the experiences of pre-service visual arts teachers in the planning and application phase of a course focusing on visual culture in the special teaching methods course. This course in Turkey provides information about how and with what type of methodologies arts-related topics should be taught in visual arts education. During the first semester, the course was conducted theoretically, and in the second semester the researcher focused on the application of these theories. In this research, visual culture is discussed as one of the special teaching methods of visual arts education. A total of five visual arts pre-service teachers were selected as participants using criterion sampling. The research used practitioner inquiry as a method and conducted during the 2017–2018 spring and 2018–2019 fall semesters, lasting 8 weeks in total. During the application process, the pre-service teachers taught their samples of course plans on visual culture that they created during their pre-service practice to the primary and secondary school students in 2 weeks of classes. The research data were obtained through semi-structured interviews, document review, and reflective notes and analyzed with descriptive methods. As a result of this research, the visual arts pre-service teachers saw the students gain a critical perspective, become more aware of issues in their daily lives, express themselves in a better way, and improve their inquiring skills with the application of a visual culture course plan. With the visual culture course plan, the pre-service teachers also gained several professional experiences and skills.

Introduction

Today, pedagogy in a visual cultural context has a structure that expands the possibilities and even offers new ones. The effect of new production methods around technology is increasing and expanding the boundaries of visual culture and is becoming an important resource of pedagogy. Visual culture pedagogy refers to an approach that goes beyond the classroom that is associated with relating real-life issues from a visual culture perspective and is a process based on student-centered creative inquiry. This pedagogical approach aims to effectively bring the experiences of informal learning into process (Duncum, 2009; Freedman et al., 2013). Visual culture pedagogy allows children to become self-directed, independent and to have meaning-producing and interpretive experiences. Hence, teachers are expected to transform themselves personally and professionally. In the subjective developmental process, students focus on their own stories and become creative individuals through these stories. During this process, it is critical that teachers construct a guiding identity. Because visual culture pedagogy is an open-ended process through which

students question their subjective selves and develop critical thinking skills, teachers' guidance is of pivotal importance (Haanstra, 2010, as cited in Bedir Erişti, 2020, p. 169). "Visual culture pedagogy provides students with the opportunity of reframing their experiences and equips them with critical thinking skills. Visual culture pedagogy refers to a process where students find their own orientations. It involves a different cultural process in which traditional media and new media processes interact" (Carpenter& Cifuentes, 2011, as cited in Bedir Erişti, 2020, p. 169). In line with this perspective, participation is essential in visual culture pedagogy, and it provides students with a medium where they subjectively examine, question, interpret and associate all kinds of verbal and visual messages they see around them with new production processes (Bedir Erişti, 2020). Hence, critical pedagogy takes a holistic approach with a critical perspective on visual culture (Tavin, 2005). Students can develop a critical perspective when they critically question their own life experiences inside or outside school and create their own meaning. Therefore, visual culture reveals who they are, what they think, and how they behave (Anderson, 2003; Tavin, 2003). According to Taylor (2000), the purpose of critical pedagogy is to help students stimulate their desires, imaginations, and intellectual background and inquire about the social, political, and economic powers that have a huge impact on their lives. Critical pedagogy emphasizes the production, transformation, education, and reproduction of knowledge rather than just accessing it. According to Freire (1997), the major task of the practice of critical pedagogy is to transform learners into creative, communicative, and critical individuals with their teachers and others. Thus, thanks to critical pedagogy, individuals shift their positions from the object to the subject of education. It also offers students an inquisitive perspective. From this point of view, critical pedagogy has a connection with visual culture. According to Giroux (2007), today's visual culture includes educational practices for the analysis of messages produced and disseminated through media, popular culture, film, advertisements, mass media and other cultural production tools by combining written, audio and visual forms of expression, rather than associating the inquiry and analysis of texts with a single source. gives. Thus, it incorporates visual culture studies to shape the interdisciplinary dialogue between critical pedagogy and cultural studies. From this perspective, the visual images children and youth see have expanded the subject focus of art education (Duncum, 2002; Freedman, 2003; Tavin, 2000). Because students spend most of their time in different places in the visual world, the tendency to transform the order of this new world with education or examine it through creative artistic activities is important for visual culture applications.

In the related literature, there are studies in which undergraduate students interpret popular culture texts and identify intertextual relations using the critical pedagogy method (Tavin, 2003). Some studies (Sohn, 2004) offer an understanding of social context in critically interpreting visual culture and present a technology-supported learning environment that provides many different perspectives and learning through dialogue. In other studies, Goble (2013) investigates how art teachers' perspectives on visual culture are reflected in their personal experiences, practices in learning environments and design of arts teaching curricula, and Darts (2004) examines the interaction between arts and visual culture and explores how visual culture affects students' understanding and awareness of social issues to discuss social issues and art production. Among the studies performed on visual culture education in Turkey (at secondary and undergraduate levels), Türkkan (2008) examined how visual culture education enables students to gain critical thinking skills and associate these skills with daily life. Çığır (2016) presented visuals to students in social, cultural and economic contexts with a critical perspective through social network-oriented visual culture practices. Many studies also showed that visual culture education provides students with a critical perspective on media literacy and examined to what extent popular culture elements affect students' intellectual and artistic expressions (Dilli, 2013; Dilli, et al., 2016; Güler &

Bedir Erişti, 2019). Recent studies have also put emphasis on the importance of visual culture education in pre-service education and visual arts teachers context (Kuru, 2009; Saribaş, 2019; Özsoy, et al., 2020).

The reviewed studies show that teaching critical pedagogy based on visual culture has helped students develop critical thinking, interconnect texts, understand images, make meaning, raise awareness about social matters, understand media representations, and examine their daily visual encounters. In order to gain these mentioned abilities, pre-service teachers should be provided with a course on contemporary art education approaches rather than the traditional arts education curriculum taught in the special teaching methods (STM) course in the art teaching departments of education faculties (Freedman, 2003; Freedman & Stuhr, 2004; Hausman, 2007; Martin & Freedman, 2019). In Turkey, STM in teacher education of visual arts is a course covering the topics of how to teach arts and arts education and which methods to use. It is intended to help visual arts pre-service teachers gain professional knowledge and skills. Among the purposes of the STM in visual arts education are for teachers to develop an understanding of multicultural and intercultural arts education and to acquire comprehension skills to compare and influence other countries' cultures with their own cultural values. The course is also designed for teachers to gain skills for comprehending contemporary teaching methods in visual arts and design education (Özsoy & Alakuş, 2009). The system of today's arts education is not only about passing some specific knowledge and skills on to the students; what matters is individuals' ability to produce different ideas and synthesize and make products using these knowledge and skills. Objects and images encountered in daily life (posters, comics, tattoos, graffiti, visual culture forms seen in museums, television, computer games, movies, web pages, etc.) have begun to surround humanity alongside other artworks. These objects and images are of great interest to students, and they consider them as artworks (Gökay Yılmaz, 2009). Given that, a quality visual culture-based art education is urgent for students to make sense of and interpret the great influence of these forms of visual culture. Thus, their teachers need to be educated first to provide them with this education.

Learning how to prepare and apply a course plan based on visual culture is significant for pre-service art teachers. For STM course content, it is important to pay attention to how to teach arts as well as the teachers' competences, skills, and field knowledge to apply visual arts curriculum effectively. In planning a course, many factors play an integrated role, such as the application, preparing materials, presentations, application of teaching methods and techniques, organization of the learning environment, duration, and classroom management. Teachers are expected to be capable and master this whole process. The General Competencies for Teaching Profession proposed by the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MNE) (2017), indicate that pre-service teachers are expected to gain competencies under the headings of 'professional knowledge', 'professional skills' and 'attitudes and values.' Also, the content of teacher training undergraduate programs has been updated by the Higher Education Institution (HEI) (2018). The updated programs include such competencies under the headings of Professional Knowledge of Teaching (PK), Field Education (FE) and General Knowledge (GK). This is reflected in arts education through content that focuses on interdisciplinary interaction and is based on visual culture. This change encourages the development of 21st century skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, effective communication, innovative production, and respect for cultural differences in the curricula of primary and secondary level arts education. For that reason, there is a need for designing such programs to provide students with these skills and for training art teachers to implement these programs. This can be achieved not only at the workshop courses in the Art Teaching programs, but also in both theoretical and applied courses for arts education (Özsoy & Alakuş, 2017). Pre-service teachers are required to acquire competencies in visual

literacy and the ability to question, understand, discover, and think critically during the artistic process. Pre-service teachers should also focus on topics related to contemporary arts education and application to help students gain these skills. Herrmann (2005) claims that art education becomes more relevant to student learning when boundaries are questioned, and traditions investigated. Visual culture studies in art education can involve embracing postmodern concepts and challenging modernist ideals. Similarly, Goble (2013) claimed that art teachers should be provided with a dialogic pedagogy of visual culture through in-service and pre-service teacher education and need to apply this pedagogy in their own teaching. Ballengee-Morris et al. (2001) put emphasis on the importance of providing a visual culture based syllabus that helps students to question their everyday lives and the social fields they engage in and also raises their awareness about social issues.

In Turkey, the importance of visual culture education has particularly been emphasized on all levels of arts education during the past decade. The studies conducted in Turkey mostly concern visual culture for the secondary school level; meanwhile, visual culture studies for visual arts pre-service teachers are very rare. STM in visual arts training provides professional skills and competencies to teachers in Turkey, and it is important to gain these as a result of the course. Not much research has been conducted in Turkey that focuses on STM and how it helps visual arts pre-service teachers develop a contemporary arts education approach. Kuru (2009) investigated how pre-service arts education in Turkey can be covered in pre-service arts education of visual culture studies and stated that there is a need for studies on how to include visual culture theory in art education and that visual culture applications should be covered in teacher education programs. Mamur (2012) revealed that pre-service teachers think of the questioning of visual culture as a learning opportunity in the curriculum in order to make more conscious choices to conduct art and cultural events. According to pre-service teachers, the questioning of visual culture as a topic in primary and secondary education curriculum is effective in terms of critical thinking; requesting attention, motivation, and interpretation of contemporary art practices; and making more conscious choices concerning artistic and cultural issues. These above-mentioned researches revealed that visual culture applications in visual arts education are important both in visual arts teacher education and for educating students. There are several studies focusing on the experiences of pre-service teachers with STM and emphasizing the importance of the STM as a course. Dilmaç and Dilmaç (2010) explored the experiences of pre-service teachers in gaining knowledge and skills about the topics covered in the STM course, the methods and techniques used, the outcomes, and how to prepare and present the activity materials. Yılmaz (2006) states that the STM course builds a theoretical structure, and both STM I-II courses have positive impacts on the applications and are beneficial for initial teaching experiences. This research is intended to reveal how pre-service visual arts teachers plan a visual culture course for an STM course and how they apply a visual culture course plan in pre-service teaching practice in visual arts education. The research questions are as follows:

1. How do the pre-service visual arts teachers experience the process of creating a visual culture course plan, and what was the process like?
2. How do STM courses affect the procedure of the pre-service visual art teacher's creating and applying visual culture course content in their practicum?
3. What are the pre-service visual arts teachers' experiences related to teaching practice with the prepared visual culture course plan?
4. How do the applications of this visual culture course plan affects the learning products of primary and secondary school students?
5. What kind of outcomes do this visual culture course plan applications provide the students with?

Method
Research Model
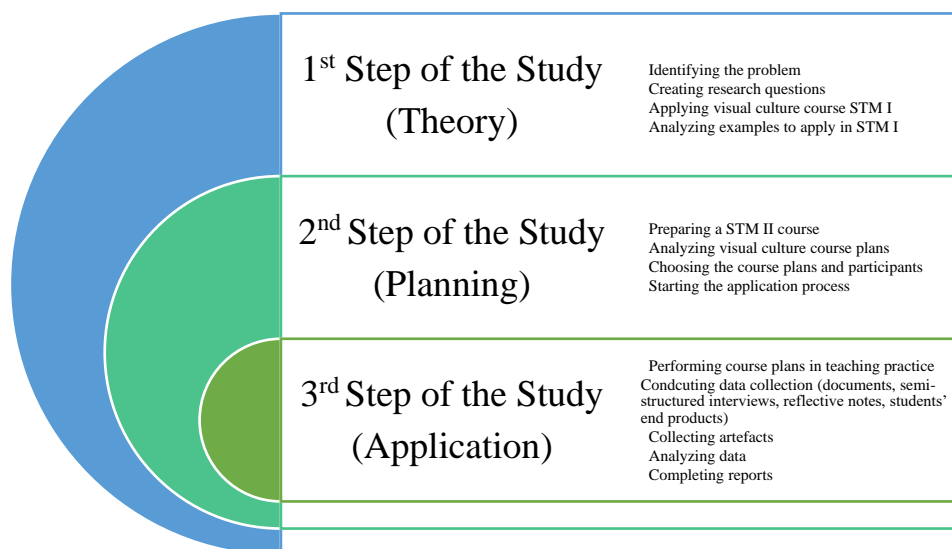*Practitioner Inquiry*

This research was conducted using practitioner inquiry. "As practitioner inquiry is now established as a widely-recognized research tradition and flourishing movement for educational change, we might consider ways that practitioner inquiry could be conceptualized and executed to broaden implementation, deepen understanding, and sustain inquiry within teacher education" (Bertling, 2020, p.1). Practitioner inquiry is a kind of conceptual umbrella used to summarize a number of differing forms of practitioner-based study of teaching, teacher education, and related issues (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2004). Practitioner inquiry or practitioner research are overarching concepts that unite the different epistemologies and traditions underlying participatory action research, teacher research, self-study, the scholarship of teaching, and using teaching as a context for research. Practitioner inquiry is a form of professional learning defined as the systematic, intentional study by educators of their own practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). With practitioner inquiry, practitioners take on the role of researcher from an insider's perspective and pose problems that emerge from their local contexts. Practitioners are assumed to have significant knowledge about the particular educational contexts in which they work. They use multiple sources of data to document their classroom practice and student learning, which often takes the form of those used in qualitative research, such as interviews, observations, and artefacts (Anderson & Herr, 2009; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). "The purpose of the practitioner inquiry is stated as 'to improve an application, to improve the understanding of the application by its practitioners and to improve the situation in which the practice takes place" (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 165). Because it is integrally embedded in the everyday practices of practitioners; such as pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, teacher educators, and administrators; and situated in their daily teaching environments; practitioner inquiry can become an inherent component of practice, allowing practitioners to understand and improve their practice systematically (Bertling, 2019). Based on the literature, the practitioner inquiry defined questioning as a process to support in-service and pre-service teachers' professional development practices by systematically examining them (Jacobs, et al., 2015). Therefore, this present research examined how pre-service visual arts teachers plan a visual culture course STM to teach visual arts, how they apply a visual culture course plan in pre-service teaching practice, what they learn from a visual culture course plan, their competence to teach professionally, what the students learn and achieve with a visual culture course plan, and how the students change with the practitioner's inquiry.

Practitioner Inquiry Steps

The first step of the research was to lecture the pre-service teachers, who were junior-level students in the department of art teaching, on the theoretical subjects in the STM course. During the application process, the researcher focused on teaching culture in the STM course in the 2017–2018 spring semester. The second step of the research was preparing and applying a course plan, and pre-service teachers gained experience by designing several course plans. A field expert assessed the course plan samples, and then five pre-service teachers were selected to apply these visual culture course plans that they designed for primary and secondary school during the 2018–2019 fall semester. The third step of the research involved the pre-service teachers applying the selected course plans to seventh- and eighth-grade students at the primary school level and 11th-grade students at the secondary school level. This process lasted 5 weeks in the spring semester.

During the implementation process of this research, the pre-service teachers applied their course plans for 2 weeks. This research process lasted 8 weeks in total. The researcher and a field expert (an art teacher) assessed the visual culture course plans created by the pre-service teachers and then provided feedback. The reviewed course plans were sent to the pre-service teachers on a regular basis every week for review. The pre-service teachers were given 5 weeks to design visual culture course plans in the STM course. They solved the problems they encountered during the design process before moving to the next step of visual culture activity. They encountered problems such as what to choose as a visual culture subject, what type of activity was appropriate for which educational level, and what type of questions they would ask the students to cover visual culture. They also encountered some problems during the planning of the course in defining outcomes for the students and choosing appropriate material for the methodology and timeframe of the course. Another problem was related to preparing the material for the visual culture activity including identifying the students' readiness level, finding interesting material, providing the material, and using it efficiently in the classroom.

The steps, course contents, and activities the researcher observed in the practitioner inquiry during the STM course research are outlined in Figure 1.

1st Step of the Study (Theory)	Identifying the problem Creating research questions Applying visual culture course STM I Analyzing examples to apply in STM I
2nd Step of the Study (Planning)	Preparing a STM II course Analyzing visual culture course plans Choosing the course plans and participants Starting the application process
3rd Step of the Study (Application)	Performing course plans in teaching practice Condcuting data collection (documents, semi-structured interviews, reflective notes, students' end products) Collecting artefacts Analyzing data Completing reports

Figure 1: Practitioner Inquiry Steps

Participants

There were two different types of participants of this research: 30 pre-service arts teachers who took the STM course during the second semester of their third grade and five pre-service teachers who were in the fourth grade and were selected through criterion sampling. During the research, each of the pre-service teachers prepared and conducted the STM course individually. The researcher assessed all of the prepared course plans, and the plans of five pre-service teachers were selected based on predefined criteria. The criteria for the STM course and application skills included lecturing, communication skills, backgrounds, course planning, teaching process management, classroom management, assessment process, and professional qualifications. MNE initially determined these criteria to assess the teaching practices of pre-service teachers. To understand the efficiency of teaching the STM course and the application of visual culture course curriculum, the researcher graded the teachers as

competent, moderately competent, or incompetent in relation to these criteria. With the help of these criteria, pre-service teachers who prepared the most appropriate course plans with steps, included visual culture elements, and prepared course activities around visual culture were selected. After the researcher graded the competency of the teachers according to these criteria, pre-service teachers who were thought to be competent enough were requested to participate in the research voluntarily. They were provided with a voluntary participation form to grant their approval of their participation. The participants were given code names based on their names, while the participant students' names were coded as SO1 (i.e., Student Opinion 1).

Researcher's Role

The researcher conducted research on visual culture and visual culture education, which is one of the researcher's fields of expertise (Çığır, 2016; Güler & Bedir Erişti 2019; Güler, 2020a; Güler, 2020b). The researcher applied the research and collected data by planning the visual culture STM course. In this research, visual culture applications were employed to enhance and improve the STM course, and pre-service teachers were asked to experience teaching visual culture with the help of course plans and pre-service practices.

Data Collection Tools

Semi-structured interviews, document review, and reflective notes were used as data collection methods in this research. Semi-structured interviews and documents constituted the main data sources for the research.

Once the application phase was over, the researcher asked the pre-service teachers 12 questions during the semi-structured interviews. A field expert checked the interview questions. The researcher prepared the questions according to the purpose of this research. The researcher had a face-to-face interview with each pre-service teacher for approximately 15 minutes. The interviews were recorded with a voice recorder.

In the document review process, the researcher reviewed the samples of visual culture course plans and the presentations of pre-service teachers. While selecting the five visual culture course plans, the researcher used the course plans and the presentations for the STM course as criteria. In addition to these, visual culture materials that were used during the application phase and the products created by the students after the application phase were considered as documents.

The pre-service teachers used the reflective notes to express their experiences after their practical training. These notes were a minimum of two pages in length and covered 2 weeks of course duration.

Data Collection Process

In the data collection process, the data were collected during the STM course and within the scope and duration of the course plans that the pre-service teachers followed during their teaching applications in pre-service education. Table 1 shows the topics that the pre-service teachers discussed in the STM course. Table 3 shows the stages of the course plan they prepared within the framework of the visual arts education program. Figure 2 illustrates pre-service teachers' visual culture course plan contents and application period.

- **Global issues (population increase, consumption, urbanization, industrialization)**
- **Fashion**
- **Culture and fashion**
- **Child abuse and painting**
- **Technology addiction**
- **Analyzing local visuals**
- **Traditional Turkish handicrafts**
- **Visual culture and architecture, historical ruins**
- **Consumption and culture**

Table 1: The subjects addressed by pre-service teachers in visual culture course plan samples

During the first semester of the third grade, 30 pre-service arts teachers were provided with theoretical information about the STM course, and during the second semester of the course they discussed the visual culture subjects listed in Table 2 within the same framework. The pre-service teachers prepared their course plans based on three fields in the MNE (2018a, 2018b), namely "Visual Communication and Forming," "Cultural Heritage," and "Art Criticism and Aesthetics." They planned the subjects within the STM course concept. They followed these steps to plan the course: course, subject, grade, timeframe, learning domain, outcomes, art techniques, teaching methods, course preparation, teacher preparation, student preparation, motivations, information sharing, application, and assessment.

Data Analysis

The method of analysis used for this research is descriptive. Descriptive analysis is a type of qualitative data analysis that includes summarizing and interpreting the obtained data using various data collection techniques based on the predetermined themes. For this research, the analysis was conducted in four stages. In the first stage, the researcher created a code list considering the theoretical framework. The data were then analyzed in accordance with the relevant literature and the purpose of this research. The data were arranged to form code categories and themes by examining the research questions and the data collected through semi-structured interviews, reflective notes, and document review. Afterward, a draft of coding was created. The researcher and a field expert (an arts teacher) read and encoded the data independently. Later on, these codes were compared, and common codes identified. Research themes were developed based on the common codes. Thus, valuable data were obtained from the draft codes, and the interview coding key was created. To determine the reliability of the codes in this interview coding key, the researcher and field expert coded the transcripts of the interviews of pre-service teachers. "To measure the reliability of the research, the interview coding consistency of the researcher and the field expert for each interview was compared with the Reliability = Consensus / Consensus + Disagreement x 100 formula, and the reliability of the research was calculated as 90%. Findings were interpreted with direct quotations on the determined themes" (Miles & Huberman, 2015, p. 64). After coding, sub-themes were defined, and then the main themes were formed. The main themes helped to create a general understanding and were shown in a table to make the patterns more visible for the samples of visual course plans in the STM course, and the direct statements of the participants were included.

Research Validity and Reliability

Data diversity ensured the internal validity and reliability of this research. Semi-structured interviews, document review, reflective notes, and observation were used to create data diversity. The long duration of the research and the researcher being personally in the field conducting all of the observations were important for the reliability of the research.

Another level of reliability of the research was ensured by the experience of the researcher, who had prior experience in conducting participatory action research during her graduate education.

For the research, the codes were confirmed by a field expert who supervised the data. This process is explained in the data analysis (Gürgür, 2016, p. 43-46).

Samples of Visual Culture Course Plans of Visual Arts Pre-Service Teachers

Visual Culture and Traditional Clothes	Visual Culture and Racism	Environment and Art	Consumption and Art	The Image of the Child in Society
7th grade 2nd week practice	8th grade 2nd week practice	11th grade 2nd week practice	8th grade 2nd week practice	8th grade 2nd week practice
Collage as a technique	Collage and suprematism	Puzzle game collage	Puzzle game Collage and crayon	Collage and suprematism

Figure 2: Samples of visual culture course plans of visual arts pre-service teachers

Figure 2 shows the chosen visual culture subjects in course plans of pre-service teachers. In the assessment stage, they took several factors into account, such as the applicability of the visual culture subject; the preparation of the materials according to the students' readiness level; the duration of the application; the appropriate questions for the application process; the appropriate methods, techniques, tools, and equipment; and the assessment of the end products. First, each pre-service teacher found relevant visuals on the internet and then presented these to the students in the classroom. The students were requested to comment on these visuals. To help students understand, analyze, and interpret the visuals, the pre-service teachers individually asked students several questions such as "What do you see in this image? Does it remind you of anything?" The pre-service teachers then let the students choose any visual they had provided to create their own artistic work. In general, however, the collage technique was applied because of the time limits of the course. Pre-service teachers motivated primary and secondary school students to take a critical approach during their creation. They asked visual literacy-related questions about the visuals and images the students saw.

Findings and Comments

Based on the obtained data, three different themes were identified: "The Process of Planning A Visual Culture Course Plan Activity," "STM as a Visual Culture Course," and "Teaching Experience." These themes and relevant categories and codes can be observed in Table 2. The application of the research, findings, and discussions can be found here on this section. In this section, the end products and opinions of the primary and secondary school students are discussed.

The Process of Planning a Visual Culture Course Activity	STM as a Visual Culture Course	Teaching Experience

Planning the activity
Completing the activity
	Visual Culture
	    Visual culture as a concept
	    Choosing a visual culture subject
	Preparing a visual culture course plan
	    Managing a classroom
	    Course length
	    Attracting students' attention
	    Encountered problems
	    Differences between theory and practice
	    Reflections of STM course
	Outcomes of teaching through visual culture
	    Raising awareness
	    Different perspectives
	    Active individuals
		Practical training
		    Teaching experience
		    Collaborative interaction

Table 2: Process of planning a visual culture course plan activity in the special teaching methods course

Findings about the Theme "The Process of Planning a Visual Culture Course Plan Activity"

This section includes findings and discussions related to several questions. The first question was "How do the pre-service visual arts teachers experience the process of creating a visual culture course plan, and what was the process like" The second question was "How do STM courses affect the procedure of the pre-service visual art teacher's creating and applying visual culture course content in their practicum?" The fourth one was "How do the applications of this visual culture course plan affects the learning products of primary and secondary school students The course plan samples of five pre-service teachers are presented separately, and the findings are presented in such a way as to follow a meaningful pattern with each other.

The First Course Plan Sample – Visual Culture and Traditional Clothes

Visual 1: Seventh-Grade Students' Visual Culture Artistic Works Depicting Traditional Clothes

Regarding "Planning the Activity," which is a category under the theme "The Process of Planning a Visual Culture Course Activity," one of the pre-service teachers, Hilal, expressed her feelings as follows:

> *I have realized that when I was planning my first course plan, I had no idea what I was doing even though I thought I knew. I have had hard times planning my first [referring to the course plan that she prepared in STM course]. It was easy to prepare the activity plan, and I paid attention to outcomes of the MNE…Therefore, the activity process and outcomes went well.*

This pre-service teacher referred to her experiences in the process of planning a course in the STM course during her practical training as difficult; however, she had no difficulty conducting the activity.

Hilal chose fashion as a visual culture subject. She planned a 2-week course for the seventh-grade students. She provided students with a ready-made template to make collages. The pre-service teacher conducted the course wearing Erzincan's traditional clothes to attract the students' attention. She started the visual culture course by explaining her traditional clothes. She explained the pieces she wore by showing her kerchief, chemise (a caftan-like red or green costume), frock, salwar, folkloric dress, wool socks, and shoes as a part of women's traditional clothes. Men's traditional Erzincan clothes include slippers, shirts, vests, woolen cloths (*aba*), salwars (*şalvar*), socks, flat-heeled shoes (*yemeni*), boots (*edik*), and belly bands. She explained all of these details and then skipped introducing the traditional clothes of the seven regions of Turkey by providing visuals she found online. She also tried to create an interaction with students by asking questions including the following:

1. How do local clothes affect our lives?
2. Why do you think traditional clothes are important?
3. What do you think about the origin of clothing?

The students answered that clothing was invented for protection from natural conditions, local dress is a part of regional clothes, and clothes are important because they cover body parts. At the end of the course, the pre-service teacher asked students to explain their designs and whether they were inspired by anything during the process. Some of the students claimed to be inspired by the clothes their grandparents wore in the past, others by the teacher coming to class wearing traditional clothes, others by the Korean series they watched on TV, and others by dance costumes, the clothes they wear to celebrate National Sovereignty and Children's Day in Turkey on April 23, or the desire to design clothes in the Ottoman Empire style.

Based on these findings, the pre-service teachers followed the visual arts curriculum of the MNE (2018a) during the course plan creation process. In pre-service teaching, it is important to follow the MNE (2018b) when creating a course plan. Hilal helped students understand the cultural values such as traditional clothes, folk dances by drawing attention to the objects of traditional culture as a visual culture subject. It is also noteworthy that the pre-service teacher went to class wearing traditional clothes. It is apparent that the students were impressed by the movies they saw and the visuals they encountered. Their artworks reveal that they were inspired by clothes from different geographical regions of Turkey. It is also important to note the impact of mass media on students' perception. To create the Ottoman Empire style, the students designed the woman figure as more ostentatious and the male figure as more simple and added the accessories and hats of that period.

The Second Course Plan Sample –Visual Culture and Racism

Visual 2: Visual regarding the concept of racism distributed in the classroom by the pre-service teacher Esra

Esra, a visual arts pre-service teacher, focused on the concepts of racism and multiculturalism as a subject of a visual culture course. She introduced the concept of collage through the visuals distributed to the eighth-grade students. Esra intended to give the students an idea about the activity with the visuals related to racism by distributing those visuals. Regarding the first question of this research – "How was the pre-service teachers' experience in the process of creating a visual culture course plan, and how was the process?" – Esra mentioned the following in her reflective notes in the "Planning the Activity" category concerning the theme of "The Process of Planning a Visual Culture Course Activity":

I prepared the course plan considering the grade level and the readiness of the students to the subject. As a pre-service teacher, I transformed the factual, conceptual, and functional information that I learned in theoretical classes into an abstract model based on their own meanings. While preparing this, I aimed for the students to learn and understand the subject better … I focused on racism as a visual culture subject in the course plan. I completed the plan by doing the required research … I divided the students into groups based on the activity. I tried to create a discussion environment. Once the activity was over, I realized what different and creative ideas the students had.

Esra used the visuals she showed before starting her activity in the classroom and her questions related to these images to attract the students' attention. Esra asked the students the following questions during the activity preparation:

1.   What do you see in these?

2.   How do the people on these visuals look?

3.   What attracts your attention the most in these visuals?

Some of the students' answers are as follows:

●   "I see people with different skin colors in the images, but rather than racism, they communicate with each other as if they are related" (SO1).
●   "I see expressions of love and happiness on people's faces, smiling faces, and pure, clean expressions in a warm environment" (SO2).
●   "Even though it may seem like racism at first glance, the people actually look hand in hand enjoying unity and happiness; this attracts my attention" (SO3).

According to these findings, the pre-service teachers touched on social issues beginning with students' private lives, and they did so with a critical approach. With this course plan, students developed an understanding of issues such as multiculturalism, racism, justice, power, and established moral connections. These findings are supported by the research results of Yim (2012) and Tavin (2003). Yim (2012) attempted to envision a visual culture curriculum to question the humanitarian education model in terms of prejudices and discriminatory attitudes that hinder democracy and social justice. As a result, it was seen that students learn to see subjects such as social justice, war, and peace from other people's perspectives and establish more connections with their own personal lives. Tavin (2003)

helped students establish intertextual connections between their visuals, imaginations, and private and public lives with the study of visual culture. Visual culture and critical pedagogy have changed the postmodern world, and with their impact, the primary school students could understand the real structure and themselves and became more self-aware. Visual culture and critical pedagogy helped the students understand the distributed power relations, the basis and tool seen as resistance and struggle in visual culture in a better way.

Some examples of students' artistic works on racism are as follows:
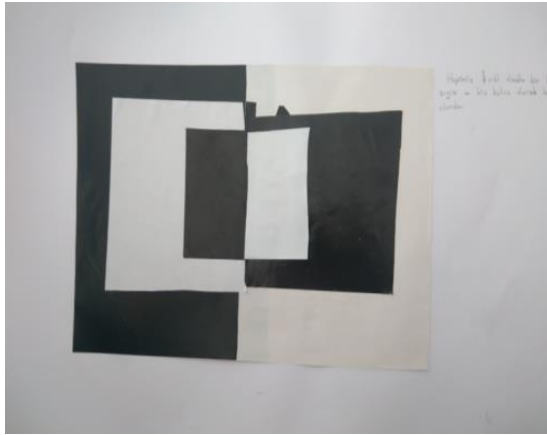
Visual 3: Student's collage
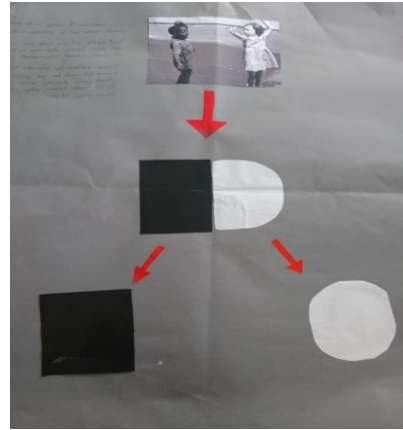
Visual 4: Student's collage

"I thought of black- and white-skinned people as friends being a part of a whole different unity. I think the black part completes the white, and the white completes the black part" (SO4; see Visual 3).

"In the first picture, there are people living without racism, and they are really happy because they are just children and not aware of racism. In the second one (black rectangle and white circle), I explained how people slowly recognize their races and transform into different colors. In the third picture, the arrows detached from each other to push themselves in different directions and separate their paths. Here we see the beginning of racism" (SO5; see Visual 4).
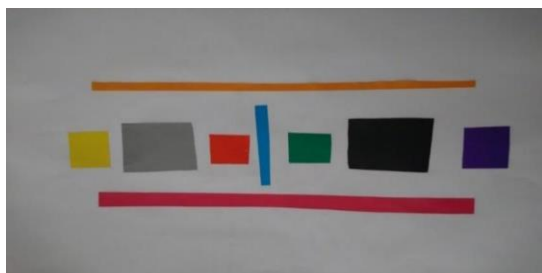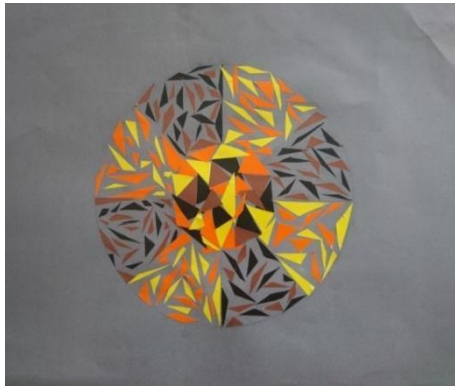

Visual 5: Student's collage

Visual 6: Student's collage

"I used different colored squares to represent different races. When we hold the paper vertically, we see that the purple square is superior, and when we do the opposite, we see the yellow square coming on top and being superior. Everyone thinks themselves as superior in one way, but when we hold the squares as seen above, we actually see that no one is superior to anyone, but equal" (SO6; see Visual 5).

"In this work, I used different flags of countries. My aim was to say no country is superior to any other. No matter how different our flag is, even a small color resemblance indicates the integrity of each other. Countries can integrate with one color. Countries can

actually integrate with one color no matter how distant and foreign they are from each other" (SO7; see Visual 6).

Visual 7: Student's collage

Visual 8: Student's collage

"If we think of this circle as the world, the triangle pieces represent different countries. The countries are in small pieces, but in time they become one as big triangles to show big continents and societies of unity" (SO8; see Visual 7).

"Brown circle, square, and rectangular shapes and blue, red, and orange shapes are people hating each other. The long yellow stripe is the way of salvation and happiness, but since they are not alike and racist, they cannot take this path and reach enlightened ideas and the future" (SO9; see Visual 8).

Based on these findings, the pre-service teachers stated that students were highly influenced by media tools and that a visual culture course concretized students' abstract thoughts. These findings are supported by Çığır's (2016) research findings. It appears that a visual culture course provides students with sensitivity to subjects they have not noticed before, and students can express abstract concepts by concretizing them in a visual culture course. Additionally, pre-service teachers observed that in a visual culture course students were affected by media and communication tools.

The Third Course Plan – Environment and Art

**Visual 9: Course material prepared by the pre-service teacher for the subject of visual culture**

For the "Choosing the Visual Culture Subject" code, Pinar stated, "The activity I prepared is a subject on environment and art. I interpreted the works of the artists in order to make sense of the concepts of environment and art to the students. The purpose of my choice was to show that the materials thrown in the environment could be used to make art, to make

art practices by using recycling, to support students to make original artworks by using their creativity to prevent pollution, and to help them develop a wider perspective around this topic because people do not use trash bins but throw their waste simply anywhere in the environment. In a society, when we talk about art people immediately think of canvas and brush, but if they could have a broader perspective, they would see that waste materials could be utilized to make art."

Visual 10. Play cards prepared by a pre-service teacher

Pinar explained how she applied the visual culture activity as follows: "First, I talked about the subject of the activity and its outcomes. I explained visual culture to 11th-grade students. I prepared materials to attract students' attention. These materials were play cards. I requested them to match the artists who make art by utilizing waste materials with their visuals; then I flipped the cards. I enhanced my activity with drawings and visuals. I brought some printouts from social media for the activity. Later on, I asked them to interpret the artworks. I distributed worksheets to be used for the interpretations in the class. We played games with these cards by using the question–answer method. We talked about the work and the artist. I asked students to design based on these … The works of students were exhibited in the classroom, and we evaluated them."
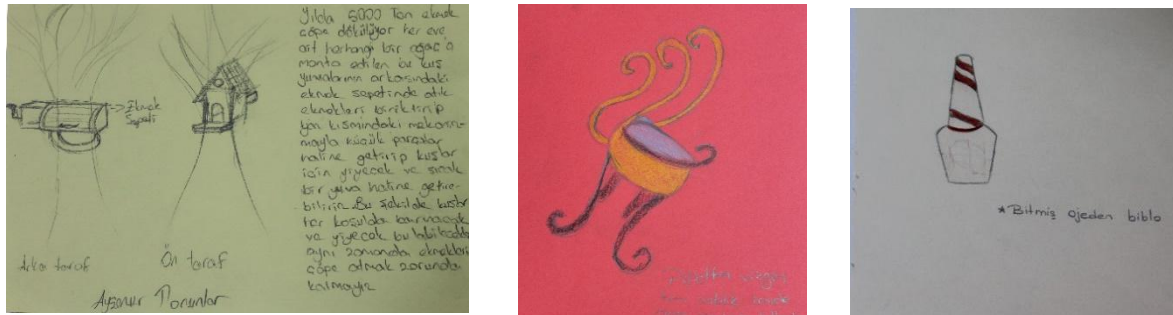
Visual 11: Students' drawings

Pinar's intent as one of the pre-service teachers was to make artistic works out of waste materials. She helped students utilize waste materials by using their creativity and aimed to raise awareness about the subject. The pre-service teacher started the activity with a game called "find the match" to attract students' awareness and then requested them to make a work of art utilizing waste materials. Students designed new works using mostly plastic bottles, caps, and kitchen utensils as waste materials.

Based on these findings, environmental problems are another subject of visual culture addressed by pre-service teachers. After drawing attention to environmental problems with play cards, the pre-service teacher stated that the students became more conscious of this

problem through visual culture and arts. Dilli's (2013) study supports this finding. In that study in which the representations of the social subjects in media and popular culture were questioned, primary school students were more conscious of the environment and nature and developed a critical perspective about what is going on around them as a result of the activities related to visual culture theory.

The Fourth Course Plan – Consumption and Art

Visual 12: Visuals about consumption the pre-service teacher brought to the classroom

In this activity, pre-service teacher Ebru chose 15 images about consumption from the internet and brought them to the classroom. She made the students watch a short film on the subject and then asked questions about the images she brought to the class and the things they saw in the movie.

Visual 13: Puzzles made by students

Ebru explained how she planned and performed the visual culture activity as follows: "I created my visual culture course plan based on the works I did in my third grade in university. Then I identified the outcomes relevant to the students' level and aimed to achieve them through a visual culture course activity. My main purpose in addressing consumption in visual culture education was to make students think about this issue, to raise their awareness, to guide them to consume less, and to remind once again where today's world is going … I engaged them in the process with a puzzle activity. I tried to make them wonder about the result when they were trying to finish the puzzle. I divided them into two groups and asked them to examine the two pictures. In the first activity, they thought about the subject, and in the second one, they evaluated their own thoughts and perspectives verbally and in writing. I created an activity process to understand what kind of perspective they had at the end of the process." She explained that she created the activity plan in the STM course for her third grade as well as her reasons for choosing this subject specifically.

Visual 14. Student's drawing

Visual 15. Student's drawing

Ebru said the following about the students' work:

"In this drawing, the student was inspired by an old photograph of the Earth and the environment. The student tried to explain that today's Earth is nothing like it was before. Taking it as yesterday and today, the student divided the world into two and expressed his/her ideas. S/he said that s/he tried to reflect the Earth by observing it" (see Visual 14).

"In this drawing, the student depicted a person who would like to have a world without air and water pollution but is facing the reality of unplanned urbanization in his dream. Even if it's a dream, the divided part indicates the environment that the person wants and prefers to live in. The student said that s/he did not want such a planet and would try to keep the environment clean" (see Visual 15).

Visual 16: Student's drawing

Visual 17: Student's drawing

"With this drawing, the student tried to show a waiter serving the Earth to people and that people could eat it quite easily. In fact, s/he tried to explain that we are defeated by our own wishes and desires. S/he emphasized that we consume everything without thinking about the consequences. While drawing, the student tried to show how easily the Earth was destroyed" (see Visual 16).

"The student drew a shopping mall, and this shopping mall had only the most known brands. The figures seen below represent the people going to the mall, but for the students they look like graves. The student said that the people who are so blinded by these brands are getting old and dying without realizing how fast the time flies" (see Visual 17).

These findings indicate that the pre-service teachers enabled students to question the social issues they dealt with in a visual culture course activity by drawing. By enabling students to create meaning patterns in the classroom (by creating a discussion environment), the teachers helped students reflect their thoughts through their artistic works with a critical perspective (see Visuals 15–17). With their visuals exhibited in the classroom, the students created new meanings by visualizing environmental problems, unplanned urbanization, and consumerism – in short, global issues. They had the opportunity to express their thoughts on

these issues as well. Students created their works by using contrasts (such as clean–dirty and fantasy–real) and humor (see Visuals 16 and 17). In this way, they were guided to show the transformation of their thoughts to their works. Additionally, in Dilli's (2013) research, multiple visual culture activities were applied with a teaching method around visual culture so that students could develop their practical skills and meaningful works. The research indicates that the students questioned the meanings of the visuals and put the new meanings on the works they created and developed.

The Fifth Course Plan – Society and the Child

Visual 18: The visuals of the theme "The Child" brought to the classroom

Elif, a pre-service teacher dealing with the subject of society and the child, brought visuals of children with different themes that she found on the internet to the classroom and presented them to eighth-grade students. She asked students to interpret these visuals (see Visual 18). About the sub-theme of "Visual culture subject," Elif stated, "I chose such a subject as a reaction to the situation of children who are still forced to work, marry, subjected to war and harassed at a young age. The purpose of the activity was to show what kind of rights children have. I aimed to show how much of an importance is given to these rights in society, to be aware of which rights of theirs (children) are taken away, and how this is different from one society to another. Education is the most important way to overcome these issues. As a result of this activity, the students learned about their rights, their roles in society, what kind of living conditions children have in different societies, and how traditions and customs differ from society to society."

Visual 19: Students' group work   **Visual 20: Students' group work**

Elif divided the eighth-grade students into groups of five and guided them to make a collage. The opinions of some students about this activity are as follows:

"With this collage, we wanted to show the marriage of young children to older people and its negative impact on these children. We wanted to explain that the time young children spend with their peers is more positive and healthier. The small yellow circles represent

children. The distributed yellow circles represent the ideal childhood with happy children playing games, going to school, and having fun. Big red circles on a black ground represent older individuals. Small yellow circles that are glued on them depict the emphasis on the inequality and lack of harmony between them. Circles in purple and red that are cut evenly on a blue background mean that the individuals get married and complement each other when the age of marriage comes" (SO10; see Visual 19).

Elif stated her opinions about the students' works as follows:

"The eighth-grade students divided this collage into two to emphasize that children do not have equal rights in society. They compared children who had good and bad lives. Those with a good life have a colorful world where they have fun and access to education, whereas the other part represents the bad lives and broken hopes of children who were subjected to violence. The black and green lines in the middle represent hope and despair" (see Visual 20).

Visual 21: Students' group work   **Visual 22: Students' group work**

"In this visual, the students focused on the children married at a young age. The broken small red circle represents the hopes, dreams, happiness, and joy of the children who got married at a young age, but this does not last long because children are pure enough to notice what is bad. These broken pieces represent some of their hopes and joys. These thoughts begin to fade from the biggest to the smallest piece. The black circle across shows the psychological pressures affecting the child. The child starts falling into this, and the hopes are disappearing" (see Visual 21).

"Focusing on the girls who were married at an early age, the students wanted to tell a story about the children's right to education, which is God given, being taken away, and they are forced to pursue a difficult life. They explained that a child who is retired into his/her shell will no longer live her/his childhood and fall apart in time, and even if the child grows up, s/he will always be disappointed about life" (see Visual 22). Through this visual culture activity, the students had an opportunity to express their thoughts about child brides in society and their personal opinions about their family life.

In summary, considering the issues addressed by pre-service teachers and students within the framework of visual culture course plans suggests that the students became more aware of social issues such as multiculturalism, child brides, the impact of consumption, environmental issues, and racism. Pre-service teachers enabled students to critically question the social issues they encounter daily. Additionally, the students adopted symbolic expression (see Visual 21), where the black circle represents psychological pressure and the red circle child brides) in their works. Thus, they expressed their thoughts with symbols and produced new meanings. These findings support those of Darts (2004). In Darts' research, the results

showed how engagement in social issues through art and visual culture can increase students' understanding and awareness of these issues. The researcher emphasized that students can become more aware of and responsible concerning social issues through art and visual culture. Sohn (2004) found that pre-service teachers interpreted contemporary artworks by using visual metaphors in an associative manner with abstract concepts. In Sohn's research indicates that visual culture studies improve the questioning skills of pre-service teachers and enable them to gain different perspectives, problematize, and make sense of visual culture experiences in their daily lives. Considering these results, visual culture studies are particularly effective in raising awareness and helping students become more conscious of social issues.

Findings About Teaching Experience

The opinions of the pre-service teachers related to the third research question "What are the pre-service visual arts teachers' experiences related to teaching practice with the prepared visual culture course plan? are outlined below.

For the "Teaching Experience" code, pre-service teacher Esra expressed her opinions as follows: "I had the opportunity to improve my proficiency in teaching by teaching in different classes at the practice school. I think what enhanced my professional skills was being able to understand the course plan in my own field, interpret the activities, and meet face to face with students to share knowledge. To assess myself, I can say that I have become more aware of my responsibilities in an official institution as a pre-service teacher … I think this experience has had a great impact in terms of consolidating my knowledge about the course plan and the concept of visual culture. I tried to teach the concepts, conduct a course, and to make sure about the purpose of the course, course plan, and the duration of the course consciously. Thanks to the things I learned in this course (STM I-II), I could realize my professional skills and my student-centered approach, that I am no different from a real teacher, and I could envision the environment I would love to teach in future." She highlighted that she could apply the information she learned in STM I-II and gained experience teaching.

For the "Teaching as a Profession" code, Ebru described teaching as a profession as a sacred duty. "There is a very dynamic youth that I work with, and therefore I also have to be dynamic. Teaching is a very sacred duty. My duty in this profession is to try to shine a light on each student and at least help them become individuals who have awareness. I want to prepare better studies not just on one subject but about the course and extracurricular activities and to raise individuals who have a positive impact on life. Everyone has been influenced by teachers in life. This is exactly how I would like to be an exemplary teacher model by progressing in my professional life … I consider the hearts that I could touch through my teaching on arts and life adventure as a nebula – an explosion of a star."

For the "Collaborative Interaction" code, pre-service teacher Ebru reflected that she conducted the course in collaboration with the supervising teacher in the practical training. "I had difficulties as it was my first teaching experience. I could conduct the course well; however, due to the lack of participation, I had difficulty completing the course in its given time. We did the activity together with the students in the classroom. My supervising teacher allowed me to take control of the whole classroom and supported me to be more comfortable."

These findings show that pre-service teachers expanded their knowledge and skills by planning and applying a visual culture course in STM. Pre-service teachers reinforced and experienced the knowledge and experience they acquired in STM I-II through a visual culture

course plan in teaching practice. These findings are supported by Yılmaz (2006), who states that the STM course constitutes the theoretical framework of the teaching practice. In Yılmaz's research indicates that the positive reflections of the STM I-II course were very effective in teaching practice and were beneficial in initial teaching experience.

Findings Concerning the Visual Culture Special Teaching Methods Course

This theme includes findings and comments related to the research questions "How do the pre-service visual arts teachers experience the process of creating a visual culture course plan, and what was the process like?"

Findings Regarding the Visual Culture Category

Related to the "Visual Culture" category under the theme of "Visual Culture STM Course," Hilal expressed her opinions as follows: "It got my attention that the students were very influenced by their environment and social networks during the application. One of the students was influenced by a movie and reflected this in her work. She was putting herself in the shoes of the movie character she had seen. She used phrases such as 'I can be like him and wear beautiful clothes like him.' The movie she watched was *Magnificent Century*, and she wanted to be like the lady who was one of the main actresses." The pre-service teacher emphasized the media as the students' top influencer. Through this activity, she observed that the students were highly influenced by the movies and series they watched (see Visual 1).

Regarding the "Visual Culture" category, Esra said, "The visual culture course focuses primarily on the individuals to help them express their emotions and thoughts through visuals. Visual art courses should not be limited to only reach aesthetics, but also the subjects and concepts should be expanded to cover the cultural, political and economic context … It is particularly important for the students to know themselves, recognize their cultural values, and express them through visuals. During a visual culture course, individuals can communicate with others in the classroom and interpret the visuals around them. Teaching a visual culture course can help students have a multicultural environment where students can consider cultural differences during their art education and throughout their professional lives, and in this way they can get to know different cultures." She explained with examples that a visual culture course can be more effective than a traditional art education.

Findings Regarding the Preparation of Visual Culture Course Plans

This section outlines the findings related to the second research question: "How do STM courses affect the procedure of the pre-service visual art teacher's creating and applying visual culture course content in their practicum?.

Related to the "Preparation of Visual Culture Course Plan" category under the "Visual Culture STM Course," pre-service teachers expressed their views on the duration of the courses. Pre-service teacher Ebru stated her opinions as follows: "The course plan that I prepared served its purpose accordingly, but I have had issues related to time when starting the second activity. Therefore, I asked them to finish this activity by continuing in class the next week. Actually, I had already thought of this activity process as 2 weeks in my course plan. It went exactly how I wanted and in line with the course plan." With this statement, she emphasized the insufficient time for application. The statements of the pre-service teachers

indicate that they have had problems regarding the duration of the course while conducting visual culture activities.

Related to the "Visual Culture STM Course," Esra said, "The activities that were created and written during the STM course in the classroom helped us to apply this activity. In particular, I learned about the preparations before the course itself: the plan, identifying the outcomes, the teacher's responsibility, how students should be treated, and how to proceed with an activity according to the students' readiness. All these things that I learned helped me to prepare a course plan, to have information about visual culture subjects and how to conduct, to make an activity. I planned the activity according to the techniques we learned in order to teach and acquire the knowledge, skills, and behaviors we gained in the STM course. The fact that we did the activities in the STM course both individually and in groups helped me to carry out mine effectively in a class environment." She stated that she was able to apply the knowledge she gained in the STM course and work effectively in the course.

Regarding the "Attracting Attention" code, Hilal expressed her opinions as follows: "I thought the students would love the local clothes. It happened just as I thought. In order to attract their attention, I went to the classroom wearing the local clothes of Erzincan. I conducted my course for two hours in these clothes. During the breaks, I provided information to the students about the clothes." In this way, she could attract their attention and achieve her purpose.

Related to the "Classroom Management" code, Ebru stated, "Since there were students from the painting department, my activity was pretty relevant. First, I explained the purpose of the activity to the students, but there were students who did not think of the activity positively. I struggled dominating the classroom." However, Elif claimed that she had less difficulty in classroom management: "I was happy to have solid, smooth and healthy relationships with the students despite this being my first experience. Classroom management was a collaboration between the class environment and students."

Related to the "Reflections of STM Course" code, Ebru specified that the STM course had positive impacts during the preparation and application of the course plan: "I was also happy that the course plan that I prepared last year was highly appreciated by the supervising teacher and taken as an example for him. I cannot say I was not fully inexperienced, because I was carrying a gem [plan] for the course. The STM course helped me a lot as everything began and ended with that plan. It enhanced my skills on how to prepare and apply a plan." Esra agreed with this, saying, "I was able to prepare a plan on visual culture, especially thanks to the information and activities I wrote about the STM course. During the preparation, I focused on the plans we prepared before in the course, the talks that happened in the course, our examination of different course plans, and the outcomes we identified during the STM course." That being said, it is evident that the pre-service teacher applied her prior knowledge in the STM course.

Pinar explained, "Visual culture helped me to make an activity using the methods and techniques I learned during the course. I chose the activity based on the behaviors and skills of the students. Later on, I used the methods within the scope of the information I gained about the course plan and its outcomes. During the activity, I planned my course gradually according to the readiness of the students … I created my course plan on visual culture. I used almost all of the information I learned before the activity in visual culture. I was able to apply the knowledge I gained in the STM course to conduct my course." Pinar thus claimed that her knowledge was consolidated in terms of being able to apply the theoretical knowledge she gained in the STM course.

Related to the "Difference Between Theory and Practice" code, Pinar expressed her opinions as follows: "The plan that I made was happening in the STM course in the classroom. Therefore, I was not doing much research on activities and materials … There

were differences between the visual culture course plan in special teaching and the course plan we made in practice, such as age, participation in the course, and the content of the course plan. I was able to transfer the real concepts of visual culture to the students in practice." This indicates that the visual culture was more meaningful to her when it was practiced.

These findings reveal that pre-service teachers gained a great deal of experience about the subjects covered in the STM course, the methods and techniques used, the outcomes, and how the activity materials were prepared and presented after the activity was completed. The pre-service teachers adhered to the visual arts course curriculum of the MNE (2018a) while preparing their visual culture course plans. These findings are supported by Dilmaç and Dilmaç's (2010) research, which revealed that the goals of teaching practice were achieved in terms of organizing, controlling, and communicating with students in the classroom and gaining experience in actively involving them in the teaching–learning process. Additionally, the application achieved its goals in terms of understanding the goals of the courses related to the years of education included in the study field, including the curriculum, study methods, textbooks, student files, notebooks, assessment, and evaluation.

Findings about the Learning Outcomes of Conducting a Visual Culture Course

This section outlines the findings related to the fifth research question: "What kind of outcomes do the visual culture course plan applications provide to the students with?"

Related to the "Making a Difference" code under the "outcomes of the visual culture course plan applications," Elif stated, "After the post-course presentations, some of the students said that there was no such thing in our country; thus, they felt very lucky, but unfortunately even if they are not aware, such things are still happening in many parts of our country … After the activity, I informed them about this topic." She stated that through visual culture activities the students gained new awareness of social issues.

For the "Critical Thinking" code, Ebru explained, "I tried to make them understand and make meaning out of what they see and develop a different perspective toward life and various messages in the environment. I also wanted to make them be aware of gender roles in society, plus it was my main goal for them to be able to think critically and learn to look from a critical point of view, because at the beginning of the course they did not have any specific ideas, but after this subject with the examples and activities I have seen their thoughts changing. At the end of the activity, the students saw that they could generate an idea and work on it. Therefore, it was very effective and sustainable to achieve this by supporting it with visual culture. I can say that the students have more sustainable outcomes with the visual culture activity."

Regarding the "Conscious Individual" code, Ebru reflected on her experience, stating, "The outcomes of the course were quite high and important for the students because I think students gained awareness of being conscious individuals while they were explaining their original works." She emphasized that the students became more conscious of social issues through visual culture activities about subjects of which they were not previously aware.

These findings demonstrate that with a course plan on visual culture, students became more conscious of the issues they experience daily, had increased awareness of social issues, learned to see issues from a different perspective, developed a critical perspective, and learned sustainable lessons. Bradshaw's (2013) research supports these findings, indicating that the use of visual culture in the secondary-level arts education curriculum helped students establish dialogue with each other, develop different perspectives, have empathy, think critically, and generate different solutions. There were similar findings in Türkkan's (2008)

study, which demonstrated that primary school students expressed themselves more easily through visual culture studies and developed critical thinking skills by questioning the connection between what they see and the reality behind it. Considering the outcomes of the visual culture course and its applications, visual culture teaching is necessary and important.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this research show that both pre-service teachers and students acquired significant gains and experiences in many aspects through a visual-culture-based course plan. The result of this study provides a promising picture for future applications.

This research reveals that the pre-service teachers focused on designing a multicultural classroom environment, introducing cultural components, and understanding and interpreting visuals in visual culture STM course plans. Congruent with the findings of other studies (Darts, 2004; Sohn, 2004; Tavin, 2003), the pre-service teachers stated that the students became more conscious about social issues and raised awareness through visual culture activities. The present research indicates that the visual culture subjects and activities that the visual arts pre-service teachers dealt with helped primary and secondary school students develop a critical perspective and appeared to be an important gain for the students. The finding that the inclusion of visual culture studies in arts education at primary-secondary and undergraduate levels allows for developing a critical perspective is highlighted by other studies as well (Bradshaw, 2013; Türkkan, 2008). This research determines that primary school students can question the issues they encounter daily, express themselves, and improve their inquiry skills. Further, it ascertains that the students are influenced by media devices and popular culture in their visual culture works. They reflected and reported this in their visual content (such as TV, TV series and movies) they chose for activities. Given that visual culture studies include a variety of visual content such as media content, advertisements, videos, movies, series and popular culture productions, it is plausible that our daily life activities are built on them. This is further supported by Tavin and Hausman (2004) and Mitchell (2002). Tavin and Hausman (2004) claim that visual culture largely depends on media productions, and art education should be considered and addressed with media productions. Mitchell (2002) discusses that visual culture interprets and analyzes media values; therefore, the practice of visual culture examines the relationship between the viewer and the visual comes as a screen culture. Indeed, the pre-service teachers, who performed a visual-culture-based course plan at a primary and secondary level in this research, stated that they were highly affected by the environment and social networks surrounding them (Çığır, 2016). Furthermore, the students reported that they created their art works under the influence of the messages spread by TV and media tools. According to Duncum (2003), for the individuals bombarded with visuals in this information and media age, visual culture serves as a teaching tool to analyze and interpret this visual stimuli. The students in this research were able to interpret the visual stimuli they encountered as an active audience and make visual inquiries based on their interpretations. For example, they expressed the issue of child brides, which they learnt about through news and other sources, using concrete images and visually criticized this social issue. Another student made visual inquiries by including the popular culture objects (such as McDonalds, Coca Cola, Burger and KFC) to his/her work and adding the expression RIP, which s/he saw on social media. The power of the media in visual culture studies is an undeniable reality in this sense. In the relevant literature, scholars place a strong emphasis on a critical perspective in order to understand and question new technologies, media, social media, popular culture and the visual culture created by consumption culture (Bedir Erişti, 2020; Duncum, 2002; Freedman, 2003), and argued that

gaining this skill appears to be a major goal of visual culture education (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005, as cited in Mamur, 2020).

In this present research, pre-service teachers realized and experienced the importance of a visual culture course in today's art education with the course plan samples in which they prepared and applied a subject of visual culture in the STM I course. In their course plans, the pre-service teachers critically addressed the issues of contemporary art education such as cultural values, racism, social justice (e.g., education, religion, culture, gender, children's rights), multiculturalism, consumption, and environmental issues. Likewise, Çığır's (2016) visual culture study focusing on social networks reveals that high school students generally have an interest in social issues such as violence, violence against women, consumption, animal rights, social justice (e.g., language, religion, gender), and multiculturalism as visual culture subjects (Darts, 2004; Dilli, 2013; Türkkan, 2008) whilst undergraduate level students tended to deal with social issues such as war, peace and social justice (Yim, 2012). Based on these findings, it appears that in visual culture studies students form visual culture subjects based on their own life experiences and interpret them critically in terms of economic, social, and cultural aspects. Additionally, in terms of developing critical thinking skills, practitioner inquiry in education also improve teachers and students' critical thinking skills, help them approach education issues critically, provide democratic reform in education, and encourage the students to think about current education methods (Johnston, et al., 2020; Jo, 2017; Jacobs, et al., 2015). This study showed that inquiry on visual culture practices improved the critical thinking skills of both the pre-service teachers and students, that the pre-service teachers aimed to change and transform art education with the subjects they addressed in the classroom and that the subjects questioned by the students as a result of this change and transformation shaped their final art works.

Rogoff (1998) claims that visual culture opens an entire world of intertextuality in which images, sounds, and spatial delineations are read on and through one another, reaching ever-accruing layers of meaning. The visuals (such as art forms, media images, news, representations, etc.) the pre-service teachers presented in the classroom in their visual culture course plans helped primary and secondary school students develop a new perspective they did not previously have. The students concretized their thoughts by creating symbolic meanings and reflected implicit messages on their artworks. On the other hand, the students could question the visual culture materials the pre-service teachers brought to the classroom and still perceive the messages the materials were supposed to communicate. This finding is congruent with the results of Fındıkçı (2015). In this study, visual culture practices caused a change in the visual perceptions of the students toward the society they live in and the culture and changed the concepts they produce. Thus, the students could become more conscious towards the visuals in their surroundings, perceive the intended messages (i.e., connotations), as well as analyze and criticize the visuals better, and read visually. In this study, the pre-service teachers emphasized that visual culture should not be limited to a visual arts course and that its subjects and scopes should be expanded within the cultural, political, and economic context. They also mentioned that visual culture studies in particular are crucial in terms of students' recognition and knowledge of their identity and cultural values and reflecting these on the images. In a visual-culture-based course, the individuals reported that they can communicate both in the classroom and with others, interpret and make sense of the images surrounding them, and acquire multiple literacy based on visual culture, which is in line the findings of other studies (Bedir Erişti, 2020; Bülbül, 2011; Güler, 2020a; Güler, 2020b). Similarly, Freedman (2003) claims that "visual culture studies are essential for students to understand the world they live in."

In this research, the pre-service teachers realized that the outcomes offered by a course plan based on visual culture to students (e.g., communication, self-expression,

different perspectives, and awareness) are critical and that they are responsible for achieving these outcomes. This finding supports the conclusions of Mamur (2012) emphasizing the crucial role of teachers in visual art education. In this study, pre-service teachers stated that their students developed different perspectives and gained intellectual awareness. As Özsoy and Alakuş (2017) argue, to achieve the change and transformation of students in the visual culture-based curriculum in art education, first teachers need to change and transform themselves.

Based on the findings of this research, the students appear to generate creative ideas, increase their awareness of their environment and social issues, and become competent to think critically, following the visual culture activities. It is reported that visual culture activities encourage creativity and support creating new meanings (Freedman, 2003; Hermann, 2005). This research concludes that pre-service teachers had difficulties managing the classroom during their experiences of the teaching profession in visual culture courses. They also became aware of their professional competencies and deficiencies during this process. They mentioned that they had the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge gained in the STM I course in their visual culture course plan and activity. They also stated that they prepared the course plans, including duration of the course, time, materials to be used, teaching methods and techniques appropriate to the subject, learning outcomes, course conduction, and assessment, as in the samples of the course plan they prepared in STM I-II courses. Moreover, they mentioned writing their visual culture outcomes in line with MNE. The pre-service teachers emphasized a student-centered education understanding, its importance in visual culture studies, and how it ensures the students' active participation during the course. In visual culture activities, pre-service teachers used the large–small group discussion method to examine the subject in depth, and they included peer assessment for the assessment of the artistic works. This experience in pre-service teaching practice helped them understand the importance of the teaching profession and have a vision for their future teaching environment. Similar studies support the idea of the pre-service teaching practice providing pre-service teachers experience and making them aware of their own competencies and deficiencies (Dilmaç & Dilmaç, 2010; Yılmaz, 2006).

This research indicates that the pre-service teachers cooperated effectively with their mentor and the supervisor in the teaching practice. They used the theoretical knowledge they gained in the STM course in the course plan applications. In their teaching experience during the teaching practice, they realized how crucial a well-planned course plan is. In addition, a visual culture course experience helped them understand the importance of visual culture in visual arts education through the application. Likewise, in Goble's (2013) study with art teachers, the teachers interpreted visual culture through their own experiences from teaching practices and designed their art classrooms and art education curricula accordingly. In this current research, the pre-service teachers grasped the importance of a visual culture course plan in pre-service practice. They experienced the teaching of visual culture with a course plan they applied at the primary and secondary school levels and had forward-looking ideas. Kuru (2009) considers the pre-service teaching practice in visual culture important for pre-service teachers whilst Bradshaw (2013) calls it an effective method for teachers to think critically about visual culture in the classroom, offer different solutions, and render information permanent. It is further stated that it is necessary for visual arts teacher to gain experience in visual culture and apply it in the classroom (Goble, 2013; Güler, 2020a; Mamur, 2012) and that further pre-service and in-service trainings are required to teach new approaches of arts education such as visual culture theory. Bertling (2017, 2020) emphasize the need to include pre-service teachers in art-focused research and to perform further studies on the training of pre-service teachers.

In this research, the practitioner inquiry and pre-service teaching practice affected pre-service teachers' mindset regarding visual culture teaching. The practitioner research encouraged them to develop their identity as a teacher and their future role in this as a profession. These results are supported by Levin and Rock's (2003) research since they also claim that the practitioner inquiry motivates pre-service teachers to think about the teaching profession. It has been observed that the practitioner inquiry makes it easier for them to learn about the teaching profession (Butler & Schnellert, 2012; Rinke & Stebick, 2013; Wallace, 2013). The pre-service teachers in this study indicated that there was increase in their knowledge about the teaching profession such as following the course, managing the classroom, and preparing the plan. Likewise, other studies reveal that pre-service teachers focused on social injustice and diversity issues as subjects in the classroom by using practitioner inquiry (Athanases, et al., 2012; Hyland & Noffke, 2005, as cited in Jacobs, et al., 2015). During the present research, pre-service teachers examined social justice issues such as racism, child brides, and children's rights in the classroom. According to Bertling (2020), communication and active participation between the pre-service teacher and the supervising teacher is ensured through an artistic approach. In this present study, the researcher observed cooperation and effective communication and dialogue between pre-service teachers and supervising teachers by using practitioner inquiry. The pre-service teachers experienced the process of conducting a scientific study as well as visual culture issues in the practitioner inquiry.

As a suggestion for further national and international studies in this field, visual culture teaching should be a part of art education as a method, and given its outcomes and gained skills, pre-service teachers should be encouraged to work on this subject. In Turkey, contemporary art education subjects and new paradigms might be a focus rather than traditional subjects in visual arts STM courses. STM I-II course content can be created in such a way that pre-service teachers can actively use it in their fourth-grade teaching practice. Thus, in teaching practice they will have the opportunity to experience the theoretical knowledge of this course and reinforce what they learned in the right environment. The pre-service teachers with their visual culture education and teaching experience may change their perspectives, and also transmit their knowledge and skills to their students through visual culture activities. This research procedure can be applied and developed at different higher education contexts and any related research project will potentially contribute to developing a systematic approach towards visual-culture education in pre-service teacher education.

Acknowledgements

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