

**OTHERING CONTEMPORARY VISUAL ARTS: A CASE STUDY
OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN GULU DISTRICT,
UGANDA**

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20/U/GMAID/14355/PE**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH
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DECLARATION

I declare to the best of my knowledge that this research dissertation titled “**Othering contemporary visual art: a case study of selected schools in Gulu District**” is my original work and has never been submitted to any other institution for any academic award and is being submitted with the approval of my supervisor. Authors whose pieces of work are quoted are fully acknowledged.

Signature.....

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APPROVAL

We, the undersigned, affirm that Ayaa Constance presented this research report entitled, “Othering Contemporary Visual Arts: A case study of selected Secondary Schools in Gulu district, Uganda” under our supervision and it is now ready for submission to the department.

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Dr. Wycliff Edwin Tusiime (PhD)

(Second Supervisor)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this write-up to my family members, and to the resilient art teachers who inspire creativity against all odds.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Glory goes to the Almighty God for the precious gift of life and wisdom that He has brought me this far. Without you Lord, things would not be easy.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- CAPA : Creative and Performing Arts
- DSE : Diploma in Secondary Education
- ITEK : Institute of Teacher Education
- TTC : Teacher Training Colleges

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the othering of contemporary visual arts within selected secondary schools in Gulu District, Northern Uganda. It explored teaching methods, barriers to student proficiency, and the relevance of this discipline. Using a case study approach, the research involved 52 teachers and 2 personnel from the Gulu District Education Department, selected through purposive sampling. Data collection comprised interviews and observations, analyzed through content and thematic analysis. Findings revealed diverse teaching strategies, but challenges such as marginalization, resource constraints, and a lack of qualified instructors persisted. Shortcomings in curriculum implementation and socioeconomic factors aggravated these challenges. Despite obstacles, art education is valued for fostering cultural expression, identity exploration, and critical thinking. The study recommends tailored training programs for art educators and further investigation into their qualifications. Overall, it provides insights and recommendations to enhance contemporary visual arts education in the Gulu district's secondary schools.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises the background study, statement of the problem, study purpose, objectives, research questions, and significance of the study. This research was inspired by the creative yet marginalized visual creations of impressive art styles that were not taught in Ugandan secondary schools. This research focused on how contemporary visual art is often seen as separate or different from mainstream culture.

1.2 Background to the Study

The evolving practices of visual arts such as concerts, digital connections, and certain practices of colossal land art, and site-centred art, place more importance on discovering new groupings and inventions by building information through capabilities, partnerships, and active collaborations among individuals (Leng, 2017). These new practices of contemporary visual art, observes education as an all-inclusive development, necessitating collaboration and replication, where learners are taught when answering questions collectively (Leng, 2017).

Art that was formed in the subsequent half of the 20th century or the 21st century is termed contemporary art (Nasser Alghanim, 2020). It is an art that was inclined by a world that is globally wedged, customarily diverse, with scientific advancement. The work of such art associates with a variety of supplies, methods, philosophies, and refrains dynamically, continuing the 20th-century trend of pushing boundaries. Contemporary visual art is varied and expanded, but what sets it apart is the lack of any all-encompassing attitude, establishing the principle, or "ism". Fashionable art is

a constituent of a greater traditional discussion on backgrounds including nationality, family, community, and personal and cultural identity (Leuthold, 2010).

Visual arts comprise acceptable arts like drawing, colouring, printmaking, taking pictures, and statues; broadcasted arts, as well as films, graphic conversations, animatronics, and developing knowhow; architectural, conservational, and industrialized arts, such as urban, inside creations, and scenery designs; traditional arts and workings of art, like ceramic ware, fibres, jewels, and workings in timber, paper, and other supplies (Kurniawati, 2017).

Othering is the act of identifying and marginalizing certain people, groups, ideas, or practices as fundamentally different, inferior, or outside the dominant group's accepted norms. This process often perpetuates power imbalances, stereotypes, and exclusion, reinforcing divisions between "us" and "them."

In education and art, othering appears through the exclusion or undervaluation of cultural expressions, artistic practices, or perspectives that deviate from mainstream ideals. In education, this may involve treating certain subjects, such as the arts, as less important or essential than fields like math or science. In the art world, it can manifest by marginalizing works from non-Western cultures or art that highlights marginalized experiences, categorizing them as "different" or subordinate to more traditionally accepted art forms.

Othering is well-understood as “a shared sensation within cultural happenings that comprises; the use of labels plus symbols of the other while engaging them and conversing about them for example, ethnocentrism, discrimination and dislike of foreigners (Clark, 2020). There is grading among dissimilar types of others in the habits they are preserved or communicated around. The

other varies and takes dissimilar looks of persons depending on their ancestries, financial capital, and tongues.

Globally, the goal of visual art education is to train learners and to demonstrate to them the physical abilities to be fruitful and compliant in the art business. This also involves making goods that can be both good-looking to grown-ups, and worth of price inside the market (Adeniyi & Joseph, 2024). International students discover the world through an artistic lens and become clever to express thoughts, sentiments, opinions, feelings, and viewpoints (Semenov, 1986). Therefore, engaging them in an imaginative art process inspires thinking and problem-solving abilities vital to living in the changing world today.

The global modern visual arts syllabus encompasses interconnected movements in creating art detecting art and replying to art. It gifts a variety of actions in observing, traveling, replying to, and raising the visual world (Alhababy, 2016). In intercontinental schools, modern visual art lessons take the form of fabric and fiber, which is a flexible and attractive channel for creativity and are materials in which the individual can discover, invent, and design at all levels (Drummond, 2022). Their structures, surfaces, designs, and colours can stimulate thoughts and present chances for an imaginative look. As the learners attain self-confidence in managing the constituents, they can be used in more multifaceted habits. Their use can also contribute to learners' visions of old-style crafts and modern design, including fashion (AJPO Journals USA LLC, 2023).

In Africa, visual arts are imaginative subjects in the Nigeria Senior School program, which is truthful and it arouses practical and unavoidable performances. Art intermixes both philosophy and rehearsal of the divisions of arts; drawing, painting, graphics, textiles, ceramics, and craft, to come up with imaginative and skills attainments, in the setting of students (Riches, 2023). Mcdougall, Bever & Seper (2011) subscribe that visual arts in Africa allow students to envisage

and make possessions from reminiscences. However, Matthew (2013) listed numerous encounters, fronting learning of visual arts in Africa, such as insufficient learning supplies, means, and amenities, lack of competent art mentors, poor foundation of students taking up art, and poor syllabus preparation.

History has put it that the learning of arts and crafts was key to the achievement of the British refinement assignment in East Africa, given the primeval level of poverty in which most persons in East Africa lived. There was no necessity to effort to advance their standard of living except by visual arts which could be done through their hands (Wolukau-wanambwa, 2015). Therefore, Trowell supported the promotion of craft and artistry as the completest way to a cultured life in East Africa. By 1910, less than 20 years after the formation of the Uganda Colony, the native populace was previously stirring for the type of academic teaching that would make them qualify for positions of power inside the foreign government (Wolukau-wanambwa, 2015). But to Trowell's attention, by 1936 there existed a surplus of fresh East African people looking for office jobs.

The Western models that the key secondary art schools in East Africa inclined on were frequently extremely disjointed, and regularly somewhat out-of-date. Conceptual art, multimedia, and performance, for example, must be properly recognized topographies of Western art schools' syllabi since the 1970s and which by the way, have stronger roots in East African philosophies than symbolic colorings and monumental features somewhat currently known art syllabuses (Atenyi, 2023).

In Uganda, Margaret Trowell is known for starting art teaching, by the time she brought an arts program that was utilized throughout the training of art teachers. The same art programme was utilized for instructor grounding through exhibiting, basket creation, design, material, and picture-

making (Ssegantebuka, 2017). As time went on, Margaret Trowell was discharged and was replaced by Cecil Todd who came up with a European method of teaching that was the future utilized for preparing art teachers in Uganda. Cecil Todd's European mode of teaching extended European understandings of expressing art; differing from the local methods of art. These Eurocentric methods later on updated the design of a Bachelor of Education programmes with Art (Ssegantebuka, Tebenkana, et al., 2021). This course was offered at Makerere University for some time and then later extended to Kyambogo Institute of Teacher Education (ITEK). Unfortunately, as a result of numerous glitches, such as poor coverage of content, a shorter duration of art teacher grounding, and insufficient teacher grounding, the B. Ed course was lowered to a diploma and it was then sent to the Teacher Training Colleges (TTC) as Diploma in Secondary Education (DSE) (ERIC, 2021).

One of the challenges observed in Uganda's central reproductions of formal visual arts teaching is that, for historical motives, its teachings, constructs, and concepts of value, yield stories about art and the artist's course is concerned with the impression of the art gallery. Art gallery aids as the mediator of excellence and lawfulness. The tricky bit with this method is that there are limited art galleries in Uganda, and quite a few art learners can only chance of visiting one throughout their program. So, their teaching skills them to position themselves and their work relative to something that is widely abstract and exclusively isolated (ERIC, 2021).

On the one hand, school art is commonly extra traditional, spanning out of the common resources, and procedures (AJPO Journals USA LLC, 2023). School art is a type of art that is formed in school by learners with the direction and encouragement of teachers. Therefore, educators have a significant role in secondary school art education; they may promote or suppress learner's imagination and significant words (Litt, 2018). On the other hand, the philosophy in class needs

to be shared education particularly while in work using improved contemporary materials. Learners have to encounter imitative practical attainment move away from results-oriented making and permit thoughts and conversations to fuel their work (Desai & Morgan, 2023).

Surprisingly, the visual arts syllabus in secondary schools in Uganda concentrates on Western views rather than a true Ugandan view that reproduces suitable logical modes that suit the African setting (Kigozi, 2016). The whole secondary school education program is designed to equip learners to pass examinations empowering them with the skills needed beyond examinations. It is then reasonable to settle that the fundamental applied standards learners need to acquire for their innovativeness and creativeness from schooling have not been completely listed in present visual arts teaching in Uganda (Wolfgang et al., 2022). Among other factors, limited content knowledge, and inadequate governmental support are key factors derailing the development of visual Arts Education in the country.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The government of Uganda through the Ministry of Education and Sports extended secondary teacher training of visual arts to National Teacher Colleges (Ssegantebuka, Tebenkana, et al., 2021). This initiative aimed to promote the integration and appreciation of contemporary visual art in secondary schools across the country.

However, despite these efforts, Western art continues to dominate the visual arts curriculum in Uganda's secondary school. Kigozi (Kigozi, 2008) observed that the rationale for the visual arts syllabus in Ugandan secondary schools primarily reflects Western approaches and fails to embrace philosophical models rooted in the African context. This disconnection has led to the

marginalization of community centred artistic practices which are often rich in creativity and cultural relevance, while promoting foreign ideologies and cultural values.

Although Uganda's new lower secondary curriculum intends to equip learners with relevant skills, it remains dominated by Western European art traditions, exacerbating the neglect of indigenous art forms. The failure to align the visual arts curriculum with the context of local communities poses a significant threat to the preservation of cultural heritage and the fostering of creativity among learners in the Gulu District.

This research, therefore, seeks to critically examine the "othering" of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Gulu District, Northern Uganda, with a view to exploring its implications for cultural heritage, creativity, and curriculum development.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the othering of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Gulu district in Northern Uganda.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives.

- i. To examine how the curriculum integrates contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Gulu District.
- ii. To investigate factors affecting the implementation of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Gulu district.
- iii. To evaluate the relevance and alignment of contemporary visual arts within the curriculum in secondary schools in Gulu district.

1.6 Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions;

1. What teaching methods are used to deliver contemporary visual art in secondary schools?
2. What are the factors limiting the implementation of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Gulu district?
3. How relevant are contemporary visual arts to the educational needs of students in Gulu district?

1.7 A Conceptual Framework

The integration of contemporary visual art in secondary school curricula is often limited, leading to othering. This research explores how curriculum design, teacher perceptions, and institutional factors influence the inclusion of contemporary visual art. A conceptual framework provides a structured approach to understanding the dynamics of “othering” within the context of secondary education. It outlines the relationships between curriculum policies, teacher training, resource availability and the integration of contemporary art.

Figure 1.1 illustrates a conceptual framework. It visualizes how various factors interact to either perpetuate the “othering” of contemporary visual art or foster its meaningful integration within secondary school curricula.

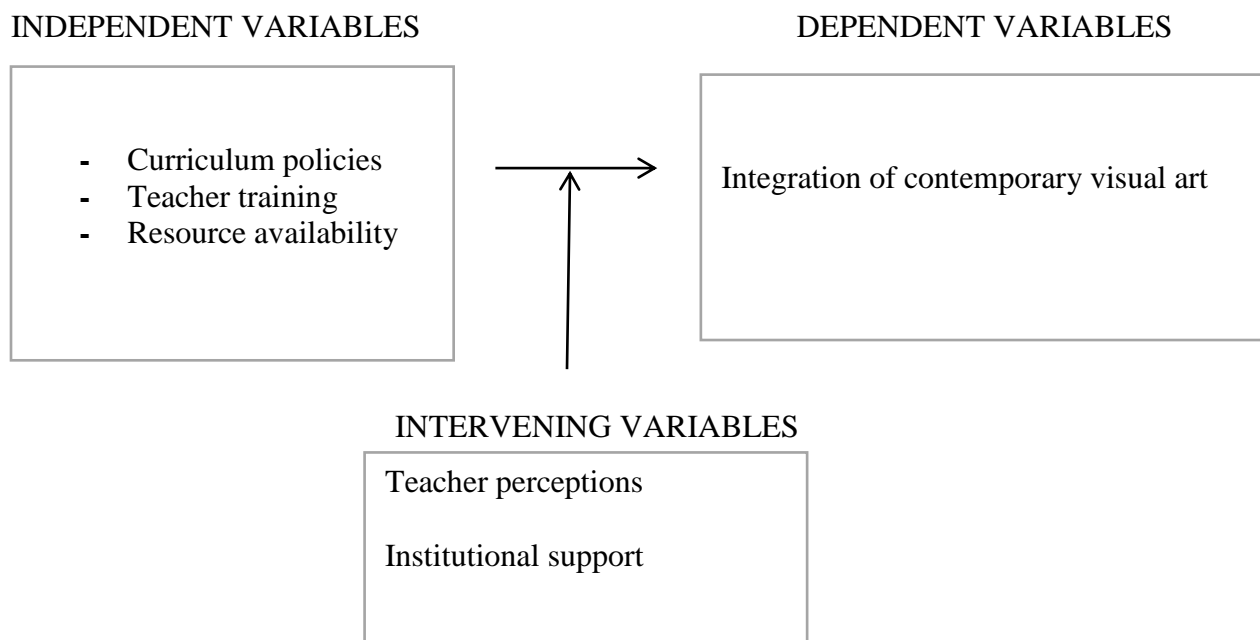


Figure 1.1: A conceptual framework

1.6 Significance of the study

The findings of this study may have the potential to inform policymakers and curriculum developers on enhancing the role of contemporary visual arts in education. This will not only

enrich the learning experience but also create an environment where the arts can thrive and stimulate creativity among the learners as a vital component of personal and societal growth.

This research may provide heads of secondary schools in Gulu District with information on othering of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools, which may improve their decision-making process.

The findings of this study may help art curriculum developers in Uganda to improve on visual arts syllabus in secondary schools of Uganda to focus on a true Ugandan context that reflects appropriate philosophical models. This may be attained using findings on how the curriculum integrates contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Uganda.

This study intended to provide other scholars with related topics with literature on factors limiting students' education of contemporary arts in post primary schools and the relevance of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Gulu District. This shall increase knowledge of the current form of writings on othering of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools.

1.7 Scope of the Study

1.7.1 Content Scope

This research project intended to examine the othering of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Gulu District. Specifically, this research project was guided by the desire to find out the how the curriculum integrates contemporary visual art in secondary schools, to find out factors affecting the implementation of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools and to explore the relevance of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Gulu District.

1.7.1 Geographical Scope

This research project was carried out in Gulu district found in Northern Uganda. Gulu District is bordered by Lamwo district to the north, Pader and Omoro Districts to the East, Oyam District to

the South, Nwoya District to the Southwest, and Amuru District to the West. Gulu District headquarters are approximately 333 kilometres (207 mi), by road, north of Uganda's capital district, Kampala.

1.7.3 Time Scope

The study examines changes in visual arts education practices from 2020 to the present day and was carried out for a period of one academic year 2022 to 2023. This period was allocated for this research project to provide ample time for identification of the research topic, proposal writing, data collection and report writing. Related literature of at least 10 years was utilized for an extensive review of different trends of use of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

Visual arts; is operationally defined as all arts that comprise the old-style fine arts, such as sketching, painting, printmaking, photography, and sculpture; media arts, including film, graphic communications, animation, and emerging technologies; architectural, environmental, and industrial arts, such as urban, interior, product, and landscape design; folk arts; and works of art, such as ceramics, fibers, jewellery, and works in wood, paper, and other materials (New York States Learning Standards for the Arts, 2017).

Contemporary visual arts; has been defined in this study as the institutionalised network through which the art of today presents itself to its interested audiences all over the world. It is an intense, expansionist, proliferating global subculture, with its own values and discourse; communicative networks; heroes, heroines, and renegades; professional organisations; defining events; meetings and monuments; markets and museums - in sum, distinctive structures of stasis and change.

According to the operational definition of this research, a shared sensation in intercultural interactions involves using labels and symbols to refer to the other person during meetings and conversations. Examples of this include ethnocentrism, racism, and xenophobia (Bennett, 2004).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter details literature related to othering of visual arts in secondary schools, obtained from different sources like journals articles, research reports, newspapers and many more. For clarity, the literature has been organized into theoretical review and empirical review as presented below;

2.2 Theoretical review

This study was supported by Dewey. J theory of aesthetic feeling, whose origin was way back in 1887. Dewey's theory states that individual expertise chooses the denotation of art, and to comprehend the ideas of art and knowledge, Dewey mentions to two psychosomatic fundamentals of a human being (Dewey, 2005). The principal was the sensation, which was the next stage past the insight. The human being was baptized by Dewey as "the live creature," who started the path to the work of art from the feeling, which he calls "aesthetic feeling" (Dewey, 2017). He believed that the feeling "comes from the examination of the perfect price of some aspect of knowledge" and permits the individual to separate what is good-looking from what is not.

The aesthetic is a superiority that is embedded inside living creatures and is closely related to human psychosomatic features, which are his approaches, imaginations, and mindful or lifeless principle for discriminating what is or is not good-looking (Venkatesh & Meamber, 2008). The individual has an ability which permits him to pleasure by the good-looking, whether this comes from the drawers or the final users. Hence, when understanding possesses the superiority referred to as aesthetics, the last in turn shall provide regularity to the Deweyan notion of visual knowledge.

Alternatively, art looks beyond personal work and the work of art is an outcome of a list of activities, inside and outside actions of the human being (Bridges, 1945). That is, to make work, the artist encounters his situation and alters underdone materials; either it is clay or color, sound or expression. He utilizes a list of vitalities like intellectual procedures, sensual insights, experimentations, mistakes, feelings, hard work, etc. and desires reflect the practical, decorative, radical, or divine overhaul that his effort shall deliver. Lastly, the effort of art is born, which caused or, in Deweyan's words, the consummation of a visual understanding. Alternatively, the final user who earns the benefit of the usefulness of artwork or who appreciates and respects it also should use both perceptual and reasoning abilities, whereas seeing, examining, and re-forming the work (Ekweariri, 2021). Thus, for Dewey art and aesthetics, though dissimilar, both compound into one state: the artistic understanding.

Morgan K. Williams (2017) cites that Dewey urged that progressive education should include socially engaging learning experiences that are developmentally appropriate for young children (Williams, 2017). Dewey thought that effective education came primarily through social interactions and that the school setting should be considered a social institution. He considered education to be a “process of living and not a preparation for future living” (Williams, 2017). Therefore, John Dewey’s theory on art, experience, and education is chosen as a theoretical approach to understanding how the artistic process can generate emotional understanding and how artistic experiences can be related to education and society (Goldblatt, 2006). Dewey’s theory is relevant due to his view of the concepts of emotions, reflection, freedom, growth, and society. Dewey’s theory on teaching developed the so-called progressive pedagogic, which became an influential movement during the first half of the 1900 century (Williams, 2017).

According to Puolakka (2014), the relationship of Dewey's aesthetic thinking to this developing field of contemporary aesthetics is not without problems. This was because his main work in aesthetics contains passages in which he grieves over the fact that the human ordinary experience is often infected with apathy, lassitude, and stereotype" categorized by human incapability to get neither the excellence by intelligence nor the implication of things thought. In these understandings, the 'world' is more occupied with humans as disruption and individuals are not adequately alive to feel the taste of intelligence nor yet to be motivated by belief. Dewey settles his doubtful scrutiny of usual capabilities: that it is not for the harassments and boredoms of day-to-day practice, the monarchy of vision and daydream would not be good-looking (Puolakka, 2014).

Unlike John Dewey, Richard Shusterman provides a difference between two likely methods of memorizing theoretical ideas on aesthetics of day-to-day life which might frame certain essential discussions within modern day-to-day aesthetics (Puolakka, 2014). The leading one focuses on the usualness of the day-to-day and contends that the moods of understanding, specifically those that arise from day-to-day matters and actions, include their personal, form of artistic personality from those elevated by drawings, wherever we regularly attach importance to the innovative and the astonishing.

Despite the criticisms surrounding Dewey's theory, the theory remains firm in this study based on the idea that progressive education should include socially engaging learning experiences like contemporary visual arts which are developmentally appropriate for learners (Williams, 2017). Dewey emphasizes that effective education comes from social relations and that the school setting should be considered a social institution (Jiping et al., 2020)

2.3 The Mode of Othering Contemporary visual Arts in secondary Schools

Sonja VUK and Maja BOSNAR (Vuk & Bosnar, 2021) urge that teaching of contemporary visual arts comprises preparation, scheming, and establishing ceremonial teaching. This was intended to make the coming generation encounter the difficulties presented by the current speedy expansion of varied methods of visual art illustrations and numerous mass media for broadcasting and allocation of such material. New ways to express oneself, as well as new methods and materials for art formation, are repeatedly evolving in our hurriedly shifting societal and practical context, which is conquered by visual art. Thus, making it challenging to understand reality in othering contemporary visual arts, unless a scientific investigation is undertaken. Hence, this study has to be conducted to examine the othering of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in the context of Gulu District in Northern Uganda.

Annika Hellman & Tarja Karlsson Häiki urge that it was imperative to widen the scope of the contemporary visual art syllabus and notice tactics for exploiting the new and fashionable art to deliver responses to the learning problems for the coming generations (Häikiö, 2024). It was no longer reflected as a proper alternative for the combined creation of information for the old-style educational scheme to subjectively classify understanding short of creating theoretical ties amidst them, i.e. minus incorporating it (et al., 2014). However, it remains unclear whether the widening of the syllabus of contemporary visual arts applies to secondary schools in Uganda, hence there was a need to research about examining the othering of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in the context of Gulu District in Northern Uganda. According to (Ssegantebuka, 2017), schools need to teach learners how to acquire, reason, and make sense of the rapid social modification and the undefined future. Outdated teaching's prominence on one-way messaging does not meet today's needs for learners' all-inclusive individual advancement in visual arts. It is essential to substitute the old-style technique of information transfer, in which learners are only unreceptive users of information, with more well-organized instruction and education based on learners-oriented actions and collaborating, problem-solving practices (Hajian, 2019). Most of these approaches to teaching contemporary visual arts in the current generation, seem to have remained in writing rather than being applied in secondary school visual art learning. Due to such reasons, there is a rising desire to find out the mode of othering contemporary visual arts in the context of secondary schools in Gulu District, in northern Uganda.

Zlata Tomljenović adds that a collaborative method of education and teaching in visual arts education raises the trade-off amidst the entire subjects in learning progression, and encourages serious and imaginative thinking by use of vigorous, learner-oriented teaching approaches such as active, experiential, independent, investigative, cooperative and problem-solving learning (Tomljenovi, 2015). The past assessments on the suitability of teaching contemporary visual arts in a single-class level of schools, channels to the fact that, throughout the education development, most single-class educators do not adequately use methodical diversity and original methods to education and teaching (Tetikci et al., 2020). The use of a collaborative method of teaching visual arts, which promotes creative thinking, might be in a global or regional context, not in the context of secondary schools in Gulu District. Thus, there is a need for this study to establish the mode of teaching contemporary visual arts in the context of secondary schools in Gulu District in Northern Uganda.

According to Anduru Grace,2022, during visual arts lessons, the instructor needs to bear the understanding and abilities to allow learners to obtain the content and attainments of the unit by use of all forms of apparatuses and actions that have learning importance rendering to the potentials of the college and the setting. Additionally, it must contain the capability to disclose the originality of the learners and extend the chance to utilize the creative technique, integrated with modern education approaches and practices, and to assist from adequate possessions, apparatus, gallery plus art arcade tour-observations, exploration, inspection, developments, and performances. It is quite uncertain whether all teachers from the context of this study have the knowledge and skills to enable learners to obtain visual art content, or they use other methods of teaching(Grace Anduru, 2022). This can be confirmed through conducting this research to establish the mode of teaching visual art in the context of secondary schools in Gulu District, in northern Uganda. Integrating

contemporary art into other subjects is a creative and interdisciplinary approach that can enhance learning experiences and engage students in a deeper understanding of both art and the subject being taught (Sonja VUK and Maja Bosnar, 2021). This approach encourages students to explore connections between seemingly unrelated disciplines, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and a holistic understanding of the world (Pathak, 2023). Contemporary art often reflects and comments on historical events, social movements, and cultural shifts. By analyzing artworks inspired by historical contexts, students can gain insights into the emotions, perspectives, and challenges of people during different periods. This can make history more relatable and engaging for students (Ishiguro & Okada, 2021). This is practically true although this may vary according to different contexts of teaching and learning of visual art. Hence this study seeks to understand this mode of teaching contemporary visual art in the context of secondary schools in Gulu District.

Contemporary art examinations and tests are designed to evaluate students' understanding of both the practical and theoretical aspects of art. These assessments aim to provide a comprehensive view of a student's abilities, knowledge, and critical thinking skills in the realm of contemporary art (Piacentini, 2023). Students are often required to create original artwork as part of their examination. This can include a variety of mediums such as painting, sculpture, digital art, photography, or mixed media (Asare et al., 2023). Teachers are looking for the application of artistic techniques, creativity, innovation, and the ability to communicate ideas visually. Students may be evaluated on their mastery of technical skills, use of materials, composition, and how effectively they convey their artistic concepts (Alghufali, 2024)

2.4 Factors limiting Students' Learning of Contemporary visual Arts in Secondary Schools in Gulu District

Ssegantebuka, Julius and Tebenkana, cite some difficulties art teaching is facing, comprising: a lack of competent art educators, insufficient learning amenities and backing. Consequently, most schools lack competent instructors to impart art knowledge as well as satisfactory learning amenities. An additional limitation to art teaching is inadequate art resources, implements, and apparatus. The absence of workshop space is also another limitation recognized (Ssegantebuka, Tebenkana, et al., 2021). It must be well-known that PVATs cannot acquire numerous creative abilities short of art supplies and apparatuses plus the absence of workshop planetary required for rehearsal. However, such factors might not be similar to those limiting students' learning of contemporary visual arts in all regions, thus this research seeks to find out factors limiting students' learning of contemporary visual arts in the context of secondary schools in Gulu District, in northern Uganda.

Okonkwo (2016) adds that the fallacy in humanity that denotes art as non-educational since it is full of real-world effort. This credence touches the painting educator and hopeful art educators' self-assurance, staffing, and disrespect from the populace. Scanty syllabus preparation and expansion is another encounter. Okonkwo (2016) further observed that revising a school syllabus is necessary since art packages at all stages of teaching want this review of the curriculum. Changes in secondary school syllabus in Uganda, in most cases, favours science subjects at the expense of arts subjects, which might continue to discourage learners from understanding contemporary visual arts. On the other hand, human beliefs in visual arts might have not been spread across all cultural settings. Therefore, there was need to carry out this research to establish whether similar factors limit students from learning visual arts in the context of secondary schools in Gulu District.

Okonkwo (2016), urges that the challenges in art education include; scarcity of competent art teachers, poor instructional facilities, funds, and lack of necessary teaching resources. Inadequate supplies, apparatus, and tools are additional challenges in art education (Okonkwo, 2016). The absence of working space was added contest recognised (Barnabas, 2022). It has to be maintained that minus the essential art materials, instruments, and workshop space for training. The social misunderstanding is that art is not educational for the reason that it was more of a real-world endeavor (Francis Okechukwu Amadi & Priscilla Ifeoma Okechukwu, 2016). Ssegantebuka et al (2021) encounters in front of instructors in the education of visual arts contain a pronounced influence on what Performing Visual Art Teachers (PVATs) acquire. Selected visual art subjects have plenty of content to be understood within a short time. The challenges identified here in literature such as; scarcity of competent art teachers, poor instructional facilities, funds, and lack of necessary teaching resources could only apply in a global or regional context. Thus, this research was necessary for ascertaining whether similar factors limit students from learning visual arts in secondary schools in Gulu District (Ssegantebuka, Sserunjogi, et al., 2021).

Moalosi and Molwane (2018) explored the difficulties teachers face when teaching design and technology in schools in Botswana. The results show that the Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) program “was so intensely loaded with various units all shared to develop a single theme which makes the instruction more challenging since instructors are not skilled in most of these themes. Additionally, a number of these themes, e.g., designs and technology, are not currently taught in secondary schools. Ssegantebuka, Julius and Tebenkana (2021) added that there was educators’ absence of consideration of CAPA thoughts plus the absence of possession of the CAPA syllabus and complications in the evaluation of CAPA. Diversification of the art subject

might be a factor limiting students' learning of visual arts only in Botswana and may not apply in the context of secondary schools in Uganda (Ssegantebuka, Tebenkana, et al., 2021).

Alhababy (2016) undertook a syllabus evaluation and the results indicate that there was a lack of enough education supplies, an absence of money, an extraordinary price of amenities and restrictive rules which backup the discontinuation of shared amenities when there was a postponement in reimbursing of the bills. Such actions were a result of what art schooling was thought to be. However, this review of related literature was in a regional context not in the context of learning institutions in Uganda.

Socioeconomic challenges can result in limited financial resources for families. As a result, they may feel compelled to invest in education that promises a clear return on investment (Alhababy, 2016). Such education involves children from different families taking up subjects like mathematics, physics, biology, and chemistry since these subjects have been regarded by the families to have direct employment unlike in the case of Art.

The importance of exposing individuals, particularly students to contemporary visual art as a means of broadening their perspectives and deepening their understanding of the wider art world (Maryam Saif, 2023). Engaging with contemporary visual art challenges students to think critically and interpret artworks that might not have a readily apparent meaning. This process encourages them to analyse and interpret symbolism, metaphors, and artistic choices, enhancing their analytical and interpretive skills (Pamela B Schaff, 2011)

Traditional gender stereotypes often associate girls with nurturing and domestic roles, while art is seen as a "soft" or non-essential pursuit. These stereotypes can discourage girls from considering visual arts education as a serious and valuable path (Isaac, 2021). The lack of visible female artists

in mainstream art history and media can lead girls to believe that successful artists were predominantly male. This lack of representation can make it difficult for girls to envision themselves as successful artists and can diminish their aspirations (O’Keeffe, 2016).

2.5 The Relevance of Contemporary Visual Arts in Secondary School Education

The teaching and learning of other subjects in the educational system depends on the success of the fine arts for their instructional procedures (Bassey & Akpan, 2021). Fine arts are looked at as those representations, made mainly for artistic motives, occasionally taken as arts-for-art-sake, other than for profitable use (Winner et al., 2013). However, the review of the relevance of contemporary visual arts in this section was more of a general context not specifically for secondary schools, hence this study sought to establish the relevance of contemporary visual arts specifically for secondary school education in Gulu District in northern Uganda.

The teaching of contemporary visual arts builds students’ critical thinking. Critical thinking entails access, analysis, and synthesis of information, which was taken to be essential to 21st-century learning (Joynes et al., 2019). Critical thinking includes other abilities such as communication, information literacy and the capability to scrutinize, examine, understand, and assess confirmation. It was presented as pertinent inside the area of formal learning, and also inside the business and liable common nationality (Cardoso & Silva, 2018). Ogegbo and Ayodele Abosede Aina urge that serious thinking can be imparted, trained, and grasped by students, though most secondary and university learners lack the essential capabilities to steer and choose pertinent foundations from the surplus of available information (Ogegbo & Aina, 2022).

Visual art teaching aids learners in understanding elementary abilities like reading and writing which are critical essential abilities for day-to-day life. It also aided in improving collaboration

with others; whether it involves knowing another language, advanced quality communication, or even improved body language. Improved confidence and individual understanding, improved messaging skills, and better-quality reasoning are among the most motives for learning the arts (Shabiralyani et al., 2015).

According to Fitria a variety of arts instructional methods and art additions inside art forms such as dance, drama, visual arts, or music were imparted in separate programs channelled to students' attainment of art principles. Arts-based actions were working as a means of imparting more educational thoughts in non-arts content (e.g. modelling the body to look like a specific message to advance developing literateness by dance) or the arts are used to strengthen school ideas and create the content more appealing (e.g., using warm and cool colors when creating maps in science class (Fitria, 2013)

Visual arts support promoting growth, novelty, creativity and change in rudimentary students. Through arts, learners attain skills like resilience, grit, and a development attitude to aid themselves major in their craft, do well intellectually, and prosper in life past school (Deasy, 2002). With the increasing body of exploration that compares art capabilities with numerous spheres of knowledge, it was essential to realize that to advance successfully, well-smoothed intellectuals, educators need to include arts teaching in the syllabus. This was aimed at enabling learners to creatively reason with new thoughts, reasoning outside of the box, interact more excellently with self-assurance and be socially conscious with understanding. Hence, it was essential to integrate art teaching back into the school syllabus (Conway, 2019).

Oliver et al. (2019) cited that when viewed holistically, arts integration sees the arts as a tool to support K–16 students' whole physical, mental, and spiritual development. This emphasizes how

combining a variety of artistic mediums, like visual arts, photography, poetry writing, and storytelling, can help foster imagination, creativity, and expression to educate engaged citizens in a democratic society. The integration of the arts was seen as a soul-awakening effort.

Ceran (2022) urges that visual message art was very significant, particularly for persons, and entities that desire to link with their intended viewers, and graphics designs are the possibility for such instances. For example, graphics designs are significant for most explanations, the main reason is that it is the foundation of each symbol design always observed. The other reason was that all the shared media content and ads we observe daily were realistic design outcomes. It also included visual designs, book cover designs, magazine page layouts, product designs and clothing designs (Tan, 2012). Indeed, even secondary schools could have visual communication art to guide learners in and outside of the classrooms, unfortunately, this might be in a context outside schools in Uganda.

Designers of contemporary visual art promote products and services, through their imagination; they select the right technique and make it (Ceran, 2022). No matter in what way the technique was, if the target audience do not comprehend, the communication does not attain the objective. The capability to create intelligence to design, while observed by the intended audiences with designers, should rely on social build-up, empirical understanding, use of facts, and the capability to observe and understand well (Ceran, 2022). This was possible with more knowledge of contemporary visual art acquired from school. Ceran and Selma also state that for such a motive, it was observed that artists assign meaning to share social morals, antiquity, and linguistics in the approaches they use (Ceran, 2022).

Vervoort and Joost M.Smeenk urge that contemporary art designs extend clarifications for the networks that alter individual's worldview. This situation extends new chances in the imaginative arena and generates implements for designs. Creating something begins in the mind and it moves to an imaginative development such as cognitive, interrogative, creating innovative content, critical thinking, and examination (Vervoort et al., 2024). Imaginative progression and adding photographic and verbal expressions for designs necessitates using composite, concentrated, and advanced psychological abilities (Gündoğan et al., 2020). However, relevance associated with these processes of visual arts, was hardly presented in literature in the Ugandan context, thus encouraging this research to be undertaken to examine the othering of visual arts in post-primary institutions.

According to Flores (2017), students come from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences. Therefore, through learning contemporary visual artworks, they contribute their artwork to an exhibition. This reflects their unique perspectives, personal histories, and cultural influences. As a result, these exhibitions became a celebration of the diversity within the student body (Theses et al., 2024).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the research design, the population covered, sample size determined, sample technique, data collection methods, data collection instruments, data quality control, data analysis method, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

A case study design was adopted, since according to Yin (Schoch, 2009) a case study design under qualitative research performs an in-depth understanding of a research problem in its actual setting, which in this research was othering of visual arts in secondary schools. The case study design was aided by the qualitative research approach, which involved collecting qualitative data using interviews and direct observation. This contained the inquiry technique of knowledge and observing the character use of othering of visual arts in secondary schools.

3.3 Study Population

The study population consisted of 52 art teachers from 26 secondary schools in Gulu District, and 2 staff from Gulu District Education Department. According to Gulu District report of 2022, the district currently has 30 secondary schools, from which two art teachers from each school were of interest in this study. The choice of this study population was guided by the schools that do art and design as a subject and the willingness of those secondary schools purposely teaching visual arts which in each school the researcher was purposely interested in visual arts teachers.

3.4 Sample Size Determination

According to Krejcie and Morgan's approach a study population of 60 teachers corresponds to a sample size of 52 secondary teachers derived as follows;

Table 1. Sample Size Determination

Study population	Sample size	Sampling method
60 Arts teachers from 30 secondary schools	52 Arts teachers from 26 secondary schools	Purposive
02 Gulu District staff from the Education department	02 District Education staff	Purposive
Total	54	

3.5 Sampling Method

52 Art teachers from secondary schools in Gulu District were selected using the purposive sampling method. Similarly, 2 staff from the District Education Department were purposively selected to take part in this research. Purposive sampling was a technique that involved selecting the participants according to the characteristics or requirements of the study, which in this case was teaching art in secondary schools. Purposive sampling was chosen for this study based on its flexibility in saving time and money compared to other sampling techniques that could have been used in this study.

3.6 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

3.6.1 Interview

The researcher employed face to face interviews with art teachers in schools that did art and design and two staff from Gulu district education department. The interview method was a chosen method for this study since it was a flexible method of data acquisition as described by Alamri and Wafaa Abdullah (Alamri, 2019) it enabled the use of multiple channels of data collection like verbal and non-verbal. This method was further adapted in this study because it explored the phenomenon in-depth to understand othering of contemporary visual art. The interview guide (see Appendix I) was used to guide the interview process during data collection. The interview guide consisted of an array of questions designed based on the specific objectives of the inquiry, aimed at providing answers to research questions. The interview guide was utilized to enable the process of an interview, and to ensure that all the necessary questions are asked as responses were recorded.

3.6.2 Observation

The observation method was used for this study to collect data through observing pre-defined visual arts in secondary schools, since according to (Yeradkar & Jaywant, 2020) observation method involved collecting data through predefined behaviour. Throughout data gathering, the researcher keenly observed and recorded the mode of teaching visual arts as it occurred within the available teaching spaces. A structured/systematic observation checklist (see Appendix III) was used to guide the observation process of data collection. The systematic observation checklist consisted of a predefined list of items to observe while collecting data for this study. The systematic observation checklist consisted of a column of items to observe, a column for yes or no, and a column for final remarks after observation.

3.6.3 Historical Documentation

This method was used in this study to obtain second-hand accounts of events on othering of visual arts in secondary schools, commonly found in textbooks, journal articles, newspapers, biographies, and other media such as films or tape recordings. A historical document review guide (see Appendix IV) was used to guide document review during data collection. The historical document review guide contained a list of items to be reviewed and chosen according to specific research objectives. This list consisted of a column for items to be reviewed, a yes or no column, and a column for final remarks after reviewing the listed items.

3.7 Data Quality Control

3.7.1 Validity and Reliability

The interview guide, observation checklist, and historical document review guide were pre-tested using arts teachers from Bethany High School in Naalya, to identify and align possible areas of error in data collection instruments. Pretesting also helped to reduce errors from observer bias and historical document review bias. Those teachers involved in the pre-testing of these instruments were encouraged to make comments on the clarity of the interview questions. The comments and suggestions obtained helped the researcher to address the deficiencies in the interview guide, observation checklist, and document review guide, hence ensuring their validity and reliability for data collection.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis involved editing, sorting/grouping quotations from the respondents, summarizing, and developing meaning from all responses given by the respondents. Content and thematic analysis were used in this study where meaning was derived in the form of themes, in line with the

research objectives. Where necessary pictures were presented to support responses obtained during data collection.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

According to Fleming and Zegwaard (2018), it was continuously imperative to reflect the first principles of ethics in research concerning human contributors. Principles in investigation intended to safeguard participants from contrary penalties of the investigation undertakings. The researcher aimed to safeguard the human rights of the participants. This was attained by considering the following; the researcher got an introductory letter from the Directorate of Graduate studies Kyambogo University then sought permission from the District education officer and presented the motives for undertaking the research before data collection, requested permission from the head of the institutions and the teachers, got consent from the art teachers and assured them of secrecy of the information obtained from them by not sharing it with other persons apart from using it strictly for education purpose. The researcher then proceeded to data collection by purposively sampling 52 art teachers from 26 secondary schools that study visual arts and 2 staff members from the Gulu District Education Department. This method ensured that participants had relevant experience and insight into contemporary visual arts education. An interview guide with semi-structured open-ended questions aimed at eliciting detailed responses about teaching practices, challenges, and the relevance of contemporary visual arts was used.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides study findings from interviews and observations carried out in secondary schools in Gulu District. The results are presented according to the study objectives which sought to: find out the main mode of teaching contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Gulu District, factors limiting students' learning of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Gulu District and explore the relevance of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Uganda.

4.2 Response Rate

Out of the 52 Arts teachers and 2 District staff who were expected to be interviewed during this study in Secondary schools in Gulu District, 46 Arts teachers were able to respond to the interview whereas 6 could not take part due to various reasons. All the 2-district staff from the education department were successfully interviewed. This means 48 respondents were successfully interviewed. This in total gave a response rate of 88% and a non-response rate of 12%.

4.3 Respondents' Characteristics

The study established and presented the characteristics of the study group according to their age, gender, and education level.

4.3.1 Age of the Respondents

Out of 48 respondents who were successfully interviewed from the 26 secondary schools in Gulu District, 10 of them were in the age group of 20 to 24 years, 15 of them were in the age group of

25 to 29 years, 8 of them were in the age group of 30 to 34 years, 6 of the art teachers were in the age group of 35 to 39 years and lastly, 7 were in the group of 40 years and above.

4.3.2 Gender of the Respondents

Out of all the 48 respondents who successfully took part in the study, 32 were male and 16 were female. This means that the study was represented by the highest proportion of male compared to female respondents.

4.3.3 Education Level of the Participant

Out of 48 respondents who were interviewed, 12 had attained diplomas in teacher education, 32 had attained degrees, 3 had attained postgraduate diplomas and 1 had attained a master's degree. This means that most of the respondents had at least degrees compared to other education qualifications; hence they were able to give better opinions about othering of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Gulu District.

4.4 Integration of Contemporary Visual Arts in Secondary School curriculum in Gulu District

The findings indicate that the common methods used to teach contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Gulu District include: teacher centered methods, demonstration by teachers, practical sessions and writing notes.

Most of the Arts teachers from secondary schools in Gulu District revealed during the interview that *they teach contemporary visual arts in their schools by aligning with the national curriculum.* Contemporary visual arts education in secondary schools in Gulu District was aligned with the national curriculum set by the Ministry of Education and Sports in Uganda. This curriculum

defines the learning objectives, topics, and skills that students are expected to acquire. Some of the teachers said “*they do this because of the strict follow up by the academic office*”.

Some Contemporary art teachers from different secondary schools in Gulu District said that *they teach contemporary visual arts by engaging learners in practical art-making to gain skills*. Teachers’ engagement of students in practical art-making has been a key aspect of visual arts education in secondary schools in Gulu District. Through this approach learners are taught techniques such as drawing, painting, sculpture, and digital art were being initiated in some schools. This involved learning about different materials, tools, and methods used in contemporary art creation.



Figure 4.1: Senior two Students of Gulu City High School being engaged in Art Marking

Source: The Researcher

According to contemporary art teachers from secondary schools in Gulu, *they engage their learners in creative thinking and expression during contemporary art lessons*. Through creative thinking and expression, visual arts education has encouraged students to develop their creative

thinking and be able to express what they are imagining. They were regularly given assignments or projects that allowed them to explore their ideas and create artwork that reflects their perspectives.

Teachers also revealed during the interview that; *they regularly expose learners to contemporary art to enable them to gain extra skills that can match the 21st century contemporary art skills.* Arts students have been exposed to contemporary artworks using the available textbooks, and learning by watching TV, in some schools, teachers have tried to use online resources, and some schools at times transport their students to local art galleries or exhibitions. Similarly, an observation was done in one of the schools where students were attending art class and they were drawing a stove placed on the table in front of the class.

Teachers were also quoted in this interview saying that; *even integrating art in other subjects like history, geography, literature, mathematics, physics, biology and agriculture has helped to improve students' learning in such subjects.* As another way of teaching art, contemporary art has been integrated into other subjects like geography, biology, history, literature, and agriculture. This was applicable in all schools since these subjects were involved in the secondary school curriculum. Through this interdisciplinary approach, students understand the connections between art and various aspects of society and culture. Similarly, an observation conducted on students attending geography class in senior four shows that students were engaged in sketching maps while following what was already drawn on the blackboard by the teacher.

Contemporary art teachers from secondary school teachers in Gulu city revealed that; *they have provided opportunities for students to learn the history of art by theory as also stipulated in the syllabus.* Through the theory, students were taught about the history of art, various art movements,

famous artists, and art theory. This theoretical foundation helped students understand the context and concepts that underlie contemporary art. Many also added that “*students were biased about reading art history claiming it was very difficult to understand*”

Teachers were also recorded in an interview stating that; *they regularly involve a combination of practical assignments during examinations and test assessments*. Contemporary art examinations and tests are set to examine students in practical areas (creating art), theoretical assessments (knowledge of art history and theory), and potentially presentations or critiques.

4.5 Factors affecting the implementation of Contemporary Visual Arts in Secondary Schools in Gulu District

Findings from the interviews have revealed several factors limiting students' learning of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Gulu. Such factors have been analysed, interpreted, and discussed as follows;

Secondary school teachers have revealed that; *they lack enough resources to enable them to express contemporary art to learners. They also added that the available resources are not enough to meet the 21st-century requirements of visual art*. Most schools in rural districts like Gulu face the challenge of limited resources, including art supplies, tools, and equipment needed for practical art-making. This can hinder students' ability to engage in hands-on learning and explore different artistic techniques.

The teachers also mentioned that at times they demonstrate for the students but are constrained because they lack the materials for this action. During the drawing sessions at times the teachers have to show the students how to go about the practical.

One respondent said “we at times demonstrate but the students copy what you have demonstrated or they use the examples you use for explanations and because of that I rarely demonstrate and besides the time is not even there”. Another said “students only want to use pencil and of late a few try to use colored pencils. If you use a different medium or talk about art that was different from what they have seen or know, they become reluctant and skeptical”.

Figure 4.2 below is an indication of the lack of enough teaching materials to meet the 21st-century requirements of visual art.



Figure 4.2: Students of Gulu High School attending Visual Art Class

Source: The Researcher

Figure 4.2 shows that Senior Three Students of Gulu High School Attending Visual Art lacked 21st-century materials like; projectors and smart boards that let art instructors show high-definition pictures of Romantic and Neo-classical artworks that may be used as teaching aids. This prevents teachers of visual art from giving their students tasks like identifying and closely examining elements in each artwork as well as creating and keeping the annotations that are superimposed

over the pictures. Images would be used in schools via digital devices not just as illustrations but also as visual texts that could be read in conjunction with other primary materials. Even better, instead of utilizing texts, documents based on essay judgments might be made by projecting certain images onto the board. With the current move to online learning, there is more reason and opportunity to think about how we may utilize art to enhance learning experiences.

Though practical sessions were also common, at times students were given a set of items to draw and later collect of assessment. This was evident where a teacher was not ready for the lesson but was in position to pick any item(s) and forward to the students to draw. Or students were given a set of instructions to carry out any other form of art.

A respondent admitted that at times they were not prepared for certain lessons, so instead of leaving the student idle it would be better to give them something to draw. Teachers also complained of limited time for art.

Art teachers also revealed that; *they face challenges of insufficient classroom space, lack of proper lighting, and inadequate ventilation.* These forms of challenges affected the quality of art education since learners need suitable environments to create and display their artworks. An observation conducted in most of the schools also proved that more art students were attending visual art lessons in small classrooms and this was common in classrooms like senior one and senior two.

Secondary school teachers also stated that; *schools face a challenge of few qualified art teachers and they attributed this to the bias that the public has developed about art subjects in secondary schools and higher institutions of learning. One teacher is made to teach all levels from senior one to senior six.* A shortage of qualified art teachers who are trained in contemporary art practices

can impact the quality of instruction. Teachers might lack the knowledge and skills to effectively teach modern art concepts and techniques.

Furthermore, teachers also responded during the interview that; *the contemporary art curriculum followed by some of the schools in Gulu had not been updated to reflect contemporary art practices and trends of the 21st century.* Students were still instructed on what and how to do tasks.

Teachers have also reported that; *socioeconomic challenges had made art education seem less important to students and their families. They added that families have prioritized education that they perceive as directly leading to stable employment opportunities. Subjects like science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) were often seen as more practical and directly linked to job prospects. Unlike art education, on the other hand, was sometimes seen as less likely to lead to a secure career, especially in fields with traditional job security concerns.*

Teachers reported that; *Gulu City was not yet blessed with enough areas of art exhibitions, galleries, and other art spaces. They added that this had restricted students' exposure to contemporary artworks and artists. This exposure was crucial for expanding their horizons and understanding the broader art world.* Contemporary visual art reflects the current cultural, social, and political context. By exposing students to contemporary artworks students can better understand the issues, values, and concerns of their time. This exposure helps them connect with the world around them and appreciate how art serves as a reflection of society.

Some respondents revealed that art was not a priority in their schools. *“It was often allocated time that most other subjects were not in favour of. Besides that, there was almost no reference for the students so that they get inspired”.*

Secondary school art teachers reported that; *gender roles and expectations can sometimes affect how students were encouraged to pursue art education. Girls, in particular, face additional challenges and biases in accessing and excelling in visual arts education.* Gender roles and expectations indeed have a significant impact on how students, including girls, were encouraged to pursue art education, particularly in the field of visual arts. The researcher observed that most practical art making were carried out by female teachers and keenly attempted by female students while drawing and painting sessions were actively done by male students and mainly taught by male teachers.

Teachers have further reported; *limited technology and connectivity for contemporary art education to match with the 21st century requirements. They added that in this digital age, technology plays a significant role in contemporary art practices.* However, limited access to technology and the internet in rural areas can hinder students' exposure to digital art forms.

Art teachers have reported that; *students from secondary schools in Gulu and their families were not aware of the potential career paths in the field of contemporary visual arts. This has led to a lack of motivation and interest in pursuing art education beyond the school level.*

Teachers had also reported that; *learners in their schools have a strong focus that learners and teachers have, was to pass examinations which has led to more focus on memorization and regurgitation of information rather than on creative exploration and critical thinking.* Most of the respondents revealed that lecturing was the easiest way to get the syllabus covered. The teachers stand in front of the class and instructs the students on what was expected of them including the outcome of the art work. One teacher commented: *“Telling them what to do was the only way you can get these students to make some reasonable art work.”* Another respondent said *“Waiting for*

the students to create an artwork will take forever and I do not have that time neither does the school". "Most of these students were in the art class because they have no other subject to do".

The education system in many schools has increasingly prioritized the goal of passing examinations, which has resulted in a shift towards emphasizing memorization and reproducing of information, often at the expense of fostering creative exploration and critical thinking.

4.6 The Relevance of Contemporary Visual Art in Secondary Schools in Gulu District

The inclusion of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Uganda holds several important benefits for students, their communities, and society as a whole.

Art teachers have reported from interviews that; *contemporary visual arts provide a platform for students to express their cultural identity, beliefs, and experiences. They added that through art, students can explore their heritage and communicate their perspectives on local and global issues.*

Art offers students a creative avenue to delve into their cultural heritage, traditions, and history. Through various artistic mediums like painting, sculpture, music, dance, and storytelling, students can explore the stories, symbols, and values that define their cultural identity. This exploration helps them develop a deeper connection to their roots and a sense of belonging. This agrees with Oliver et al. (2019) who cited that when seen holistically, arts integration views the arts as a means of helping K–16 learners develop into entire person body, mind, and spirit. This highlights opportunities for fostering imagination, creativity, and expression in order to educate engaged citizens in a democratic society, by combining many artistic mediums, such as visual arts, photography, poem writing, and storytelling are two examples of how to make these processes evident. This task of integrating the arts was perceived as awakening the soul.



Figure 4.3: Art teacher engaging Senior Five students of Gulu City High School

Source: The researcher

Besides showing the Art teacher engaging students, Figure 4.3 also shows Art pieces that have been made by students. Hence that indicates that through visual art, students expressed their experience in attending visual art classes by making some art pieces.

Teachers said that; *engaging learners in artistic practices nurtures their creative thinking and problem-solving skills. They added that students learn to approach challenges with open-mindedness and innovative solutions, which are valuable skills in all aspects of life.*

Art teachers reported that; *students who analyze and critique artworks are encouraged to think critically about complex ideas, fostering a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives.* Analyzing and critiquing artworks enabled students to examine various elements, such as composition, symbolism, technique, and context. This process encourages them to think critically, assess multiple factors, and formulate well-reasoned opinions.

According to some secondary school art teachers; *art provides a unique medium for self-expression where students can convey their emotions, thoughts, and narratives through their artwork, contributing to the development of self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment.* Art is a means of self-expression to students since it offers a powerful platform for individuals, especially students, to express themselves in ways that may be difficult through other means. This can lead to a deeper understanding and acceptance of one's emotions and thoughts.

Administrators also reported in the interview that; *visual arts teach students to communicate visually and effectively. They learn to convey messages, ideas, and emotions through imagery, an essential skill in a world increasingly reliant on visual communication.* Visual arts education helps students develop visual literacy skills, which help them to become proficient in interpreting and understanding visual information, which was crucial in a visually saturated world.

Art teachers from secondary schools in Gulu have also reported that; *contemporary art often reflects and responds to global issues, connecting students to broader social and cultural contexts. Exposure to diverse artistic styles and themes fosters a global perspective.* Exposure to contemporary art can make students more aware of pressing global issues, such as climate change, social justice, migration, and cultural diversity.

Teachers further stated that; *the creative industry was growing globally, offering various career paths in areas such as design, animation, illustration, advertising, and more. Providing students with a foundation in contemporary art can open doors to future vocational opportunities.* The creative industry encompasses a wide range of career options, including graphic design, animation, illustration, advertising, marketing, film production, and more. This finding agrees with Swapp (2016) urged that visual arts support promoting growth, novelty, creativeness, and change in rudimentary students. Swapp added that through arts, learners attain skills like resilience, grit, and a development attitude to aid themselves major their craft, do well intellectually, and prosper in life past school. Indeed, using such skills students can explore diverse vocational paths within the art industry and be able to get employed.

Teachers revealed that; *engaging students in artistic activities can serve as a form of stress relief and contribute to their overall well-being. Art-making provides a productive outlet for emotions and a means to relax and unwind.* Artistic activities offer a constructive way for students to manage and regulate their emotions. It allows them to express and process their feelings, which can be particularly beneficial during times of stress or emotional turmoil. At one point in one of the secondary schools, students who did not go for lunch break were observed sketching and drawing as a means of passing time and getting off the stress of not having lunch. This finding agrees with Hardiman et al., (2019) who emphasized that a variety of arts instructional methods and art additions inside art forms such as dance, drama, visual arts, or music are imparted in separate programs channelled to students' attainment of art principles. Therefore, through such art activities, students can get relieved from stress, which contributes to their overall well-being.

They added that; *contemporary art often addresses social issues, fostering empathy and understanding for marginalized groups and societal challenges. Students can gain insight into the experiences of others through art.* Art has the power to evoke empathy by allowing students to connect emotionally with the experiences of others, especially marginalized groups.

They also said that; *art has the power to bring communities together. Students' artworks can be shared in local exhibitions or community events, promoting cultural exchange and fostering community pride.* Involving students in local exhibitions or community events that showcase their artwork encourages active participation and engagement with their community. Also, art exhibitions featuring students' work provide an opportunity for cultural exchange.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we embark on a journey through the culmination of our research efforts. Having meticulously examined the research problem, delved into the methodology, and scrutinized the data. This chapter presents a summary of findings, conclusion, and recommendations all in line with the research objectives as follows;

5.2 Summary of findings

5.2.1 Summary of the integration of Contemporary Visual Arts in Secondary Schools curriculum in Gulu District.

The main modes of teaching contemporary visual art in secondary schools in Gulu District include;

Using a combination of practical assignments during examinations and test assessments.

Providing students with opportunities to learn the history of art by theory.

Integrating art in other subjects like history, geography, literature, mathematics, physics, biology, and agriculture.

Regularly exposing learners to contemporary art to enable them to gain extra skills that match the 21st century contemporary art skills.

Engaging learners in creative thinking and expression during contemporary art lessons.

Teaching contemporary visual arts by engaging learners in practical art-making to gain skills.

Teaching contemporary visual arts by aligning with the national curriculum.

5.2.2 Summary of Othering factors limiting Students' Learning of Contemporary Visual Arts in Secondary Schools in Gulu District.

The other factors limiting students' learning of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Gulu District are;

This study has established that teachers in secondary schools in the Gulu District lacked enough resources to enable them express contemporary art to learners. They also added that the resources that were available were not enough to meet the 21st-century requirements of visual art.

This study also established from contemporary visual art teachers in secondary schools in Gulu that they faced challenges of insufficient classroom space, lack of proper lighting, and inadequate ventilation.

This study further found from teachers that schools faced a challenge of few qualified contemporary visual art teachers and they attributed this to the bias that the public has developed about art subjects in secondary schools and higher institutions of learning.

This research has learned that contemporary art students in secondary schools in Gulu District are limited by the contemporary art curriculum followed by some of the schools, which has not been updated to reflect contemporary art practices and trends of the 21st century.

Contemporary visual art students in Gulu have also been found to be faced with socioeconomic challenges. These have made art education seem less important to students and their families. Families have also prioritized education that they perceive as directly leading to stable employment opportunities. Subjects like science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) are often seen as more practical and directly linked to job prospects. Unlike art education, on the other hand

is sometimes seen as less likely to lead to a secure career, especially in fields with traditional job security concerns

It was found out from this research that another factor limiting students' learning of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Gulu district is that Gulu City is not yet blessed with enough areas for art exhibitions, galleries, and other art spaces. They added that this has restricted students' exposure to contemporary artworks and artists. This exposure is crucial for expanding their horizons and understanding the broader art world.

It was also found in this study that gender roles and expectations sometimes affected how students were encouraged to pursue art education. Girls, in particular, most likely faced additional challenges and biases in accessing and excelling in visual arts education.

Limited technology and connectivity for contemporary art education to match the 21st-century requirements were yet another factor cited in this study.

Most students from secondary schools of Gulu and their families were not aware of the potential career paths in the field of contemporary visual arts. This led to a lack of motivation and interest in pursuing art education beyond the school level.

Learners in their schools had a strong focus to only pass examinations and this led to more focus on memorization and regurgitation of information rather than on creative exploration and critical thinking.

5.2.3 Summary of the Relevance of Contemporary Visual Arts in Secondary Schools in Gulu District.

The relevance of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Gulu district includes;

Contemporary visual arts provide a platform for students in secondary schools in Gulu district to express their cultural identity, beliefs, and experiences. They added that through art, students can explore their heritage and communicate their perspectives on local and global issues

Engaging learners in artistic practices nurtures their creative thinking and problem-solving skills. Also, through learning contemporary visual arts, students learn to approach challenges with open-mindedness and innovative solutions, which are valuable skills in all aspects of life.

Through learning contemporary visual artworks, students in Secondary schools in Gulu District can analyze and critique artworks; hence they get encouraged to think critically about complex ideas, thus fostering a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives.

Contemporary visual art provides a unique medium for self-expression to secondary school students in Gulu district where they can convey their emotions, thoughts, and narratives through their artwork, contributing to the development of self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment.

It was reported that visual arts teach students in secondary schools in Gulu District to communicate visually and effectively. They learn to convey messages, ideas, and emotions through imagery, an essential skill in the world which is increasingly reliant on visual communication.

This study has found that contemporary art in secondary schools in Gulu District helps students to often reflect and respond to global issues, connecting students to broader social and cultural contexts. Exposure to diverse artistic styles and themes fosters a global perspective.

This study further found that offering various career paths in areas such as design, animation, illustration, advertising, and more, provides students with a foundation in contemporary art and can open doors to future vocational opportunities.

This study also found that engaging students in secondary schools in artistic activities served as a form of stress relief and contribute to their overall well-being. Art-making provides a productive outlet for emotions and a means to relax and unwind.

This study has established that contemporary art in secondary schools in Gulu district often addresses social issues, fostering empathy and understanding for marginalized groups and societal challenges. Students can gain insight into the experiences of others through art.

In Gulu District, art has the power to bring communities together. Students' artworks in secondary schools are shared in local exhibitions or community events, promoting cultural exchange and fostering community pride.

5.3 Conclusion

In summary, Othering contemporary visual art in secondary school undermines the goal of holistic art education. Integrating contemporary art not only enriches students' understanding of the art world but also equips them with the critical tools to navigate and interpret the world around them. The purpose of undertaking this study was to examine the othering of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Gulu District in northern Uganda. The specific interest of this study was to find out how the curriculum integrates contemporary visual arts. To find out factors limiting the implementation of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools and to explore the relevance of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools.

Therefore this study found out that there were several modes used to teach contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Gulu District some of which include; using a combination of practical assignments during examination and test assessments, providing students with opportunities to learn the history of art by theory, integrating art in other subjects, regularly exposing learners to

contemporary art, engaging learners in creative thinking and expression during contemporary art lessons, engaging learners in practical art making and aligning art with the national curriculum.

This study also found out that there were quite several ‘othering’ factors limiting students’ learning of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools and some these factors include; Lack of enough resources to enable teachers express contemporary art to learners, the challenge of insufficient classroom space, lack of proper lighting, and inadequate ventilation, few qualified contemporary visual art teachers, limitations in the contemporary art curriculum followed by some schools and socioeconomic challenges, family prioritisation of education that they perceive as directly, limited art exhibition areas like; galleries, and other art spaces.

This study explored secondary schools in Gulu District and found out the relevance of contemporary visual arts. Some of the established relevance of art include; Contemporary visual arts provide a platform for students in secondary schools to express their cultural identity, beliefs and experiences. Nurtures students’ creative thinking and problem-solving skills. Learning contemporary visual arts enabled students learn to approach challenges with open-mindedness and innovative solutions. Art students in secondary schools were able to analyse and critique artworks. Learning contemporary visual art provided a unique medium for self-expression to secondary school students in Gulu district.

Therefore, it was based on these findings that this study concluded that there was othering of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Gulu District in northern Uganda.

5.4 Recommendations

The following policy recommendations have been suggested based on the findings from this study on the three specific objectives under study;

The government through the Ministry of Education and Sports should ensure that the national curriculum be reviewed to ensure that it adequately incorporates contemporary art education as a core component of the visual arts curriculum. This should encompass both practical and theoretical aspects of contemporary art.

Secondary schools need to develop and implement specialized training programs for art teachers to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively teach contemporary art. This should include strategies for integrating contemporary art into their teaching methods.

The government through the Ministry of Education should ensure that secondary schools have access to adequate art supplies and facilities to support practical art-making. This may involve allocating additional resources for art programs.

Policymakers in the Ministry of Education should advocate for increased funding for the arts in education, specifically targeting resources for contemporary art education. Ensure that schools have adequate budgets to procure art supplies, materials, and equipment necessary for teaching. Invest in the renovation and expansion of classrooms dedicated to art education.

The Ministry of Education and Sports should address issues related to inadequate classroom space, proper lighting, and ventilation to create a conducive learning environment for contemporary art.

The Ministry of Education and Sports should develop and implement ongoing training programs for art teachers, focusing on contemporary art pedagogy and techniques. Encourage professional development and certification for teachers in this field.

5.5 Suggested Areas for Further Research

Further research could investigate the allocation of resources for teaching contemporary visual arts. Are there specific resource deficiencies that can be identified and addressed, such as funding for art supplies, classroom infrastructure improvement, or teacher training?

Explore the qualifications and training of art teachers in secondary schools. Are there specific gaps in their preparation for teaching contemporary visual arts? Investigate potential training programs or strategies to enhance teachers' qualifications and pedagogical approaches.

Investigate the extent to which the contemporary art curriculum aligns with current art trends and the needs of students. Assess the feasibility and impact of curriculum revisions to better reflect the evolving field of contemporary visual arts.

Further research can examine the reasons behind the prioritization of certain subjects over art within families. This can involve qualitative studies to understand parental attitudes and perceptions of the value of art education.

Investigate the possibilities for expanding art exhibition spaces in some districts, including the establishment of galleries and art venues. Assess how this could enhance students' exposure to contemporary art and their ability to showcase their work.

Explore in-depth how contemporary visual arts serve as a means for students to express their cultural identity, beliefs, and experiences. Investigate specific art projects or initiatives that facilitate this expression and their impact on students' sense of identity.

5.6 Limitations to this research

This research was faced with the following limitations;

The available resources were limited and access to schools was almost restricted therefore the sample size or the selection of schools was limited, potentially leading to a non-representative sample. This limited the generalizability of the findings.

Gathering data on classroom practices relied heavily on self-reporting, which introduced biases or inaccuracies in responses.

The researcher faced time constraints that limited the ability to conduct in-depth observations or collect longitudinal data, which could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Limited funding or access to resources (e.g., art supplies, and equipment) hindered the implementation of certain aspects of the study, such as practical art assessments.

Focusing solely on secondary schools from the Gulu district limited the broader applicability of the study's findings to other regions or contexts. Teachers and students modify their behavior or responses when aware of being observed, potentially leading to observer bias.

The complexity of analyzing qualitative data, such as artistic expressions, introduced subjectivity in the interpretation of results.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

1. Age of the respondent
2. Gender of the respondent.....
3. Education level of the respondent.....
4. Could you please tell me the way contemporary visual arts are taught in your school?
5. In your opinion, has the mode of teaching contemporary visual arts improved learning in your school?
6. From your experience, what are the factors limiting students' learning of contemporary visual arts in your school?
7. Suggest how students' learning of contemporary visual arts can be improved in your school.
8. Kindly suggest the relevance of contemporary visual arts to learners in your school.
9. Suggest the relevance of teaching visual arts in your school to the community.

END

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE DISTRICT EDUCATION STAFF

1. Age of the respondent
2. Gender of the respondent.....
3. Education level of the respondent.....
4. From your observation, how are contemporary visual arts taught in secondary schools of Gulu district?
5. In your opinion, how does the teaching mode of contemporary visual arts impact learning in secondary schools?
6. From your experience, what are the factors limiting learning of contemporary visual arts in secondary schools in Gulu district?
7. Suggest how students' learning of contemporary visual arts can be improved in secondary schools in Gulu district.
8. Kindly suggest the relevance of contemporary visual arts to learners in secondary schools in Gulu district?
9. Suggest the relevance of teaching visual arts in secondary schools to the community in Gulu district.

END

APPENDIX III: OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Table 2. Observation Checklist

Item No	List of Items to Observe	Yes	No	Comment
1.	Picture paintings			
2.	Drawings in classroom			
3.	Sculpture			
4.	Broadcasted arts			
5.	Scenery designs			
6.	Students practicing dance and drama			
7.	Learners attending video art			
8.	Learners practicing digital art			

APPENDIX IV: HISTORICAL DOCUMENT REVIEW GUIDE

Table 3. Historical document review guide

Document No.	Name of the document	Yes	No	Remarks
1.	Textbooks,			
2.	Journal articles,			
3.	Newspapers,			
4.	Biographies			
5.	Documents containing drawings			

