

Exploring the Impact of Art Education on Socialization in Multicultural Classrooms: A Survey Study of Ukrainian Students

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to investigate the impact of art classes on various aspects of the emotional state and socialization of pupils and students in multicultural classrooms. The research methodology included a survey among pupils and students of Ukrainian educational institutions. Based on the results of the questionnaire, the main results of the entire study were substantiated and ideas were proposed to improve the organization of art classes by teachers in the context of creating more comfortable conditions for the socialization of students

in a multicultural classroom. The main results of the questionnaire showed that currently, students do not see a direct effect of improving relationships with peers in the learning space through visual and decorative arts lessons. At the same time, statistics showed that 55.6% of art classes in Ukrainian educational institutions are held in lecture form, and in the 27.8% of classes in which the practical form prevails, pupils and students work alone in 71.4% of cases. Despite the unpleasant statistics, art classes clearly have an indirect impact on the socialization of students and the improvement of their emotional and mental state. The positive impact of fine and decorative arts classes has been proven in statistics showing that 64.7% of pupils and students like art classes and feel that their mental state has improved. Art lessons help students to express their emotions in a non-verbal way, which is extremely valuable for pupils and students from multicultural backgrounds who have language problems or feel psychologically insecure.

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Keywords

Creativity • Teacher • Adaptation • Improvement of Communication • Multiculturalism

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, multiculturalism is becoming more and more widespread due to emigration, which in turn is often a forced step against the backdrop of certain political and economic problems of the country, military conflicts and the desire to receive a better education in the world's leading educational institutions. Ukraine is home to about 80 ethnic groups, which affects the number of multicultural classes in educational institutions. Socialization in general is one of the most important educational processes, which is complicated in multinational classrooms, as each nationality has its own beliefs and views on communication as a means of exchanging information with the environment (State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, 2001). In addition, state schools do not provide courses specifically focused on the process of socialization, interaction with society, and the formation of a student's personality. Socialization is envisaged as a cross-cutting process during a child's stay in an educational institution. According to the concept of the New Ukrainian School, approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (2016), the New Ukrainian School provides for lessons "I Explore the World", which should contribute to the socialization of primary school students. However, this course is not available in middle and high school. In addition, there has been no thorough study of the real benefits of the discipline in the socialization of students.

The fine and decorative arts course is designed for nine years of study and has a fairly free programme, which allows more time to devote to a particular type of activity that is best suited to a particular group of students. Art classes and activities are present in high school, colleges, technical schools, and universities. In addition, there are numerous studies that confirm the positive impact of art on communication skills, personality development, environmental education, ideological and political education, and the promotion of world peace. In particular, Shevtsova *et al.* (2024) emphasized in their study the importance of art education in the formation of humanistic qualities, aesthetic outlook and creative abilities. Huang (2024) analyzed the importance of art in the formation of humanistic values and political consciousness of students, emphasizing the importance of art in personal development. The study by Alsufayran (2024) points out that arts education promotes critical thinking, collaboration, empathy, and tolerance among students. The study proved that the arts can contribute to the social and emotional skills needed to maintain world peace.

In general, the topic of the influence of fine and decorative arts is quite researched in various aspects. From environmental awareness to public sentiment

and maintaining peace in the world. The problem of the impact of art classes in the educational process in the context of socialization, as a phenomenon that combines the formation of personality and communication with society, is poorly understood and requires detailed study. In order to provide a comfortable and safe space for students in multicultural classrooms, it is necessary, firstly, to pay more attention to the training of future teachers. As shown in the study by Marushchak *et al.* (2020), arts and crafts education contributes to the development of aesthetic competences in teachers, which is relevant in a multinational environment where teachers can use art as a tool for mutual understanding between students from different cultural backgrounds. Study by Rohotchenko *et al.* (2021) showed that the integration of graphic design into the professional training of future specialists contributes to the development of visual communication that teachers can later apply in a multicultural classroom. Teacher training is a painstaking and important process, as the quality of education in the future depends on these people (Shalgynbayeva *et al.*, 2014; Sakhipov *et al.*, 2023). Training teachers to work in a digitized educational space is a problematic issue.

In the process of socialization of pupils and students in a multicultural space, it is crucial to give each student the opportunity to express themselves in order to preserve the cultural diversity of ethnic groups (Ponomarenko, 2021). As noted in the study by Skakalska *et al.* (2021), modern approaches to the preservation of cultural heritage should take into account the diversity of cultural practices. The study by Rohotchenko *et al.* (2022b; 2023) on the revival and promotion of blacksmithing in the context of cultural heritage preservation again showed the importance of preserving cultural characteristics in a multicultural environment. The authors emphasized the importance of preserving cultural identity in the new environment. It is possible to study socialization in the educational process only by understanding current trends in the development of education, in particular the digitalization of the educational space in Ukraine and various aspects of this process, from various platforms, and software to the impact on the mental state of students (Collection of Scientific Papers, 2019). The study by Solovei *et al.* (2023) outlines the challenges and opportunities of digital education in the information society and identifies the key problems of the digitalization of the educational space. The problem of digitalization of the educational space is very much researched, but the aspect of socialization of students and pupils in the context of learning with the help of the latest technologies is hardly described. The problem of socialization as a concept was revealed by Bibik (2020) in a study

where she studied the socialization of primary school students during the educational process and formulated methodological tools for teachers to use in the future to improve the process of socialization of students.

The purpose of this study was to investigate art classes and their impact on the emotional well-being and social integration of students in culturally diverse classrooms. Objectives of the study are:

1. Studying the concept of multiculturalism and the impact of this phenomenon on socialization in the educational process in Ukraine.
2. Considering art as a non-verbal way of expressing emotions, impressions and transmitting information.
3. Tracing the manifestations of ideas of national identity in the works of fine art by students of different nationalities.
4. Justifying the importance of collective projects in a visual arts course.
5. Studying the socialization of students in the context of the digitalization of the educational space.

2. Materials and Methods

To conduct the study, a survey was developed using a Google form. The selection criteria for participants in this study were based on a convenience sampling method. Participants were chosen from a wide geographical range, including students from various cities and regions of Ukraine. The inclusion criteria required participants to be pupils and students aged 6 to 25 years, enrolled in Ukrainian educational institutions. Questions were chosen that would most fully reveal the topic of the study and contribute to the goal. The study of art classes as of today took place from 1 to 30 July 2024 inclusive.

The survey was divided into several blocks, namely:

1. Characteristics of the survey participant to better substantiate their further answers. The questions included in this block:
 - nationality;
 - age;
 - city/village and region where you are studying;
 - educational level (answer options: primary school, secondary school, high school, technical school, college, university, other).
2. Studying the form and frequency of art classes. Questions included in this block:
 - Are there any art classes at your educational institution (answer options: yes, no, other)?
 - How often do you have art lessons?
 - What form do art lessons take (answer options: lecture form, practical form, mixed form, other)?

3. A study of the emotional state of students during art classes. The questions included in this block:
 - How do you feel at the school? I am interested in your emotional state (answer options: good, bad, neutral, don't know, other).
 - Does your emotional state change during art lessons (answer options: yes, no, don't know, other)?
 - How do you feel in art classes? I'm interested in your emotional state. (Answer options: good, my emotional state is getting better; bad, my emotional state is getting worse; neutral; don't know; other).
 - When does your emotional state get better? Is it related to a specific activity in art classes?
 - When does your emotional state get worse? Is it related to a particular activity in art class?
4. A study of teamwork in art classes. The questions included in this block:
 - Do you work in art classes (answer options: in groups, alone, in different ways, we do not work, other).
 - Do art lessons help you to communicate better with your peers (answer options: yes, no, don't know, other)?
 - Describe how art lessons help you communicate better with your peers.
5. A window for comments/suggestions/remarks.

The survey was distributed among students through social media, including Facebook and Telegram platforms in student groups and pages. The survey was not specifically conducted on the basis of one educational institution (or several), so that the results would not be tainted by the personality of a particular art teacher, since the average Ukrainian school has only one or two art teachers. The survey was conducted all over Ukraine, with students from Kyiv, Vinnytsia, Kharkiv, Zhytomyr, Zaporizhzhia, Cherkasy, Khmelnytskyi, Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Mykolaiv, Zakarpattia, Odesa, Kherson, and Chernihiv regions taking part. The total number of survey participants is two hundred students. Of these, 151 are in secondary school, 26 in high school, 12 in junior high school, 9 in college and 2 in technical school. The results were presented in the form of pie charts for easier visual perception.

3. Results

3.1. The Concept of Multiculturalism and the Impact of this Phenomenon on Socialization in the Educational Process in Ukraine

Numerous military conflicts, political and economic turmoil affect migration, and the latter, in turn, affects the spread of the phenomenon of multiculturalism. According to the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine (2001), Ukraine is home to about 80 ethnic groups, the most numerous of which are shown in the diagram below (Figure 1).

Due to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the 2001 census results are not reliable, and are used here to outline the general picture of the ethnic composition of the Ukrainian population. Thus, in the educational space of Ukraine, a multicultural environment is a typical phenomenon. And the process of socialization of students undergoes numerous changes due to cultural diversity and national identity of each student.

Socialization in the educational process is extremely important for the development of basic communication skills and further knowledge of one's role in society. The process of socialization has two aspects. The first is the development of skills of interaction with society, tolerant attitude to social norms, moral and ethical standards of different ethnic groups. The second aspect of socialization is a deep understanding of one's own purpose in the world, the meaning of one's life, finding answers to critical questions, and, in general, self-realization and understanding of one's role in society. It is worth noting here that only through a comprehensive knowledge of one's own purpose and acceptance of one's personality can a pupil or student reach the top in communication with society. Therefore, socialization is an essential component of the educational process, as it is in childhood that basic patterns of behaviour are laid and personality facets are formed (Bourgault & Winters, 2023).

The process of socialization at school is quite lengthy and is divided into three main stages, according to the age and skills of students: preparatory, main, and post-main. The first stage of socialization through the educational process begins as soon as a child is admitted to an educational institution of primary or preschool education (Zhong, 2021). The process of socialization in work with adolescents is aimed at creating a safe space for adolescent self-expression, for the implementation of atypical behaviour, which is necessary for the expression of their own self. The last stage of participation in the socialization of a student for a school is the work of teachers on self-awareness of each adolescent's own life path, consolidation of formed moral values, determination of their own role

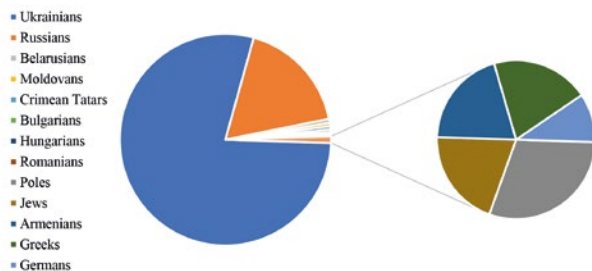


Figure 1. National composition of the population of Ukraine according to the 2001 census. Source: State Statistics Committee of Ukraine (2001)

in society, creation of a plan for the realization of their own vocations and work on the awareness of periodic revision of their own moral values.

Personal development is an extremely important area of socialization. This aspect involves the formation of a personality with its internal moral values, beliefs, and self-determination of life guidelines. In the inner space of each personality, self-esteem and self-awareness mature. The educational process clearly influences the formation of the inner consciousness of the pupil and student. Since the formation of one's own "I" occurs only with the assistance of society, according to the theory of the "Mirror Self". Internal development occurs through reading the behaviour and ideological beliefs of people around us, including through the assessment of society in relation to specific situations, objects and, accordingly, people. That is, based on the attitude of others to the student, he or she develops his or her own perception of himself or herself.

Artistic activities and events clearly contribute to the development of life orientations and the process of self-determination, influencing the emotional and cultural enrichment of the individual (Evangelidis *et al.*, 2024). For example, through artistic activities, students are able to express their feelings and thoughts, developing creative thinking and aesthetic perception of the world. The main task of the educational process in terms of the student's inner formation is the development of a truly incredible phenomenon, with its uplift, inspiration, and light – the development of the human soul as the personification of morality, consciousness, and emotionality.

Art classes contribute to the development of critical thinking, and the ability to analyze and synthesize information, which are crucial components of the educational process (Niklasson, 2023). They help students better understand themselves and others, and develop empathy and interpersonal skills. The development of interpersonal communication in the process of student socialization is important because it forms the basis for further successful communication with the environment.

This requires the development of oratory skills (in the case of primary school, speech in general), the ability to express and communicate one's opinion to others, the ability to empathize and support others, to manage one's own behaviour and to predict the outcome of a particular conversation.

The problem of socialization in a multicultural environment has many aspects, among which the most critical is the communication barrier caused by both poor language skills and student withdrawal due to lack of self-confidence, stress, anxiety. This is where art classes are very relevant, as they allow one to express oneself in a non-verbal way. Often, students of other nationalities are isolated from other ethnic groups due to differences in moral, ethical, and external characteristics. However, collective art projects help bridge the gap between students. Collaborative art teaches cooperation, tolerance, and mutual understanding. In addition, the school art course involves the study of cultures from different countries, which helps to fill in the lack of cultural awareness and broaden students' cultural outlook. Another important aspect is the limited access to self-knowledge, and art classes and activities help students better understand themselves, their emotions and needs, which contributes to personal growth and development (Goldberg, 2021).

3.2. Art as a Non-verbal Way of Expressing Emotions, Impressions and Transmitting Information: Ideas of National Identity in the Works of Fine Art by Students of Different Nationalities

Art has the ability to influence people and is considered a non-verbal way of communication. The impact of artworks is felt in many aspects of human life, from emotional to intellectual (Panchioli *et al.*, 2020). The emotional impact of art is manifested in its ability to evoke a diverse range of feelings: from simple ones, such as joy and fear, to complex ones, such as love and jealousy. Through colour, shape, texture, movements, sounds, artists can convey their own emotions that resonate with viewers, allowing them to experience similar feelings, or impose emotions on viewers (listeners) (Baroque theory of affect). The social and cultural impact of art is also significant, as it leaves an imprint on the political, economic and social aspects of a country or nation. Art can reflect the cultural contexts and social issues of its time, often acting as a means of social criticism or a tool to raise awareness of certain issues. The study by Rohotchenko *et al.* (2022a) highlights the impact of art on the formation of collective consciousness and social processes.

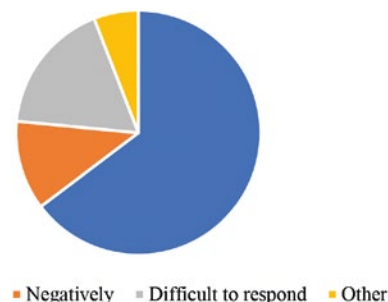


Figure 2. How students feel about art lessons. Source: created by the authors

The aesthetic aspect of art is the pleasure of contemplating beauty and harmony, which stimulates a sense of calm and inspiration. The intellectual impact of art is to stimulate reflection, critical thinking and broaden one's horizons. The study of works of art allows us to understand historical and cultural contexts, contributing to a deeper understanding of the world. Thus, art is a powerful means of communication that transcends language barriers, uniting people from different cultures and societies through universal themes and experiences. According to the results of the study by Yu (2022), students who received an art education course as part of the experiment had significantly better emotional stability and reduced anxiety levels, which contributed to their better academic performance. Art, in particular art education, has the ability to reduce stress and improve the mental state of students. Art therapy uses creative methods of expression to support students' psychological health and development. In addition, art therapy, or simply artistic practice, can create a comfortable, inclusive space where students can more easily adapt to their new environment, get to know each other and each other better, and express their thoughts and feelings freely.

The results of the survey conducted as part of this study revealed that more than half of the students have a favourable attitude towards art classes (Figure 2). Students' love for art classes is understandable and is associated with a comfortable environment, the opportunity to take a mental break in class and release their emotions.

In multicultural classrooms, one of the main problems that students face in the process of socialization is language barriers and emotional difficulties such as stress and withdrawal. And it is the Fine and Decorative Arts course that helps students to express their feelings, emotions, and thoughts without the use of words, i.e., in a non-verbal way, for example, in art or decorative work. That is, art classes have a positive effect on the emotional state of students, because they are able to express what is difficult to describe in words. The students themselves

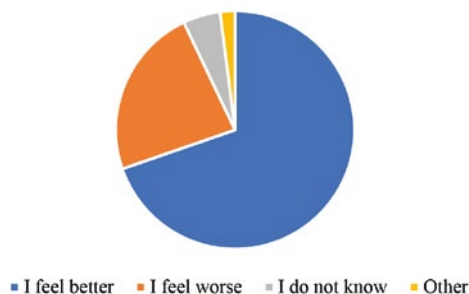


Figure 3. Emotional state of students. Source: created by the authors

also report feeling better during art lessons (Figure 3). This improvement in emotional state reflects a significant finding, suggesting that art classes play a crucial role in enhancing students' emotional well-being. The act of engaging in art can also serve as a mental break, reducing stress and providing an opportunity for emotional release. These findings reflect overall conclusions that highlight the value of art education in creating a welcoming and encouraging atmosphere, especially in multicultural schools.

Every art form contains elements of national culture that are important for students' self-identification and socialization. It is relevant that all pupils and students have the opportunity to express and share what is close to them through the arts. This contributes to the formation of their national identity and mutual understanding in a space of cultural diversity. In a multicultural environment, it is critical for each student to reinforce their own national code (Heruti & Yahya, 2024). Accordingly, the visual and decorative arts provide this opportunity. Everyone can weave a piece of their own national identity into their work, which has a positive impact on the well-being and disclosure of the student as a person with their own ideas and moral guidelines. If considering the manifestations of students' national consciousness in the context of a group (or class), this phenomenon has a favourable effect on the outlook of students who have the opportunity to study artistic styles, techniques, and symbols that are characteristic of different cultures. Through learning about the history and context of artworks from different ethnic groups, empathy, and understanding of other people is developed. Thus, by being able to express their emotions and cultural values through art, students can be heard. This contributes to mutual enrichment and the development of a tolerant attitude towards different cultures. In order to make art classes as useful as possible, the teacher has to think carefully about each lesson. In addition, it is important not to overload the lesson with mental activity, leaving more room for the student's creativity and

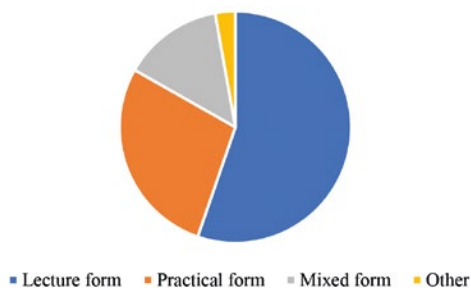


Figure 4. Form of art classes. Source: created by the authors

self-expression. Bibik (2020) notes that “the dominant position of the teacher reduces the educational effect, leaves no time for reflection, imposes its own point of view, and ignores the student's activity”. Therefore, in art classes, the teacher should position himself or herself not as someone who points, but as someone who guides in the right direction.

The form of art classes plays a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness of the learning experience and the overall impact on students' emotional and social development. According to the survey, 55.6% of students say that their educational institutions teach art classes in the form of lectures (Figure 4). The lecture form definitely contributes to the intensive acquisition of new information, they often limit opportunities for active participation and creative expression, which are essential for students to engage deeply with the subject matter. Based on the research of Bibik (2020) and our own findings, art projects allow students to express their own emotions, feelings and thoughts, to express what they cannot say in words due to a language barrier or isolation. In addition, practical activities allow each student to express the ideas of their own national identity, which has a positive impact on the formation of the national consciousness of the student and the student of a multicultural space (Poluboiaryna, 2023).

The lecture form of presenting the material should not be completely abandoned, but it should be combined with practical work so that students have the opportunity to express themselves in a non-verbal way. This combined format is seen as the most beneficial, providing a balanced approach that integrates both theoretical understanding and creative application. An integrated art course in school education is a driving force for the socialization process in multicultural classrooms. Although teachers need to take into account several nuances in order to create an inclusive and comfortable space in art classes, such as diverse cultural backgrounds of students or different learning styles and abilities. This in turn will encourage students to express their emotions and help improve their mental state.

3.3. Collective Projects in the Course of Fine and Decorative Arts and Their Significance

The process of socialization in the philosophical sense is interpreted as the mutual influence of individuals within the concept of “mutual exchange”, which in turn involves broadening the horizons through the exchange of moral and ethical beliefs, personal reflections and experiences. Therefore, the process of socialization requires collective activities aimed at sharing information and further joint success of group members. Art classes can meet this need in the educational space. Collaborative projects in art classes are extremely important because during collective activities, information, and experience are exchanged, but this is only the smallest positive part of the interaction between two or more subjects. During collaborative project work, students learn to plan the work process together and distribute tasks and time, which are essential skills for their future roles in society. In the process of working on a project, students learn to listen to each other, consider different points of view, and work towards a common goal. This helps them to understand the importance of each team member’s role and to feel responsible for the results of their work together.

According to the survey, 79.4% of students indicated that they work alone in art classes (Figure 5). This implies that many schools have limited opportunities for group projects, which can help students develop their communication and cooperation abilities. The structure of the art curriculum, which frequently emphasizes individual artistic development, may be reflected in the prominence of individual work. However, the figure also emphasizes how important it is to include more group projects in the curriculum because group activities are essential for encouraging students to socialize, develop their interpersonal skills, and feel a sense of community. It is evident from relating this data to the overall conclusions that the popularity of particular work may impede the full social advantages of art education.

In a joint activity, participants are united by result-oriented motivation that affects the effectiveness of collective work. In an individual activity, motivation depends on the ambitions and capabilities of the individual, i.e., each person individually. In collective activities, motivation depends on the working conditions, which can either stimulate or weaken it. The level of intensity of motivation depends on how effective and close the interaction in the group is. The direction of motivation can be focused on one’s own achievements, on the success of a particular team, or on the achievement of a task. Motivation grows with the development of the relationship between group members. Otherwise, there is a risk of conflicts, which can lead to failure to complete

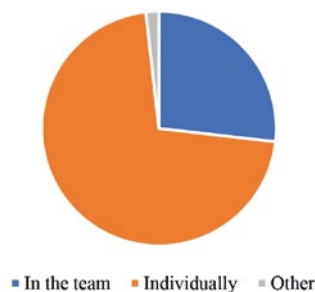


Figure 5. Format of work in art classes. Source: created by the authors

tasks. In teamwork, the implementation of the task is important. Each member of a particular group achieves its goal only through collective efforts, i.e., in the format of cooperation, which is an extremely relevant skill. Personal goals are only realized when other participants also achieve their goals. In addition to motivation, other paramount factors affect the effectiveness of a group. The first of them has a great impact on the effectiveness of cooperation between team members and the formation of interpersonal relationships as part of the socialization process. This factor is manifested in the similarity (or, on the contrary, difference) in the development of intelligence, behavioural traits and character traits. The next one also has an impact on the potential success of the group, forming a comparison of self-assessment and other team members. This factor is determined by the components of social behaviour, namely, imitation of the behaviour of other participants. Sympathy and antipathy between group members stems from the similarity and, accordingly, dissimilarity of social positions. The comparison of social positions of team members forms the socio-psychological climate of a particular group, which embodies the state of relations between individuals, concentrated in a set of psychological factors that, in turn, facilitate or hinder joint work and, in particular, the effectiveness of the group.

Marushchak *et al.* (2020) showed in their study the importance of developing artistic and aesthetic competencies in teachers through decorative and applied arts, which can be used as a means of achieving mutual understanding between students during collective projects, for every student and student of any ethnic group to express themselves. Feelings of withdrawal and shyness often affect children and adolescents, especially in multicultural settings. Self-doubt gives rise to a fear of expressing their thoughts and ideas, which negatively affects socialization, including development, the ability to communicate with peers, and overall intellectual performance. Collective projects in the visual arts course create a safe environment for self-expression. By working on collaborative projects, students learn to support each

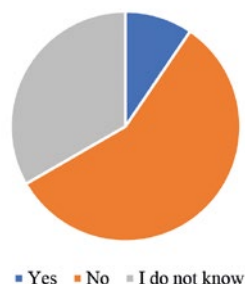


Figure 6. The impact of art classes on students' communication. Source: created by the authors

other and listen to each other's opinions, which allows children and adolescents with increased shyness to improve their self-esteem and practice expressing their own thoughts and ideas. In addition, shared tasks reduce individual pressure, allowing shy students to gradually move out of their comfort zone.

According to the survey, 57.1% of students say that art projects do not improve their communication with peers, and another 33.3% say they do not know whether art classes help them communicate better with their classmates (Figure 6). This finding aligns with the data from Figure 5, which shows that students primarily work individually during art lessons. The emphasis on individual work may restrict possibilities for group contact, which is essential for enhancing communication skills. Therefore, the absence of group activities may hinder students' ability to completely benefit from art education in terms of socialization and peer communication, even though it has the potential to promote emotional well-being and personal expression.

It should be borne in mind that the impact of fine and decorative arts, in particular practice in collaborative projects, does not have an immediate impact on improving communication. This type of activity affects the socialization process by accumulation, i.e. gradually. From each joint project, the student learns useful things for further successful interaction (de Villiers, 2021). It is also important to note that the results of this question in the survey could already be predicted at the stage of answering the question about the form of art classes in Ukrainian educational institutions. After all, these lessons cannot have a positive impact on communication if the lesson is conducted purely in lecture form. Students have the opportunity to accumulate knowledge, but they cannot express themselves and have the practice of successful (or unsuccessful) communication in joint art projects. Therefore, teachers should organize lessons in such a way that practical activities and, in particular, group projects are present.

3.4. Socialization of Students in the Context of Digitalization of the Educational Space

The trend towards digitalization of the educational space is now so widespread that it has become an integral part of any learning experience. If looking at modern society in the context of rapid socio-cultural progress, changes are happening very quickly and the integration of digital technologies in such a large scale, as it is now, has happened quite recently. In the context of education, digitalisation both makes learning more difficult by requiring students to find new methods and adapting traditional teaching for the information age, and it also makes learning better by opening up a plethora of new alternatives. Today, information is the foundation for the intellectual and ethical development of students in the learning process. Digitalization tools play a key role in creating and distributing educational content. In this context, information is becoming the main source that contributes not only to the intellectual but also to the moral improvement of pupils and students. Through innovative technologies, the educational process is gaining new opportunities for the transfer of knowledge and the education of values. Therefore, in their study, Solovei *et al.* (2023) note that a new educational paradigm has emerged, based on information, communication, digitalization and technologization. The same principle has laid down new principles of learning activities: dynamism, accessibility, openness.

The need for digitalization of the educational space has been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, if before the pandemic there were continuous discussions in the scientific community about the opportunities and challenges of ICT strategies in the educational space, the pandemic has significantly accelerated the process of penetration of the digital world into the learning environment. Solovei *et al.* (2023) express concern about the speed of replacing traditional education with digital education, as the uncontrolled functioning of ICT in the education system would be dangerous, as there are threats of levelling the personal qualities of participants in the educational process. In addition, scientists point out the anti-scientific or anti-human impact of digital technologies due to the huge amount of publicly available information that can be used against science or against people. Education combined with the latest technology has become an extremely powerful tool for developing the intellectual and emotional aspects of students. Modern technologies provide access to vast amounts of information, interactive learning content and the latest research from around the world, which contributes to a deeper understanding of various disciplines. The power of combining the learning process and the digital world is emphasized

in the study by the researchers note that if considering education and technology in a single synergistic domain, then the interactions that would be relevant to such a combination would be impressive in their potential impact on individuals and society.

The process of digitalization is fundamentally changing the very concept of education. Whereas traditional learning involves a passive way for a student to acquire knowledge from a teacher, the learning process using ICT strategies allows for learning anywhere and anytime. In addition, digitalization is changing the role of the teacher from a person who teaches to a person who guides in the process of acquiring new knowledge. Learning through digital technologies involves not only the acquisition of knowledge by the student, but also the development of skills in searching and analysing information, critical thinking and selecting relevant and reliable information. A great advantage of e-learning is its focus on a specific person, considering their psychological characteristics (Zhang *et al.*, 2022). Of course, there are negative aspects to the digitalization of the educational space, including the financial constraints of schools, which leads to insufficient technical support and problems with the maintenance of numerous equipment in the school. Teaching in the context of digital development requires staff who are knowledgeable in this area, and therefore additional training is needed for teachers. The process of preparing teachers to work in a digitized educational space requires special training, taking into account new teaching methods and techniques. Thus, in order to successfully use digital technologies in schools, it is necessary to first introduce changes in the training of future teachers.

Despite the risks and challenges, the process of digitalization is already underway and is inevitable. In the process of digitalization of the educational space, it is important to preserve the cultural traditions of different ethnic groups and integrate cultural characteristics into digital reality. For example, the study by Rohotchenko *et al.* (2023) proved the importance of incorporating Ukrainian ethno-design into graphic design. Pupils and students should be surrounded by virtual reality enriched with cultural diversity to broaden their horizons and improve the process of socialization in a multinational environment. Socialization, as a process of integrating an individual into society through the acquisition of social norms, values and behavioural patterns, requires new approaches and strategies in the context of digital transformation. Digital technologies have a significant impact on all aspects of students' lives, including their socialization. The process of socialization in the context of the digitalization of the educational space is a controversial issue, as it has both positive and negative aspects. The positive aspects include new opportunities

for learning, communication and the development of social skills. However, the misuse of technology can lead to isolation, reduced interpersonal skills and addiction.

Digital technologies provide an opportunity to participate in numerous social networks, forums, chats, and other online platforms that are designed to express opinions and interact in a dialogue, which helps to develop better communication skills. Students can communicate with peers from different countries, exchange opinions and experiences, and participate in group projects and discussions. This helps to foster open-mindedness and tolerance. However, students should be taught how to filter information on the Internet and how to contact the cyber police in time. Too much use of digital technologies can lead to the development of a mental illness – Internet addiction. Students may feel isolated from the real world, which negatively affects their interpersonal skills and emotional state. An essential task of the educational process is to teach students how to use digital technologies properly and learn how to ensure their own safety in the virtual world.

Another risk of digitalization of the educational space is a decline in the quality of education. The use of digital technologies does not always guarantee an increase in the quality of education. Improper use of technology can lead to a decrease in students' knowledge, skills and mental disorders. The digitalization of the educational space is an irreversible process that creates new opportunities and challenges for the socialization of students and the creation of an inclusive space in a multicultural environment. It is important to find a balance between the new opportunities offered by the digitalization of the educational space and traditional teaching methods so that education contributes to the harmonious development of the pupil or student's personality.

4. Discussion

The results of this study emphasize the importance and necessity of the presence of art classes and activities in the process of socialization of pupils and students in a multicultural educational space. Socialization can be interpreted as the process of acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge necessary for effective interaction in society (particularly in a multicultural context), namely for the formation of a personality and the positioning and effective performance of a certain social role in society. The process of socialization in the educational space is mandatory. There is no separate discipline or course of study for this process, so socialization should take place across the board, during any lessons and during breaks. Socialization is a complex process for both students and teachers. The multinationality of Ukraine's population

contributes to the formation of multicultural classes in the educational space. This makes the process of socialization even more complicated, as each ethnic group has its own moral and ethical beliefs, values, life positions and views on conventionally ideal communication. Additional art therapy classes, or simply artistic practice, can be used for socialization in a multicultural classroom. Art therapy helps pupils and students adapt better to the new environment and generally improves their emotional state. The same conclusions were reached by scientists Park and Ramirez (2021), who studied art therapy in the context of globalization and multicultural classrooms in South Korea.

It is recommended that the socialization process should be focused on art classes, as the visual and decorative arts have a positive impact on personality development and improve communication between students and teachers. This recommendation is supported by numerous studies that have concluded that art contributes to a better self-awareness of students. In particular, Alsufayran (2024) notes that art classes contribute to the development of empathy and tolerance, and the study by Komarovska *et al.* (2024) shows that art classes, specifically art education, contributes to the development of love and respect for nature among students. Art helps to realize the vulnerability and beauty of untouched nature, stimulating action to protect and preserve it (Lewinski *et al.*, 2019). Art classes influence the process of socialization, in particular, the development of emotional and cultural awareness, creative thinking and aesthetic perception of the world. A multicultural environment involves joint learning of students or students of different nationalities. Therefore, socialization in a multicultural space faces obstacles, namely a communication barrier, which can be associated with poor language skills and emotional difficulties such as stress, self-doubt, and isolation. In this case, art classes become an effective means of expressing emotions and thoughts in a non-verbal way, which is especially important for students who face language barriers. The visual and decorative arts help to create an inclusive and safe space where students can freely express their thoughts, ideas and feelings, which contributes to the development of real self-esteem, self-confidence, mutual understanding and respect (Vrapi *et al.*, 2023). At the same time, each student has the opportunity to enrich his or her own horizons with cultural diversity by absorbing the artistic ideas and ideas of their peers.

These results are consistent with studies of the impact of art on students' well-being. In particular, an experimental study by Yu (2022), conducted in China, confirmed lower rates of anxiety in students who attended art education classes than in those who did not. Therefore, fine and decorative arts help to release emotions and improve the mental state of students. Collective projects

in art classes are aimed at developing another crucial aspect of socialization, namely improving students' communication skills. When working on collaborative projects, students and teachers learn to cooperate, plan work, take into account different points of view, and achieve common goals (Mynbayeva *et al.*, 2019). This contributes to the development of communication and interaction skills, which are essential for successful socialization and existence in society. Working in a group, particularly during art classes, gives students the opportunity to try on different social roles, which has a positive impact on their basic understanding of social roles and responsibilities (Lewinski, 2015). Art projects develop empathy and interpersonal skills. And interpersonal skills are one of the most important components of the socialization process. However, the results of the survey indicate that 71.4% of pupils and students in Ukrainian educational institutions work individually during art lessons. Working alone is also critical, but it reduces the potential benefits of collective activity. Teachers should organize classes in a way that includes both individual and group work, providing students with opportunities to express themselves in non-verbal ways and improve their communication skills (Cherepovska *et al.*, 2021). Turan (2023) emphasizes in her study the importance of group activities in the context of forming moral values and conducting educational work with students. In their study, Cara & Velasco (2021) concluded that art in general and art education, in particular, is an essential component for the formation of the identity of individuals, in particular, those who are at risk of social exclusion. The results coincide with the present study and emphasize the importance of visual and decorative arts in the process of socialization of students in multicultural classes.

Recently, the educational process has undergone rapid changes. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the digitalization of the learning space has completely replaced the traditional education system (Mialkowska *et al.*, 2024). Currently, most schools in Ukraine combine traditional and digital education principles for the harmonious development of students. The process of digitalization of the educational process has both advantages and disadvantages. Currently, Ukraine's educational space is unable to take advantage of all the benefits of digital learning due to insufficient funding for technology and the need for additional specialized training for teachers. The results of this study on the process of digitalization coincide with numerous modern studies, in particular with the main conclusions of the study by Solovei *et al.* (2023), who identified the opportunities and challenges of digital education. Digitalization of the educational space also has a significant impact on the process of socialization. On the one hand, it opens up new oppor-

tunities for learning, communication and the development of social skills. On the other hand, the misuse of technology can lead to isolation and the development of mental disorders, including Internet addiction, among students. It is important to find a balance between the use of digital technologies and traditional teaching methods to ensure that digitalization is a useful complement to mainstream education.

The current study emphasizes the importance of collective projects in art education, highlighting how individual work in art lessons may limit opportunities for social interaction and communication among students. This is in contrast to study by Nor *et al.* (2024), which demonstrated through the experiment at the Malaysian Art School that active learning, particularly through theatre games, fosters strong interpersonal skills and promotes communication through group-based activities. The use of theatre games, which involve improvisation, role-playing, and physical exercise, encourages students to work together, thereby enhancing their ability to collaborate and communicate effectively in a group setting (Guliyeva & Azizova, 2022). Similarly, the findings from Anaya-Figueroa and Montalvo-Castro (2024) indicated the importance of collective work in dance education, despite the challenges posed by virtual dance learning in an art school in Peru. The researchers highlighted the critical role of physical presence and collaboration in dance education, suggesting that virtual environments may impede these aspects of learning. The current study suggests that the lack of group activities in art lessons could hinder communication and socialization skills.

The study's examination of how multiculturalism affects socialisation outcomes offers intriguing new perspectives on how students from various ethnic backgrounds perceive art education and how it affects their emotional states. It was anticipated that multiculturalism would result in a range of socialisation results, especially with relation to emotional well-being, given the students' varied cultural backgrounds. While students from various ethnic groups engaged in the same art-related activities, the study discovered that their emotional reactions differed. For example, because art classes offered a safe space for individuals to express their feelings without the constraints of language or cultural misinterpretations, students from more varied cultural backgrounds frequently reported feeling more at ease and expressive during these sessions. Students from more homogeneous ethnic groups, on the other hand, displayed less diversity in their emotional responses, maybe as a result of a greater sense of social support and cultural familiarity among their peers. These variations imply that multicultural settings in art classes might promote greater social integration and emotional expression, enabling students to interact with classmates from various backgrounds

and cultivate a more comprehensive emotional outlook (Tetianin & Cherniavska, 2023; Willey & Michele, 2024). The findings suggest that art programs in multicultural environments can present a special chance for emotional development since they give students a forum to work through and communicate difficult feelings while also encouraging tolerance and understanding.

In general, the results of the study show that art classes are essential for the process of socialization and the creation of an inclusive space in a multicultural environment. Therefore, it is through art lessons that students in a multinational classroom have the opportunity to express emotions and thoughts in non-verbal terms, which contributes to the improvement of mental health, the formation of emotional intelligence and cultural development. Art shapes a student's personality through the ability to express emotions. Art classes help to socialize pupils and students of different nationalities through expression as a form of communication through art. This method of communication allows transmitting information without using verbal means. Fine and decorative arts classes help to gain a deeper understanding of the culture of other ethnic groups, which contributes to further better communication among students through awareness of the basic moral values of another nationality. Collective art projects contribute to the development of communication skills and also play a pivotal role in further creating a comfortable environment in a multicultural space. The digitalization of education is an irreversible process, and the task of teachers is to find the right balance between traditional and modern teaching methods to form socialized individuals ready for life in the information society.

5. Conclusion

Multiculturalism is a crucial factor influencing the process of socialization in the educational space of Ukraine. Data from the 2001 All-Ukrainian Population Census indicate the presence of about 80 ethnic groups, which leads to cultural diversity and requires a special approach to the socialization of students. The process of socialization in Ukraine's educational environment consists of several important stages that include the development of skills for interacting with society and the formation of a student's personality. Given multiculturalism, socialization should promote a tolerant attitude to social norms and moral and ethical standards of different ethnic groups.

According to the study, art classes play a significant role in the socialization of students, helping to overcome communication barriers and emotional difficulties. They contribute to the development of creative thinking,

aesthetic perception of the world and emotional stability. It is relevant to create an inclusive and safe space where students can express their feelings and opinions, which is especially critical for those who face language barriers or withdrawal. The study demonstrated that group art projects are a crucial instrument for fostering student collaboration and communication skills, hence it is crucial to structure the educational process so that group activities occur as frequently as feasible. The digitalization of the educational space opens up new opportunities for learning, communication and the development of social skills. However, the misuse of technology can lead to the development of mental disorders and contribute to a decrease in interpersonal skills. The results of the study highlight the need to find a balance between the use of digital technologies and traditional teaching methods so that digitalization contributes to the harmonious development of the student's personality. The results are useful for teachers who want to improve and change the educational process in Ukraine. As well as for those interested in the process of socialization and wanting to help pupils and students adapt to a multicultural environment. The results are relevant for Ukrainians who have left Ukraine due to the full-scale invasion and want to help their children

socialize in the new educational space. The study is crucial for students of pedagogical educational institutions to better understand the process of socialization of students in a multicultural space.

This study is limited by the fact that the results are based on a questionnaire with a limited number of pupils and students, namely 200 people aged 6 to 25. In addition, only a part of the literature on the topic has been processed, and there are still many studies by foreign and Ukrainian scholars that deserve attention and detailed study.

It is worth investigating every aspect of artistic activity and its impact on socialization, or the psychological state of pupils and students in a multicultural space. It would be valuable to investigate the impact of collective art projects on reducing stress and improving emotional well-being among students from different ethnic backgrounds in multicultural environments. Further understanding may also be gained by examining the ways in which art lessons might explicitly address communication obstacles like language limitations and promote emotional stability in these contexts. It would also be interesting to study the influence of theatre on the formation of a student's personality and the impact on further awareness of social roles.

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