



The status of art education in the development plans of the Republic of Turkey

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Abstract

Arts education plays a significant role in fostering cultural awareness, creativity, and social development within educational systems, while also contributing to broader economic and social progress. Despite its recognized importance, limited research has systematically examined how arts education is positioned within national development planning and whether strategic objectives are supported by practical policy frameworks. This study aims to examine the extent to which arts education is incorporated into national development plans and to analyze the roles attributed to arts education within these policy documents. The research employs a qualitative design using document analysis. The study materials consist of 12 development plans obtained from the official website of the Presidency of Strategy and Budget. Data were analyzed through content analysis using the MAXQDA program to identify recurring themes and policy orientations. The findings indicate that arts education is framed in relation to cultural identity, value transmission, institutional development, and economic contribution. In addition, arts education is presented as a strategic component for social integration and the development of qualified human capital. However, the analysis also reveals that policy objectives are frequently not supported by clearly defined implementation strategies. The study highlights the need for stronger institutional mechanisms and policy frameworks to enhance the practical integration of arts education within educational and social development agendas.

Keywords: Arts education; cultural policy; development planning; educational policy; qualitative research.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the important social institutions that aims at the continuous development, transformation, and progress of the individual and society. From a philosophical perspective, education is seen as the organization of the relationship between thinking and action through the individual's experiences (Dewey, 1938); in critical pedagogy, it is positioned as a consciousness-raising and action alliance aimed at the liberation of individuals (Freire, 1995). Education is defined as the process of deliberately bringing about desired changes in an individual's behavior through their own experiences (Ertürk, 2013). International policy documents encompass education in both formal and lifelong learning contexts. (UNESCO, 2015; OECD, 2019). Education is a process that aims to empower individuals by transferring knowledge and skills, to ensure their socialization and individual development (Biesta, 2015). In higher education contexts, research has shown that arts education positively influences cognitive engagement and critical thinking outcomes, reinforcing the role of education in holistic development (Li & Qi, 2025).

The individual objectives of education are to shape and develop personality, to establish and develop democratic awareness, and to enhance the ability to adapt to life and society; while its social objectives are to contribute to achieving social development and progress goals (Karaman-Kepenekci and Taşkın, 2017). According to the human capital theory among education economics theories, education strengthens human capital, which is one of the main determinants of economic growth and productivity (Schultz, 1961). One essential component of sustainable economic growth is human capital; therefore, public policies and practices play a decisive role in developing individuals' knowledge and skills (Cerev & Ünlü, 2023). In UNESCO's 2030 Education Agenda, education is seen as a powerful tool for sustainable development (UNESCO, 2015). Education is also crucial for many policy outcomes that are critical to policymakers and citizens (Burgess, 2016).

Education has individual, economic, social, and political functions, and it can be said to be a holistic process that encompasses not only an individual's cognitive development but also their emotional, social, and cultural aspects. In this context, it can be stated that art, as an integral part of education, develops an individual's aesthetic sensitivity, creativity, and original thinking skills. Dewey (2021) emphasizes that art is a process that integrates individual experiences with life. Similarly, Eisner (2003) states that art education provides individuals with different ways of thinking. Akkurt and Boratav (2018) emphasize that art education is necessary for the development of children's creativity and talents throughout all levels of education. Catterall (2012) presents evidence regarding the positive effects of artistic activities on students' academic achievement. Contemporary educational approaches aim to create societies that are constantly developing in science and technology, arts, and cultural fields, by fostering skill acquisition, developing individuals' interests and talents, revealing their latent powers, and raising creative and productive individuals, in addition to knowledge transfer. Therefore, art education is a significant component of modern educational methods (Aral, 1999; Karabulut, 2008; Akkurt & Boratav, 2018).

Creativity is not a phenomenon exclusive to individuals with innate talent; every individual has their own unique way of creating, and art education provides the opportunity to bring these characteristics to light (Telli, 1980). Art education is a specialized form of education that focuses on the creative and expressive aspects of learning (Lukaka, 2023; Wang et al., 2025). It is thought to encourage the development of social-emotional skills, empathy, and critical thinking, as well as creativity (Winner et al., 2013). Studies in educational psychology also indicate that environmental and interpersonal factors, such as peer and teacher support, have measurable effects on students' creative thinking development (Shi et al., 2025). In other words, art education

is a fundamental educational component that supports the multidimensional development of individuals and strengthens their active participation in social life (Catterall, 2012).

According to San (2001), arts education refers to teaching activities carried out in as many different art disciplines as possible, which should be given equal value to science and technical fields in the formal education process. According to Ünver (2016), it is the process of developing desirable artistic behaviors through an individual's experiences. Arts education is also based on the development of aesthetic sensitivity, creativity, and multiple forms of expression (San, 2010; Kırıçoğlu, 2015; Uçan, 1997). According to Li (2023), the aim is to add creativity, aesthetics, design thinking, and a human-centered perspective to learning processes by adding the element of "art" to the technical and scientific content of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) in education processes. This makes it possible for students to more successfully learn the abilities needed in the modern world, like creativity, teamwork, and critical thinking. Bamford (2006) states that high-quality arts education programs support students' academic achievement through the pedagogical gains they provide, ensure the transfer of cultural heritage to future generations, and strengthen social cohesion by developing intercultural communication skills. The positive effects of art education on the cultural and economic development of students are also emphasized by Mahgoub and Alsoud (2015).

The history of art education has evolved in parallel with both philosophical foundations and social and cultural transformations. In ancient Greece, thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle argued that art was an educational tool, emphasizing the importance of aesthetic values for the development of character and harmony with society (Zengin & Güllühan, 2023). In the West, art education began to develop in the late 18th century, and in the 19th century, painting and drawing classes found their place in schools with educational reforms. Interest increased with the industrial revolution, and the institutionalization process accelerated at the beginning of the 20th century; cultural and aesthetic development came to the fore in some periods, while economic or social goals took precedence in others. Two fundamental approaches emerged during this process: education through art and education for art. The former emphasizes the development of the individual within the education system, while the latter focuses on the phenomenon of art itself (San, 2001).

The foundations of art education in Turkey were laid during the Ottoman period with Westernization movements, and painting classes in particular found their place in military and civilian schools. The opening of the School of Fine Arts in 1883 was an important turning point in this field. With the establishment of the Republic, art education became institutionalized and was spread through teacher training colleges, community centers, and art institutes. Although the number of art-related institutions in secondary and higher education has gradually increased, deficiencies in infrastructure, equipment, and qualified teaching staff have persisted for a long time (Altinkurt, 2005). Since the 2000s, art education has begun to be reinterpreted with contemporary educational approaches. Methods such as multiple intelligence theory, brain-based learning approaches, and creative drama have increased the impact of arts education in teaching programs and teacher training processes. Today, arts education can be considered a learning area that supports multifaceted thinking, respect for differences, and democratic participation, beyond developing aesthetic awareness in individuals. In developed countries, it is included in teaching programs either as an independent subject or integrated into other subjects, and plays a leading role in extracurricular activities (San, 2001).

Art education is an area that needs to be supported and developed in all its aspects. The economic impacts of art and art education are also relevant. While development is primarily considered an economic concept, it is also informed by social, cultural, and environmental factors within the framework of concepts such as

productivity, production, and innovation (Tekgül & Canlı, 2023). Understanding the relationship between the economic and cultural values created through art and art education, and being aware of their economic impacts, enables a more conscious approach to the formulation of policies on art education (Throsby, 2006). In this context, it can be said that national policy documents addressing arts education are of vital importance for countries to effectively manage their education systems, create qualified human resources, and set development goals in this direction.

National development plans are essential policy papers that lay out a vision for national development and provide economic and sociopolitical goals within a given timeframe, utilizing a comprehensive methodology (Chimhowu et al., 2019). Long-term plans can prioritize the stability and continuity of policies in decision-making processes according to changing conditions. Key factors increasing the importance of national development plans are the need for national planning to align with sustainable development goals and the need to mobilize the public, private, and civil society sectors in line with a shared vision (Harrison, 2023).
Development

Plans include policy suggestions to raise a society's educational services' quality and accessibility, which is crucial to a nation's social, cultural, and economic advancement. However, achieving the goals set out in development plans will only be possible by ensuring the integrity of strategy and implementation (Akay, 2023). Furthermore, while determining the future goals to be achieved in education and the related policies in development plans, data on the current situation is also taken into account (Bolat, 2023).

Over the past twenty years, national plans have become widespread again in many countries; the number of countries with national plans, which stood at approximately 62 in 2006, rose to 134 by 2018; today, a significant portion of the global population lives in countries with development plans (Chimhowu et al., 2019). Although the idea of planned development in Turkey dates back to the Industrial Plans of the 1930s, its institutional and constitutional foundation was laid in the period 1960–1961 (Karakütük, 2016). Twelve national development plans have been prepared and implemented from 1960 to the present. While the first period of development plans emphasized increasing the quantity and quality of education and equal opportunities, subsequent plans approached education as a lifelong process in line with the principle of continuity in education. With the development of industry, approaches such as vocational education, private sector cooperation, and strengthening vocational education through lifelong learning found their place in the plans, and policies for teacher training were developed. In later periods, plans to increase the duration of compulsory basic education for the population of the era and goals to expand preschool education came to the fore. When examining the relationship between recent development plans and education, it is seen that they include goals aimed at training qualified human resources for the information age and improving quality and quantity through lifelong learning (Karakütük, 2016).

Development plans, along with other national programs and policy documents, reinforce the decisive role of education in national development. Educational planning, implemented in line with these documents, aligns educational investments with economic growth objectives. It ensures social justice and equal opportunity, which in turn leads to economic and social development (Karakütük, 2016; OECD, 2012). Including education in national development plans reduces the fragmentation of education policies and enables the creation of a holistic vision (UNESCO, 2015; World Bank Group, 2017).

By fostering an individual's aesthetic sensitivity as well as their cognitive, emotional, and social development, art education is essential for fostering social integration, cultural transmission, and creativity. Creativity and innovation are crucial factors for contemporary economies (Ruppert, 2010). From this

perspective, arts education nourishes production and develops economic and social capacity. The transfer of a society's cultural heritage to future generations ensures the preservation and enrichment of cultural diversity. Countries develop policies and practices to protect and manage this heritage (Ortakçı, 2017; Güleç and Yalçın, 2025). A society's economic and social development is significantly influenced by its policies regarding education, culture, and the arts (Akça et al., 2018). The importance of arts education is a multidimensional issue that must be evaluated not only in a pedagogical context but also within development policies and national planning processes.

1.1. Purpose of the study

The overall objective of this study is to determine the level of inclusion of arts education in the Development Plans of the Republic of Turkey. In line with this overall objective, the following sub-objectives were addressed:

1. How are the functions of the arts in the education and training processes included in the development plans?
2. How are policies and practices aimed at institutionalizing arts education included in development plans?
3. How is the economic dimension of arts education included in development plans?

2. METHOD AND MATERIALS

This section describes the research model, the documents included in the scope of the research, and the data analysis process.

2.1. Research model

This study was designed utilizing qualitative research methods and document analysis techniques with the goal of examining the level to which art education is included in the Republic of Turkey's Development Plans. Document analysis is described as a qualitative research method in which existing documents are systematically examined to find answers to research questions (Fischer, 2005) and meanings, themes, and patterns related to the research questions are revealed (Dalglish et al., 2020). Within the scope of this research, the Development Plans accessed from the official website of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Strategy and Budget Presidency (SBP), were analyzed and evaluated in the context of the concept of art education.

2.2. Study documents

The documents for this study were the Development Plans published on the SBP's official website. Table 1 contains information on the 12 development plans prepared between 1963 and 2028 and their respective periods.

Table 1

Development Plans of the Republic of Turkey by Period (1963–2028)

Document Code	Development Plan	Period
DP1	First Five-Year Development Plan	1963–1967
DP2	Second Five-Year Development Plan	1968–1972
DP3	Third Five-Year Development Plan	1973–1977
DP4	Fourth Five-Year Development Plan	1979–1983
DP5	Fifth Five-Year Development Plan	1985–1989

DP6	Sixth Five-Year Development Plan	1990–1994
DP7	Seventh Five-Year Development Plan	1996–2000
DP8	Long-Term Strategy and Eighth Five-Year Development Plan	2001–2005
DP9	Ninth Development Plan	2007–2013
DP10	Tenth Development Plan and Priority Transformation Programs	2014–2018
DP11	Eleventh Development Plan	2019–2023
DP12	Twelfth Development Plan	2024–2028

Source: Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Strategy and Budget Presidency (SBP, 2025).

The documents listed in Table 1 are arranged chronologically from oldest to newest. Codes have also been assigned to the documents; these codes reflect the categories and themes identified through the analysis of the documents. During the coding process, documents were sorted according to their historical sequence; a number code, such as 1, 2, etc., and a DP (Development Plan) code reflecting the type of document were used. For example, the first document in chronological order was created as DP1, the second as DP2.

2.3. Data analysis

Bowen (2009) defines document analysis as a four-stage process. In this process, documents relevant to the research topic must first be selected. Next, the originality and reliability of the obtained documents are evaluated. In the third stage, the documents are systematically coded and cataloged. Finally, content analysis is performed, and results are reached. The documents to be examined within this framework were determined as Development Plans published between 1963 and 2023.

To ensure the authenticity and reliability of the documents, they were accessed from the official website of the Presidency of Strategy and Budget of the Republic of Turkey. The MAXQDA qualitative data analysis program was used to systematically code the obtained documents. All documents were scanned using the concepts of art and art education. The data obtained were analyzed separately using content analysis techniques. In this context, the concepts of art and art education were first identified objectively and systematically in the documents and coded. The codes obtained were then classified under specific categories. The categories were combined into themes and presented. Categories are presented grouped by themes. To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, the codings performed separately by the researchers were compared, and consensus was reached. Furthermore, to enhance the consistency of the codings obtained from the content analysis, findings were presented with direct quotations from the study documents related to categories and codes placed under the themes.

3. RESULTS

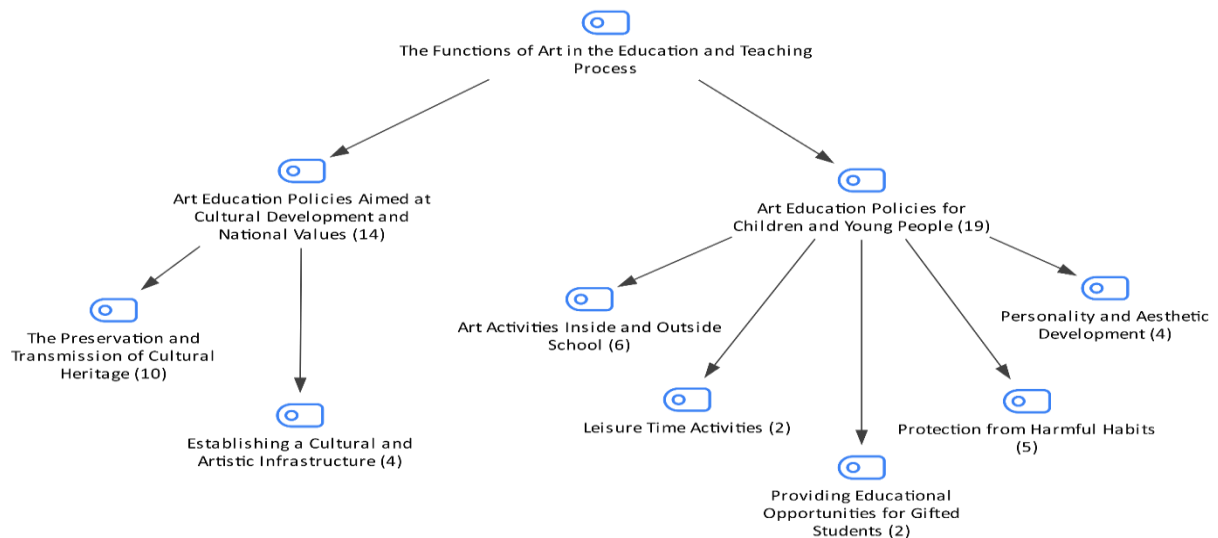
The findings are organized into three distinct themes covering the research questions, along with categories related to these themes and codes that serve as the basis for the categories. Hierarchical code models related to the themes were prepared using the MAXQDA qualitative data analysis program.

3.1. Theme 1: The functions of art in the education and teaching process

Findings related to the theme “The Functions of Art in the Education and Teaching Process” are presented in Figure 1. The coding performed in the analyses related to this theme has been grouped under two categories. These categories are named “art education policies aimed at cultural development and national values” and “art education policies aimed at children and youth.”

Figure 1

Categories and codes related to the theme of the functions of art in the education and teaching process



When examining Figure 1, it is seen that in the category of cultural development and art education policies aimed at national values, art education has become a fundamental tool for cultural development in terms of both preserving cultural heritage and passing it on to future generations, as well as cultivating qualified human capital through education. The statement *“To consolidate national values and transmit them strongly to future generations, arrangements will be made in the content of education provided at all levels to develop historical, artistic, and cultural knowledge and awareness (DP8)”* emphasizes the strengthening of artistic and cultural knowledge at all levels for the purpose of transmitting cultural knowledge to future generations, while also noting its function in promoting social unity and integrity. Therefore, the importance of establishing a cultural and artistic infrastructure is highlighted with the following statement: *“To this end, the establishment of a high-level human and physical cultural and artistic infrastructure will be fundamental (DP6).”* A similar emphasis is seen in the following statement: *“Education and training must be life-oriented, the human resources required for development must be trained, and the quality of the education system must be improved at every level. Culture and arts are fundamental elements in the preservation and development of national values and, consequently, in the strengthening of national unity and solidarity (DP5).”*

The first code reached in the category of arts education policies for children and young people is “arts activities inside and outside school.” Development plans emphasize that students' participation in various cultural, artistic, sporting, and other activities both inside and outside of school will positively impact their development, and that these activities will be encouraged. One of the statements related to this code is as follows: *“Projects will be developed and implemented under the coordination of the Ministry of Culture to ensure that children are introduced to art and traditional handicrafts at an early age (DP8).”* Another statement is as follows: *“To ensure the perfect development of young people in terms of spirit, mind, and body, in addition to in-school education and training, out-of-school activities related to ideas, culture, arts, sports, and folklore will be encouraged (DP5).”*

Another code under this category is personality and aesthetic development. *“The fundamental goal of the education system is to nurture productive and happy individuals who are adept at using and producing science*

and technology, equipped with the basic knowledge and skills required by the information society, and possess the traits of self-confidence, responsibility, entrepreneurship, and innovation. inclined towards the use and production of science and technology, equipped with the basic knowledge and skills required by the information society, productive and happy individuals are the fundamental goal of the education system (KP10)." This statement emphasizes that individuals with strong artistic and aesthetic sensibilities are among the personality traits targeted for development through the education system. The statement in the plan regarding the provision of educational opportunities by the state to students with innate talent is as follows: "While working to raise artistic appreciation throughout society, the state will provide educational opportunities to children and young people identified as having exceptional talent in the arts (DP4)." When examining the statements related to the code for protection from harmful habits, alongside statements about habits such as alcohol, drugs, criminality, gambling, etc., it is stated that "Primary school opportunities are provided for children in correctional and penal institutions." Art courses are also offered. As seen in the statement, "Children released from reformatories often struggle to integrate into their communities and are left unsupervised, which leads them to reoffend in the future," emphasis is placed on art education to prevent children and young people from being drawn into crime.

3.2. Theme 2: Institutionalization of art education

The codes obtained from the analyses related to the theme of the Institutionalization of Art Education have been grouped under three main categories. The categories and codes related to this theme are presented in Figure 2. The coding performed in the analyses related to this theme has been grouped under three categories. These categories are named "strategies for art education," "formal education institutions," and "non-formal education institutions."

Figure 2

Categories and codes related to the theme of institutionalization of art education

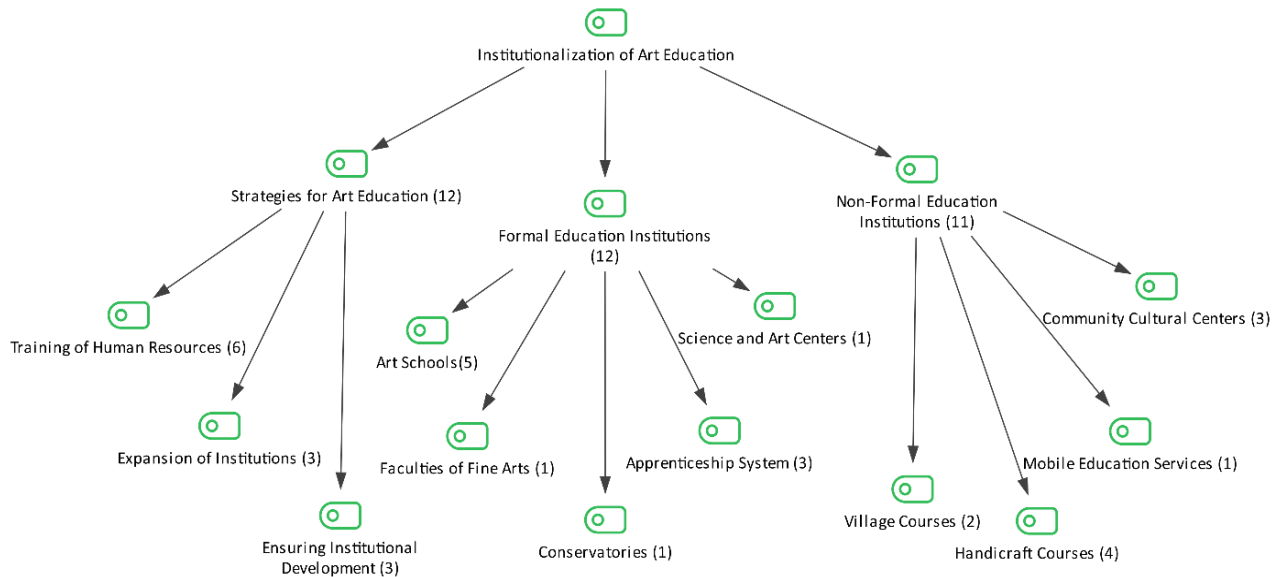


Figure 2 shows that the approach of training human resources, expanding and developing institutions, stands out in the category of institutional strategies. Findings under this theme also reveal that art education

is being supported not only in formal education institutions but also in non-formal education institutions, with efforts to establish it within an institutional framework. The code for human resource development indicates that the goal is to train artists and provide the qualified human capital needed in the fields of art activities and art education. Some of the statements in the documents related to this are as follows: *"Importance will be given to the fine arts to achieve the goals of promoting Western art in Turkey and Turkish art in the world, and training personnel in the fields of plastic and phonetic arts. State art awards will be established in every branch of the fine arts (DP1)."* The following statement regarding the same code emphasizes the opening of departments in higher education institutions for this purpose: *"Qualified culture and arts professionals will be trained for the more effective management of cultural and arts institutions and the expansion of areas of expertise, and culture management departments will be widespread in higher education (DP11)."*

The expansion of institutions nationwide and the promotion of institutional development are also codes falling under the category of institutional strategies. One of the relevant statements is: *"In the nationwide expansion of community cultural centers, local community education centers and other resources will be utilized; and to this end, cooperation with the Ministry of National Education will be ensured within the framework of a program (DP4)".* As seen in the statement, both the balanced distribution of these institutions throughout the country and their increase in number are emphasized. The statements that serve as the basis for the code for ensuring institutional development refer to the development of institutions providing arts education with a contemporary approach. Some of these are as follows: *"The Ministry of National Education will ensure the research and development of local small art products in terms of shape, design, and color (DP2)"; "... existing academies will be developed in terms of capacity, creativity, and the production and dissemination of contemporary art products (DP4)."*

In the Development Plans, codes have been assigned to art schools, fine arts faculties, conservatories, apprenticeship systems, and science and art centers within the category of formal education institutions providing art education. For example: *"Topics related to handicrafts will be added to art school programs, and courses will be organized in rural education outside major centers, taking into account the region's handicrafts (DP1)",* and *"The establishment of the National Folklore Museum and the Turkish Art Music Conservatory is envisaged to develop and compile our national folklore and music (DP3)."* The statement regarding the science and arts centers code is as follows: *"Teaching programs specific to Science and Arts Centers will be developed (DP12)."*

In statements regarding the category of widespread educational institutions, codes have been determined for community cultural centers, mobile village courses, handicraft courses, and mobile educational services. *"The activities of Village Women's and Men's Courses will be carried out in a manner consistent with practical agriculture and girls' art schools. Furthermore, in these courses, programs will be developed and implemented on social, economic, and cultural issues of interest to the public to raise the cultural level of the village population (DP3),"* indicating the existence of initiatives aimed at supporting the development of individuals living in rural areas. *"With an inclusive and high-quality education initiative at all levels aimed at strengthening the human resources of our country, the goal is to cultivate qualified individuals who are adept at using technology and production, transforming knowledge into economic and social benefits. In this context, the aim is to ensure that all individuals have access to inclusive and high-quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. During the Eleventh Development Plan period, policies will be implemented, and necessary regulations will be made in all processes in the fields of education, culture, arts, and sports to raise productive*

and happy individuals (DP11)." This statement emphasizes education, culture, and arts-focused policies and lifelong learning for raising productive individuals for social development.

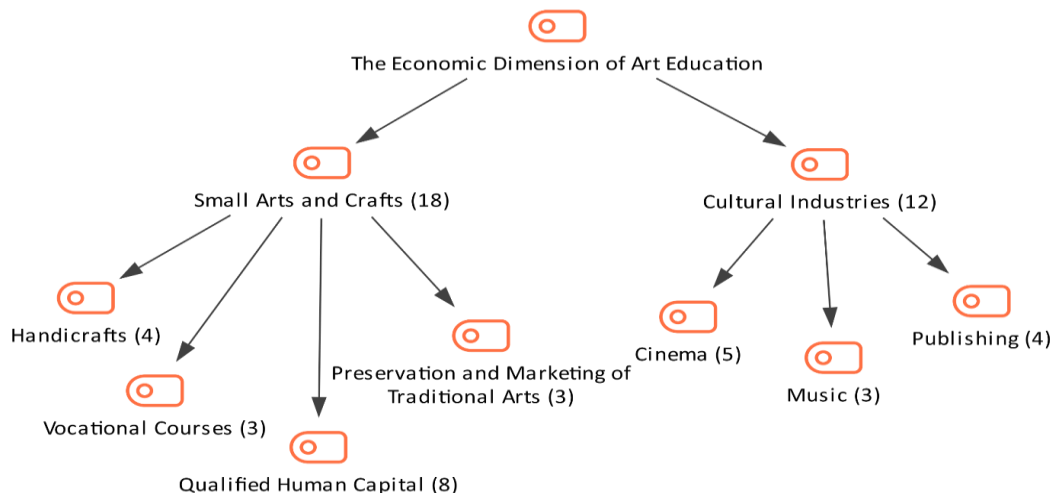
Findings under this theme reveal that art education in development plans is not limited to specific institutions; rather, it is approached in a way that increases access opportunities through formal and informal educational institutions. Policies aimed at institutionalizing art education are diversified to support institutional development through strategies and objectives focused on both individual creativity and increasing the capacity of institutions providing art education.

3.3. Theme 3: Economic dimension of art education

The categories and codes identified under the theme of the economic dimension of arts education are presented in Figure 3. The codes identified under this theme have been grouped under the categories of "small arts and crafts" and "cultural industries."

Figure 3

Categories and codes related to the theme of the economic dimension of art education



When examining Figure 3, it is understood that the support of small arts and crafts and the cultural industries stands out in the context of social welfare by being linked to economic development and education. The codes obtained under the category of small arts and crafts show that the economic dimension of arts education is frequently addressed in development plans in contexts such as workforce training, support for small industry, job creation, and the conversion of traditional arts into economic value. For example, the statement *"Both certain small industrial sectors and handicrafts will be evaluated in terms of employment. Furthermore, the cultural impact of handicrafts, particularly in terms of providing additional income to families and developing and disseminating traditional artistic values, will also be taken into account (DP3)."* Evaluates the importance of art in terms of employment and its income-generating aspect alongside its cultural contribution.

Regarding vocational courses, the following statement reads: *"Human resource gaps that cannot be met through formal education will be addressed through general and, in particular, vocational-technical continuing education programs. As tools for non-formal education, practical health, practical agriculture, and practical arts schools will be developed and disseminated through pre-employment training centers and on-the-job*

training systems (DP3)." It is seen that emphasis is placed on vocational courses provided through non-formal education institutions in vocational education to meet the need for a qualified workforce through practical arts schools. The statement in the latest development plan regarding the provision of qualified human capital with developed digital skills in culture and arts, which are valuable for the new era of cultural industries, is as follows: *"The development of digital skills and the inclusion of programs focused on digital culture and arts in formal education curricula will be ensured (DP12)."*

In the code for the preservation and marketing of traditional arts, it is envisaged that *"education in the field of handicrafts should be provided, research into local colors, patterns, and shapes should be conducted, foreign market research for handicraft products should be carried out, and small industrial enterprises lacking livelihood opportunities should not be supported and should be directed to other fields (DP3)"* emphasizes the role of art education in preserving cultural heritage to protect traditional Turkish handicrafts that are facing extinction. At the same time, it highlights the economic dimension of art by emphasizing the marketing of products and the support of small-scale businesses.

The category of cultural industries encompasses elements such as contemporary scientific research and development activities for the preservation of national musical values, as well as the development and dissemination of cinema, publishing, and other art forms. Some of the source statements for the codes under this category are as follows: *"Cultural films are an important tool for public education. Its current use is limited. The responsible bodies are just beginning their activities in this field. In the field of private film production, films with low artistic and educational value are generally made. There has been no progress in encouraging valuable films or training experts (DP2)."* This statement regarding the cinema code emphasizes that cinema, as an art form, has an important educational function. The statement *"Efforts will be made to develop folk values for the evaluation of national music through contemporary methods, scientific research, and artistic experiments (DP4)"* refers to scientific activities to be carried out through relevant educational institutions for the development of music. Another example of a statement regarding publications and other art forms is as follows: *"Emphasis will be placed on developing and promoting the art forms of literature, painting, theater, and cinema, which hold an important place in our cultural life (DP5)."* The statement regarding the publication code, *"Preserving the works of old Turkish writers and publishing them in a simplified form that can be understood by new generations, translating fundamental works of Western culture (DP2),"* shows that the goal is to develop a reading culture for younger generations by publishing the works of Turkish writers and providing translations of important works by foreign writers.

The findings of the research show that art education is addressed in various dimensions in development plans. While the functions of arts education for youth and society, its institutionalization processes, and its economic contributions are emphasized separately, it can be stated that these elements are complementary in nature. Therefore, arts education has been included in development plans as a multidimensional phenomenon with cultural, social, institutional, and economic aspects. This holistic perspective is evaluated in more detail in the discussion section.

4. DISCUSSION

According to study results, it can be stated that arts education is addressed in development plans in an integrated manner, sometimes with cultural policies and sometimes with education and human resource objectives; it is considered an element that supports social welfare and sustainable development. Eisner (2003) also emphasizes that arts education contributes to the fundamental goals of education by developing

individuals' perceptual awareness, creative thinking capacity, and problem-solving skills. According to San (2001), arts education does not only appeal to emotions, but is also a field that includes processes such as perception, interpretation, analysis, synthesis, questioning, acquiring knowledge, comparison, evaluation, and judgment. According to Güleç and Yalçın (2025), art and art education also have strategic value in terms of preserving cultural identity, strengthening social cohesion, and developing a qualified human resource.

This study has reached conclusions regarding the objectives of art education in development plans within the context of the education and training process. According to the results, it has been observed that art education is included in development plans within the context of objectives related to the preservation of national and cultural values and the transmission of cultural heritage to future generations. Similarly, Bamford (2006) states that art education is not only an aesthetic activity but also an important pedagogical tool in terms of cultural identity construction and the meaning of learning. The study conducted by Tekgül and Canlı (2023) draws attention to the importance of artistic works carried out for the purpose of preserving cultural heritage and passing it on to future generations in terms of sustainable development. Research conducted by Ortakçı (2017) also found that development plans emphasize the preservation, promotion, protection, and development of cultural values and their transmission to future generations, and that goals have been set for this purpose. It was stated that this means the preservation, development, and perpetuation of cultural diversity for future generations.

The study highlights that the findings regarding arts education policies in development plans emphasize the importance of artistic activities to complement formal education through in-school and out-of-school activities and to help students make the most of their free time. The texts highlighted the functions of these activities in supporting the personality and aesthetic development of children and young people, protecting them from harmful habits, and preventing them from being drawn into crime. In addition, the statement regarding the goal of including arts education in educational programs for children in prison is important in terms of the right to education for disadvantaged children and young people. Furthermore, the provision of educational opportunities by the state for children and young people with special talents in various artistic fields also indicates that art education policies for children and young people are included in development plans.

In the study conducted by Akça et al. (2018) on the evaluation of cultural policies in development plans, attention is drawn to the importance of making culture and arts activities accessible to broad segments of society. The participation of children and young people in cultural and artistic activities contributes to their distancing themselves from harmful habits such as internet and cell phone addiction; at the same time, it prepares the ground for their socialization as healthy, productive, and aesthetically sensitive individuals. Research conducted by Catterall (2012) also concluded that the participation of socio-economically disadvantaged at-risk youth in artistic activities increased their school attendance rates, reduced behavioral problems, and supported their personality development. A study by Kurt (2022) examined educational activities in correctional institutions and found that art education is an important tool in the rehabilitation of children who have been drawn into crime. It was stated that art education reduces the risk of children returning to criminal behavior by supporting their personal development and facilitating their reintegration into society. In a study conducted by Akay (2023), the historical development of youth policies in Development Plans was examined. The results obtained indicate that youth policies have been shaped by a protective approach in earlier periods, a socio-cultural basis in later periods, and a technology and innovation-focused framework in recent periods.

The study conducted by Bolat (2023) examined the development plans' objectives and guidelines for gifted students and the work carried out in this direction. The study found that, in line with development plans, important practices were implemented by the Ministry of National Education, universities, and various institutions; however, some of the work did not align with the plans, and therefore, the desired level of success could not be achieved. The study conducted by Özek (2024) examined the development process of policy documents related to the education of gifted children. The study concluded that the decisions included in the National Education Councils, the Grand National Assembly Research Commission Report, the Strategic Action Plan, the MEB 2023 Education Vision document, and the action plans were largely ineffective in practice, and that concrete steps to strengthen Science and Art Centers were not sufficiently detailed.

One of the important results in the theme of “Institutional Strategies in Art Education” is the emphasis on the need for qualified human resources in the field of art education in development plans. In addition, the results regarding the expansion of institutions providing arts education and ensuring their development show that development plans address arts education at the social, institutional, and structural levels. It can be stated that the fundamental goal here is both to provide qualified human capital and to strengthen the organized presence of arts institutions throughout the country. The emphasis on art schools, particularly in the early development plans, indicates that art education was considered in connection with vocational education in the early development plans.

The inclusion of fine arts faculties and conservatories in higher education development plans highlights the emphasis placed on the academic and professional dimensions of arts education. Furthermore, practices such as apprenticeship systems and practical arts schools reflect the relationship between traditional knowledge and modern educational institutions in arts education. The goal is to deliver arts education not only through formal educational institutions but also to reach broad segments of society through elements such as village courses, handicraft courses, mobile education services, and community cultural centers. It can be noted that the goal is to preserve cultural heritage and increase the productivity of the people, especially in rural areas, through village courses and handicraft courses. Ruppert (2010) has pointed out that public support should be increased so that individuals can access quality arts education. Çağlayan (2020) has emphasized that out-of-school learning environments have become important in arts education, that formal education alone is not sufficient, and that out-of-school learning environments will therefore play a critical role in the development of visual arts education.

Within the framework of the results obtained in the study, it is seen that art education is also addressed from an economic perspective in development plans. Considering the results obtained within the scope of the economic dimension of art education, it can be said that early development plans focused on handicrafts and small-scale industry, and over time, they transformed into a more comprehensive framework with creative industries and cultural policies. This change demonstrates that arts education is not only an area that imparts individual skills, but also plays a strategic role in terms of economic development and the growth of creative sectors.

In a study conducted by Telli (1980), it was argued that creativity is decisive in training the qualified human resources required by the rapidly changing social structure, and that this creativity can be developed through art education, thus emphasizing the strategic importance of art education for developed countries. A study conducted by Akkurt and Boratav (2018) concluded that art education is necessary for the cultivation of inquisitive individuals who possess critical thinking skills, are self-confident, and are open-minded. Cerev and Ünü (2023) revealed that visual arts education plays a critical role in the development of human capital

through the transmission of cultural heritage. The study also evaluated art education in the context of its contribution to social development, emphasizing its importance in education policies.

Burgess (2016) emphasizes the role of education in developing human capital within a society. In this context, arts education also strengthens human capital by fostering creativity, critical thinking, and aesthetic sensitivity, thereby indirectly contributing to economic development and growth. In a study conducted by Mahgoub and Alsoud (2015) on the economic value of handicraft products, it is emphasized that students perceive handicrafts not only as a cultural identity and aesthetic field but also as an income-generating production method. It was concluded that students recognize the economic value of handicrafts and that the potential for earning income through individual production is clearly demonstrated.

Grierson (2011) emphasizes that despite the market-oriented structure of creative industries, art education has a philosophical and cultural function that makes it sustainable without reducing creativity to economic benefit. Thus, art education contributes to the economic dimension of creative industries while also laying the groundwork for individuals' identity construction, expression of differences, and processes of making sense of the world. The findings of the study show that art education is considered an important element in development plans, not only for individual development but also for economic development. Throsby (2006) emphasizes in his work that arts education develops creativity and that this creativity provides social benefits and economic returns as a fundamental resource of the knowledge economy. He also states that the professional education of artists provides indirect contributions to the economy through creative industries.

As a result, arts education in development plans is addressed not only in the context of preserving and transmitting cultural identity, but also in terms of its multifaceted functions, such as educational functions, policies for children and young people, social integration, economic development, strengthening institutional structures, and developing qualified human capital. However, a significant portion of these objectives often remains in the text of the plans and is not supported by concrete strategies for implementation. Looking ahead, integrating policies developed through research with institutional and structural mechanisms that will bring the multidimensional contributions of arts education to life will enable arts education to produce more effective and sustainable results at the individual and societal levels.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that arts education constitutes a strategic component within development plans due to its individual, institutional, social, and economic contributions. The results demonstrate that arts education supports not only personal development and creative expression but also broader societal and cultural advancement. From this perspective, the strengthening of arts education policies and practices emerges as a significant priority for sustainable educational and cultural development.

Effective implementation of the strategies and objectives outlined in development plans requires strong alignment between policy frameworks and educational practice. In addition, the sustainability of arts education policies depends on the establishment of coordinated collaboration at the national level among ministries of education, higher education institutions, local governments, and nongovernmental organizations. Such cooperation can facilitate the consistent application of policy objectives and support the long-term development of arts education initiatives.

Furthermore, development plans should incorporate inclusive educational approaches that recognize the importance of arts education for diverse learner groups, particularly disadvantaged individuals. Integrating

arts education within inclusive education strategies can strengthen equal access to cultural and creative learning opportunities while contributing to social participation and cultural awareness.

Future research may examine the effectiveness of arts education policies included in development plans through empirical investigations that assess their practical outcomes. Comparative international studies could also provide valuable insights into how different countries integrate arts education within national development strategies. In addition, further research may explore the role of arts education within teacher training policies and strategies outlined in development plans, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of how educator preparation supports the long-term development of arts education.

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