THE IMPACT OF MUSIC AND ARTS EDUCATION IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS' CREATIVITY AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

Music and Arts education remains an essential component of holistic learning as schools seek to develop learners who are creative, expressive, academically competent, and prepared for the demands of the twenty-first century. This study determined the impact of Music and Arts education on the creativity and academic performance of junior high school learners in selected public and private secondary schools in Dagupan City during the academic year 2024–2025. Specifically, it examined learners' levels of participation in Music and Arts education, their creativity levels, their academic performance, the relationships among participation, creativity, and academic performance, and the impact of Music and Arts education as a basis for an action plan. The study employed a quantitative correlational research design involving 500 junior high school learners. Data were gathered using a researcher-made participation questionnaire, a standardized creativity assessment tool measuring fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration, and official school records for Grade Point Average in core subjects. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficient, and simple linear regression were used to analyze the data. Results showed that most learners had moderate to low participation in Music and Arts education, moderate creativity levels, and generally satisfactory academic performance. Significant positive relationships were found between participation and creativity, participation and academic performance, and creativity and academic performance. Regression results further indicated that Music and Arts participation significantly predicted creativity and academic performance, with a stronger impact on creativity. The study concluded that Music and Arts education contribute meaningfully to learners' creative development and academic achievement.

Keywords: Music and Arts education, creativity, academic performance, junior high school learners, arts participation, correlational study

1. Introduction

Creativity and academic performance are central outcomes of contemporary basic education, particularly as schools are expected to prepare learners for complex social, technological, and professional environments. Creativity enables learners to generate original ideas, approach problems from multiple perspectives, and communicate meaning through diverse forms of expression. Academic performance, on the other hand, reflects learners' mastery of prescribed competencies and their capacity to apply knowledge across subject areas. In junior high school, these two outcomes are especially important because learners are in a developmental stage marked by increasing cognitive flexibility, identity formation, peer interaction, and exploration of interests. Music and Arts education provides a meaningful context for cultivating these competencies because it engages learners not only intellectually but also emotionally, socially, and aesthetically.

Music and Arts education contribute to holistic learning by providing structured opportunities for self-expression, imagination, discipline, collaboration, and reflective thinking. UNESCO (2024) emphasized that culture and arts education can help develop creativity, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, well-being, and academic outcomes, while also promoting openness, cultural understanding, and respect for diversity. This global policy direction affirms the

value of arts education not as a peripheral activity but as an essential part of learner development. In the Philippine junior high school context, Music and Arts are formally embedded in the MAPEH curriculum, making them accessible channels through which learners may develop creative and academic competencies. However, the extent to which participation in these learning experiences relates to creativity and academic achievement requires systematic empirical examination.

The relationship between arts education and learner outcomes has received sustained scholarly attention. The OECD report *Art for Art's Sake? The Impact of Arts Education* reviewed empirical evidence on arts classes, arts-integrated instruction, and out-of-school arts study, noting that arts education has often been associated with creative thinking, behavioral and social skills, academic motivation, communication, and cooperation (Winner et al., 2013). However, the same report cautioned that causal claims must be interpreted carefully, as evidence varies across art forms and research designs. This distinction is important for the present study because it employs a correlational design, which can identify the direction and strength of relationships but cannot establish that participation in Music and Arts directly causes improvements in creativity or academic performance. Thus, the study provides localized quantitative evidence on these associations among junior high school learners in Dagupan City.

Creativity in adolescence is a complex and developing construct. It is commonly reflected in fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration, dimensions often assessed through standardized creativity measures. Said-Metwaly et al. (2021), in a meta-analysis of divergent thinking development among school-age children and adolescents, found that creativity development does not follow a simple linear pattern and may show variations across grade levels, tasks, gender, giftedness, and country contexts. This finding suggests that creativity should be studied in relation to learning environments and educational experiences that may support or constrain its development. Music and Arts education may provide such an environment by encouraging learners to imagine, perform, interpret, improvise, design, evaluate, and revise their outputs. Through these activities, students can practice both divergent and convergent thinking, which are essential in creative production and problem-solving.

Participation is also an important variable because the benefits of arts education may depend on the degree, frequency, and quality of engagement. Learners who participate regularly in music, visual arts, drama, dance, or related school-based programs may have more opportunities to practice creative processes than those with limited or no exposure. Participation may also strengthen academic behaviors such as attention, persistence, self-confidence, discipline, and collaboration. These behaviors may indirectly support academic performance in core subjects. Nevertheless, participation in Music and Arts education does not operate in isolation. Academic achievement may also be influenced by prior performance, socioeconomic background, access to resources, teacher quality, parental support, motivation, and school climate. For this reason, the present study treats Music and Arts participation as one important factor associated with creativity and academic performance rather than as the sole determinant of learner success.

Despite the growing recognition of the educational value of the arts, Music and Arts programs are sometimes perceived as less central than traditional core academic subjects. Such perceptions may reduce instructional time, limit resources, and weaken opportunities for learners to engage meaningfully in artistic activities. This issue is significant because junior high school learners need educational experiences that develop not only academic proficiency but also imagination, confidence, communication, and social-emotional skills. If Music and Arts education is empirically linked with creativity and academic performance, schools and education leaders may have stronger grounds for sustaining, improving, and integrating arts programs within the curriculum.

Accordingly, this study determined the impact of Music and Arts education on junior high school learners' creativity and academic performance. Specifically, it examined learners' levels of

participation in Music and Arts education, their creativity, and their academic performance, as measured by Grade Point Average in core subjects. It also tested the significant relationships between participation and creativity, participation and academic performance, and creativity and academic performance. Furthermore, it assessed the level of impact of Music and Arts education and developed an action plan to enhance learners' creativity and academic performance. By focusing on junior high school learners in selected public and private secondary schools in Dagupan City, the study aimed to generate context-specific evidence that may support curriculum planning, school-based arts programming, teacher practice, and learner-centered interventions. Ultimately, the study positions Music and Arts education as a potentially valuable contributor to holistic learner development in the junior high school setting.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationships among junior high school learners' participation in Music and Arts education, their creativity levels, and their academic performance. This design was appropriate because the study sought to determine the extent and direction of association among naturally occurring variables without manipulating the learners' exposure to music and arts programs. Participation in Music and Arts education was measured through a researcher-designed survey questionnaire that gathered information on learners' involvement in school-based music, visual arts, drama, dance, and related activities. Creativity was assessed using a standardized creativity assessment tool measuring fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration, while academic performance was determined through official school records, particularly Grade Point Average in core subjects. The quantitative approach used numerical data and statistical procedures to describe participation, creativity, and academic performance, and to test whether significant relationships existed among these variables. Through Pearson correlation and regression analysis, the design provided empirical evidence on the degree to which Music and Arts participation was associated with creativity and academic achievement among junior high school learners in selected public and private secondary schools in Dagupan City.

2.2 Participants

The study was conducted with 500 junior high school learners enrolled in selected public and private secondary schools in Dagupan City, Ilocos Region, Philippines, during the academic year 2024–2025. The respondents represented learners at the junior high school level, particularly those in the developmental stage during which creativity, academic identity, social engagement, and interest in artistic activities are actively forming. They served as the primary source of data for the study because their level of participation in Music and Arts education, creativity, and academic performance were the central variables under investigation. Data on participation were collected through a researcher-designed survey, while creativity was measured using a standardized creativity assessment tool. Academic performance was determined through official school records, particularly Grade Point Average in core subjects such as Mathematics, Science, English, and Filipino. The inclusion of learners from both public and private schools allowed the study to capture a broader picture of Music and Arts participation and its relationship with creativity and academic achievement within the local educational context. Through this respondent group, the study generated quantitative evidence on how engagement in Music and Arts education was associated with the creative and academic development of junior high school learners.

2.3 Instrumentation

The study utilized three primary instruments to gather quantitative data on learners' participation in Music and Arts education, creativity levels, and academic performance. First, a researcher-designed survey questionnaire was used to determine the respondents' level of participation in school-based Music and Arts activities, including instrumental music, vocal music, visual arts, drama, dance, and related curricular or extracurricular programs. The questionnaire collected information on the type, duration, frequency, and perceived level of learners' involvement in these activities. Second, a standardized creativity assessment tool, such as the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking or a culturally adapted equivalent, was employed to measure learners' creativity in terms of fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. This instrument provided quantifiable scores that reflected the respondents' creative thinking abilities. Third, academic performance was measured using official school records, particularly the learners' Grade Point Average in core subjects such as Mathematics, Science, English, and Filipino. The use of official records ensured that academic performance data were objective and reliable. Before full administration, the participation questionnaire was pilot-tested to assess clarity, comprehensibility, and content validity. Together, these instruments enabled systematic measurement of the variables and provided the empirical basis for determining the relationships among Music and Arts participation, creativity, and academic performance.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data gathered in the study were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical procedures appropriate for a quantitative correlational design. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to determine the respondents' level of participation in Music and Arts education, their creativity levels in terms of fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration, and their academic performance based on Grade Point Average in core subjects. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was employed to determine the significance, strength, and direction of the relationships between participation in Music and Arts education and creativity, participation in Music and Arts education and academic performance, and creativity and academic performance. To further determine the impact of Music and Arts education, a simple linear regression analysis was used to examine the extent to which participation in Music and Arts education predicted overall creativity and academic performance. The hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. Through these statistical procedures, the study generated empirical evidence on the association and predictive influence of Music and Arts participation on the creative and academic development of junior high school learners.

3 Results

The results showed that junior high school learners had varied levels of participation in Music and Arts education. Among the 500 respondents, the largest group demonstrated moderate participation: 180 learners (36.0%) regularly participated in one art form or occasionally engaged in multiple art forms. This was followed by 155 learners (31.0%) with low participation, while 85 learners (17.0%) reported no participation in school-based Music and Arts programs. Only 80 learners, or 16.0%, demonstrated high participation, indicating regular engagement with multiple art forms. These findings suggest that while many learners were exposed to Music and Arts education, sustained and extensive participation remained limited among the respondents.

In terms of creativity, the respondents demonstrated moderate levels across the measured dimensions of fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. The overall creativity index was 144.55, with fluency achieving the highest mean score of 45.20, followed by flexibility (38.75), elaboration (32.50), and originality (28.10). These results indicate that learners were generally capable of producing ideas, shifting perspectives, and developing responses, although originality

appeared to be the least developed dimension. The findings suggest that creativity among junior high school learners may still be strengthened through more consistent exposure to Music and Arts activities that encourage imagination, experimentation, and self-expression.

The respondents' academic performance was generally satisfactory, as evidenced by their Grade Point Average in core subjects. Filipino obtained the highest mean GPA of 86.00, followed by English with 85.30, Science with 84.15, and Mathematics with 82.50. The overall GPA was 84.49, indicating that the learners performed within a satisfactory academic range. These results provide a baseline for understanding the academic standing of the respondents and for examining its association with their participation in Music and Arts education and creativity levels. The relatively consistent GPA scores also suggest that the learners had comparable academic performance across the core subject areas.

Correlation results revealed significant positive relationships among the study's major variables. Participation in Music and Arts education was significantly and positively related to all dimensions of creativity, with the strongest association observed between participation and the overall creativity index. The correlation between participation and overall creativity was moderate, while the relationships with fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration ranged from weak to moderate. Participation was also significantly and positively related to academic performance, although the correlations were weak across Mathematics, Science, English, Filipino, and overall GPA. These findings suggest that greater engagement in Music and Arts education was associated with higher creativity and slightly better academic performance among the respondents.

The study further found a significant positive relationship between creativity and academic performance, with overall creativity showing a moderate association with overall GPA. This indicates that learners with higher creativity scores tended to perform better academically. Regression analysis also showed that participation in Music and Arts education significantly predicted both overall creativity and overall GPA. Participation explained 15.1% of the variance in creativity and 7.2% of the variance in academic performance, suggesting that the impact of Music and Arts education was stronger on creativity than on academic achievement. Overall, the results support the conclusion that Music and Arts education contributes meaningfully to the creative development of junior high school learners and has a positive, though modest, association with their academic performance.

4. Discussion

The finding that most junior high school learners demonstrated moderate to low participation in Music and Arts education suggests that exposure to artistic learning opportunities was present but not consistently sustained across the respondent group. This result is important because meaningful arts education depends not only on formal inclusion in the curriculum but also on learners' actual involvement in music, visual arts, drama, dance, and related activities. UNESCO (2024) emphasized that culture and arts education support creativity, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, well-being, and academic outcomes, but these benefits require strengthened access, teacher preparation, and recognition of artistic competencies within education systems. In the context of the present study, the limited number of learners with high participation indicates the need for schools to provide more inclusive, engaging, and sustained Music and Arts opportunities so that more students can experience the developmental benefits of artistic engagement.

The moderate creativity levels of the respondents, particularly in fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration, support the view that creativity among adolescents is developmental and can be influenced by educational experience. The study's use of creativity dimensions is consistent with Torrance's framework, which identifies fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration as core indicators of creative thinking (Torrance, 1974). The relatively lower score in

originality suggests that, while learners may be able to produce ideas and expand their responses, they may still need more opportunities to generate novel, uncommon ideas. This finding is supported by Said-Metwaly et al. (2021), who explained that divergent thinking development among school-age children and adolescents does not follow a simple linear pattern and may vary across grade level, task type, and context. Therefore, sustained Music and Arts participation may serve as one avenue for strengthening learners' creative thinking, particularly when activities encourage exploration, improvisation, experimentation, and self-expression.

The significant positive relationship between Music and Arts participation and creativity corroborates existing evidence that arts education is associated with creative thinking and innovation-related skills. The OECD report by Winner, Goldstein, and Vincent-Lancrin (2013) noted that arts education has been linked to critical and creative thinking, communication, cooperation, motivation, and other skills relevant to innovation. In the present study, participation showed a moderate positive relationship with overall creativity, indicating that learners who were more engaged in Music and Arts activities tended to have higher creativity scores. This relationship may be explained by the nature of artistic learning, which requires students to interpret, imagine, compose, perform, revise, and present ideas in expressive forms. Such processes provide repeated opportunities for divergent thinking, flexible problem-solving, and idea elaboration, all of which are central to creativity development.

The significant but weak positive relationship between Music and Arts participation and academic performance suggests that arts engagement may contribute to academic achievement, although its influence is more modest than its relationship with creativity. This finding is consistent with the cautious conclusion of Winner et al. (2013), who reported that arts education may be associated with outcomes in non-arts academic areas, but evidence should be interpreted carefully because academic achievement is influenced by many factors. In the present study, participation in Music and Arts education significantly predicted overall GPA but explained only a small portion of its variance. This indicates that while artistic participation may support academic behaviors such as focus, discipline, confidence, engagement, and persistence, academic performance is also shaped by other variables, including prior achievement, socioeconomic background, home support, teacher quality, study habits, and school environment. Thus, Music and Arts education should be viewed as a meaningful contributor to academic development rather than the sole determinant of academic success.

Finally, the significant positive relationship between creativity and academic performance strengthens the argument that creative thinking is relevant to learning across subject areas. Learners who demonstrated higher creativity scores tended to perform better academically, suggesting that creative thinking may support comprehension, problem-solving, communication, and flexible application of knowledge. The regression results further showed that Music and Arts participation had a stronger predictive value for creativity than for academic performance, highlighting the direct relevance of arts education to creative development. These findings justify the proposed action plan to strengthen Music and Arts programs, promote active participation, integrate arts-based strategies across the curriculum, provide teacher training, and raise awareness among parents and school stakeholders. Overall, the study supports the inclusion of Music and Arts education as a valuable component of holistic junior high school learning, particularly for fostering creativity and positively contributing to academic performance.

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