International Journal of Education & the Arts

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A Critical Analysis of Aesthetics and Cultural Texture of Shopping Malls in Teacher Education: The Ideology of Space

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Abstract

This case study addresses an activity called "Ideology of Space" in the context of a visual culture-based in-service teacher education program. In the study, teachers applied a multidimensional analysis to mall spaces, which serve as a good example of everyday aesthetics. The activity consisted of a series of implementations aimed at examining how ideology is experienced through spaces in daily life. It included pedagogical approaches that encouraged teachers to critically evaluate the shopping malls they visited by using their knowledge and aesthetic value judgments to examine elaborately the shopping malls, not only in the context of the economy but also within the cultural, political, and environmental contexts. The implementation process focused on visual culture and sustainable learning. The participants of the research were primary classroom teachers and secondary school visual arts teachers. In the

study, the analysis unit encompassed the experiences of the teachers who attended the activity.

While tracing the aesthetics that leak into every area of life with different functions through space, teachers examined the social, environmental and economic dimensions of such leakage and were encouraged to question their own teaching processes. The results denoted that the activity enhanced teachers' learning experiences and, by this means, promoted their professional and personal development. Teachers' expressions revealed that the visual art teachers rarely use learning approaches that nurture the intellectual process before implementing lessons in their classes. Furthermore, the educational process enabled teachers to critique themselves with regard to the use of cognitive and interactive pedagogies in their classes. Teachers developed ideas to improve their own art lesson activities through the experiences they gained during the activity.

Introduction

Over the past 20 years, art education researchers have been trying to further integrate visual images, visual literacy, and critical thinking skills with their art curricula due to the increase in visuality in the contemporary world. These efforts, called visual culture theory, evaluate art education in a broader perspective and demand a critical examination of not only artworks but also all kinds of visual fiction that affect the individual in daily life. Based on this expansion, different educational strategies are necessary in practices of teaching about visual art in art education, and the strategies developed should be incorporated into teachers' pre-service and in-service education.

Over the last 10 years in Turkey, visual arts curricula have been shown to involve learning gains with regards to critical thinking about visual culture elements. In this respect, recent studies dwell upon different stages of art education (e.g. Turkcan & Yasar, 2011; Dilli, 2013; Dilli, Mamur & Alakus, 2016; Karagoz, 2016; Mamur, 2012, 2014, 2015; Saribas, 2019), and various examples that can be integrated into visual arts teaching curriculum have emerged. Those studies have shaped the in-service teacher education programme in theory and practice. However, few studies underlined the importance of the knowledge and experience whereby primary and secondary art teachers can cultivate students' critical thinking skills. To overcome this shortcoming, a project on an in-service education programme for visual art educators in primary and secondary schools was developed and the Project funded by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey [TUBITAK] was administered to the teachers between May 2018 and March 2019. In the project, a series of activities took place with the aim of motivating classroom teachers and visual art teachers to raise students'

awareness about influences of global visual culture through theoretical knowledge and artistic activities and thus to promote students' high-order thinking skills. Within the scope of the project, 60-80 teachers participated in workshops that were organized in the Canakkale, Erzincan, Kayseri, Diyarbakir, Giresun, Mersin, and Denizli provinces of seven geographical regions in Turkey. These workshops were a result of cooperation with the Dean's Offices of Education Faculties and the R&D units of Provincial Directorates of National Education.

The teacher education programme was divided into three stages. The first stage was called a "Basic Philosophical Process." In this stage, changing values and paradigms in visual art education were analysed in the context of contemporary art practices and education, and concepts in visual cultural studies such as "Attractiveness, Representation, View, Ideology, Power, and Intertextuality" (Duncum, 2010) were investigated. Teachers responded to questions such as "Why are we interested in visual culture?" and "How should we read visual culture images?" Following the Q&A session and brainstorming, teachers participated in various activities. At this stage, "Individual and collaborative group activities" were conducted to help teachers interiorize visual culture analysis. Accordingly, two individual and three group activities took place. These activities included:

- How do we create meaning?
- Ways of looking
- Ideology of space
- Intertextuality
- Seduction and representation: Visual culture and technology-based museum experience

Before the in-service education, the Project Manager requested an activity from the author of the present study to contribute to the in-service teacher education process. In addition to that, the Project Manager asked if the activity could relate with sustainable learning and education through visual culture pedagogy. For this purpose, the activity named "Ideology of Space" was prepared and realized. The reason for the tendency toward the concept of space in this activity was that the features of the space produced and consumed in social practices is related to visual culture and can be associated with sustainability. The consumption patterns in society and the way the demanded goods and services are changed leads to the rearrangement of space. The effects of the change in consumption norms on the organization of space are primarily manifested in areas such as airports, shopping malls, and hypermarkets. For this reason, shopping malls were chosen as attractive temples of modern life so that teachers could make inquiries relevant to their daily aesthetic lives. Shopping malls, which include many concepts together within aesthetic, economic, social, cultural, political and spatial contexts, refer to a structure with interdisciplinary dynamics such as daily life, art and design, cultural

conflict, and collective memory.

Theoretical Framework

Duncum (1999), one of the most prominent supporters of Visual Culture Theory, argued that art education should adopt a wider framework for aesthetic education to include the study of everyday cultural and commercial sites such as tourist spots, themes parks, shopping malls, television, and the Internet. Duncum contended that the examination of everyday aesthetics is significant because of its powerful integration of technological, social, and economic factors that influence ordinary aesthetic experiences. Consequently, Stokrocki (2001) conducted a study in an effort to identify the effects of shopping malls on youth's aesthetic experiences; thereby testing Duncum's hypothesis (1999). She claimed that art educators today should discuss the new community art center—that of the shopping mall with its fashion designs, industrial products, and entertainment events (Stokrocki, 2001). Shopping malls should be examined for the roles, including aesthetic, that they play in students' and their families' lives, as well as in the community-at-large. As a result of her study, Stokrocki suggests that teachers need to help students discuss the hidden meanings behind "cool products" and develop artistic and positive ways of persuading advertisers and others of their needs and wants within reasonable price parameters.

The first condition for coping with visual culture is being able to evaluate it. Given the complexity of the contemporary visual world, it has become harder to aesthetically identify things of beauty, quality, and value, to identify the good and right in the social context, and to identify benefit in the economic sense. Posing the question of "How will we develop critical thinking and how will we get students to think critically without falling into the trap of aesthetic that prioritizes appeal rather than the benefit and instigates consumption?," Kirisoglu (2014) stressed the significance of being able to read through context. The postmodern world requires multiple views of images and concepts, and, therefore, from this point of view we should ask "how should we read the interwoven structure of visual culture elements"? The keyword here is *read* and being able to read. According to Freire (1997/2014), who is one of the leading representatives of critical theory, "education should rely on reading context and world instead of confining education to reading word and text" (p. 8). As a matter of fact, many contemporary artists' practices draw attention because of their approaches that reveal strategies of social order.

In her book *Reading the Shopping Mall City*, Backers (1997) posed the question of "if the shopping mall is a text, and specifically an encoded text of a city, how shall we read it?" (p.1). In his book *The Society of the Spectacle*, Guy Debord (1967/2014) posited that the entire life of societies in which modern conditions of production reign announces itself as an immense

accumulation of spectacles. He claimed that shopping malls are temples where the ceremony of spectacle takes place. He related the concept of shopping malls not only to consumption but also to spectacle. According to Tunalı and Basaytac (2013),

> The interior design of these structures requires planning so that the visitor can easily find products and has the opportunity of shopping at a maximum level. The objective of spatial syntax is to get maximum benefit from design engineering to gain control over consumption. (p.123)

In addition, Bati (2007) stated, "The functionality of interior design form is to motivates potential consumers to understand that this experience is beyond trading even if goods are materialized and made visible" (p.17).

Finally, Duman (2016) claimed "Shopping malls gave rise to the emergence of consumption as a dominant discourse, thereby creating new public space and a new form of socialization" (p.807). These descriptions of shopping malls make it possible to contend that a mall encompasses not only economic aspects but also political and social aspects as it mediates the socialization of consumption. There are three main reasons for this claim. The first reason is that these spaces are the microcosms of modern urban life: they reflect and market consumer lifestyles. The second reason is that shopping centres are aesthetic spaces: they strengthen and create culture and popular culture as well as being closely linked with architecture, graphics, and other aesthetic elements reflected in socio-political and cultural contexts. Third, these spaces give the impression of public space; however, in addition to creating inequality, shopping malls take advantage of especially low-income people and dominate people in terms of their use of time. These effects result in the uniformization of people whose social activities may sometimes be restricted depending on shopping malls' initiatives.

Methodology

This study was conducted with a case study design. The study sought to evaluate an education activity for in-service visual art teachers called "The Ideology of Space" in the context of visual culture studies in art education. The "Ideology of Space" activity was composed of a series of implementations whereby the question of how the ideology is experienced in daily life through spaces was analyzed. The implementation process centered on visual culture and sustainable learning in the context of space and ideology.

According to Merriam (2013), a case study is characterized by an intensive analysis of an individual unit rather than the subject of the research. Given that in the study, participatory teachers' experiences were associated with individual units, holistic single-case design was used.   There is a single analysis unit (an individual, an institution, a program, a school, etc.) in a holistic, one-case design (Yıldırım & Simsek, 2013, s.290).

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How can the matter of sustainability in art education be discussed through visual culture pedagogy?
2. What kind of experiences did teachers have after attending the "Ideology of Space" activity?

The study was conducted within 7 months in seven provinces of Turkey within the scope of in-service teacher education. The participants consisted of 508 primary school teachers and secondary school visual art teachers in total, and the number of teachers per workshop (province) ranged from 60 to 80 teachers.

Data Collection Tools

Data were collected through teaching materials used during the activity. The materials included worksheets, concept maps, artistic works, reflective diaries, and participant diaries. For data validity, the materials were presented to the project manager of the in-service education program and the opinions of experts were taken. After the initial pilot study in Çanakkale, the content of the implementation was revised. The teaching materials were briefly explained as follows:

Worksheets
Worksheets were employed to prompt teachers to think critically and prepare them for collaborative group work. Various visual images related to the mall like showcase designs, posters and billboards, objects in space design, interior and exterior designs of space, light, color, texture elements, games, recreational areas, and food courts were distributed to teacher groups in an attempt to stimulate the teachers to develop their awareness about space-object and human relations. A worksheet of questions posed to teachers with respect to space, the functionality of objects and visuals, the relationship between objects/visuals and humans in space, and the human relations in space was presented as follows:

- How do you define the mall?
- What is the most important thing about the mall?
- What kinds of objects/visuals are available in the mall?
- Why do you think these objects/visuals are available in the mall?
- How do you describe the relationship between objects/visuals and humans in the mall?
- How do you describe the human relations in the mall?

Concept Maps

Concept mapping was utilized to promote multidimensional and relational thinking through space. According to Novak and Musonda (1991), concept maps act as a representational tool for cognitive development change. A visual representation of information via concept maps is of utmost importance since it allows the learner to understand the topic and to relate it with his/her prior knowledge.

When it comes to previous literature reviews (Ruiz-Primo, Schultz, & Shavelson, 2001; Sen & Koca, 2003), different methods were used to generate concept maps, such as collaborative concept mapping, producing concept maps by filling in the blanks, concept mapping from scratch and flow map method. In this study, the methods of collaborative concept mapping and concept mapping from scratch were used together.

In the educational process, the participant teachers were asked to work as a 6-person collaborative group. Then, in the context of the method of concept mapping from scratch, they were provided with three basic components of education for sustainable development (i.e. society, environment, and economy) and they were expected to generate concept maps. They were also asked to associate them with the shopping mall images distributed during the "realize" step of the activity. The reason for choosing the method of concept mapping from scratch was to determine the participants' cognitive structures with regard to their ideologies without any limitations and to trigger the participants' interest in sustainability.

The reason for the use of concept mapping in the study was the frequent use of rhizomatic thinking in visual culture studies (Duncum, 2012) as well as the fact that visual culture is rhizomatic in structure. It is also crucial in terms of allowing for multiple ways of processing thinking beyond a linear logic of thinking.

Artistic Work and Reflective Diaries

Looking, seeing, understanding, and creating are the pillars of art education. In this study, teachers were asked to finalize the redesigning of seeing and understanding processes. For this purpose, the students were asked to respond to the directive: "If you designed a shopping mall, what would it look like?" and after the design process, teachers were asked to reflect their own spatial ideologies. In that vein, the following directive was given to teachers:

- Please specify the functions of visuals and objects in the space that you designed.

- Please explain your work in the context of space, humans, objects, and visuals. Then, what is the ideology of your space?

Participant Diaries

Participant Diaries were implemented at the end of the activity. They included two dimensions relating to the expression of individual and vocational findings. The first dimension was the description of the participants' opinions, emotions, and what they learned as well as the participants' findings about themselves and daily life. The second dimension involved the participants' opinions regarding the teaching profession and its contribution to art education. The participants were asked to respond to the following diary questions:

1. What did the activity of "Ideology of Space" urge you to think about?
2. What did you explore about yourself and daily life during the activity?
3. What are the contributions of the "ideology of space" activity to the teachers' professional knowledge?
4. How would you evaluate the achievements of the "ideology of space" activity in the context of primary and secondary school art classes?

Developing the "Ideology of Space" Activity

According to Carpenter and Sessions (2002), concepts (big ideas, topics, and interests), contexts (knowledge and viewpoints influencing the meaning), and techniques (approaches and methods) are fundamental contents in art education. In this study, the concept of *ideology* is discussed in relationship to *space*. Shopping malls were chosen as the space. The study therefore attempted to analyze the aesthetic, economic, social, and political relations of shopping malls, where visual information was available. As can be seen in Figure 1, the activity was theoretically based on three elements.
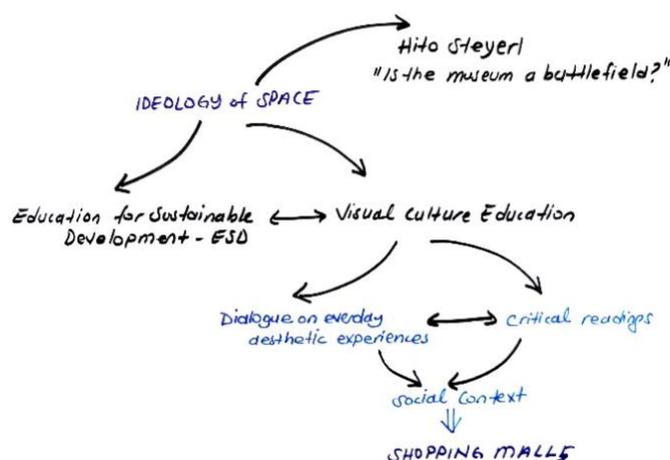

Figure 1. Fundamental structure of the activity of Ideology of Space.

The first element was the thinking approach of German artist Hito Steyerl's video artwork "Is the museum a battlefield?" In the video installation she prepared for the 13th Istanbul Biennial (2013), Steyerl followed the trace of an empty bullet found near the battlefield in Van, Turkey. In her own words, she followed the invisible bullet backwards. In the end, she uncovered connections between the arms industry and economics of art, thereby reaching visual codes. She emphasised the close relationship between the arms industry and economics of art and unravelled the implicit ties between corporate museums and battlefields. Her efforts to reveal the interconnectedness of war and art prompted us to consider how ideologies are being created and meanings are being constructed through shopping malls, which is the research topic of the paper.

The second element was the theoretical structure of visual culture education, which depends on daily aesthetic experiences, social context, and critical readings. The third element was education for sustainable development. Sustainable development strives to evaluate the relationship between shopping malls and consumption, as sustainable development is grounded on establishing a harmonious, healthy, and efficient relationship between human beings and nature. The United Nations visualizes sustainable development as interconnected domains or pillars: social, environmental, and economic (The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 2009). UNESCO's teachers' guide (2012) named "Education for Sustainable Development" points out that sustainability can be addressed in each and every subject and sustainability can be regarded as an interdisciplinary field in education. In that vein, both artists and art educators are more concerned with sustainability (Cornelius, Sherow & Carpenter, 2010; Gradle, 2007; Ozsoy, 2016). Artists and art educators do not remain unresponsive to potential risks of approaches based on consumption and sustainable growth for the environment and existence of human beings. In UNESCO's teacher's guide, education for sustainable development includes the topic of "changing consumption patterns" (p.6). Therefore, it is emphasized that students need to build aesthetic awareness for art and the environment through critical thinking, multi-thinking, solidarity, and cooperation; and, they should transition from awareness to information and action.

The steps for the process of the activity are presented in Appendix A. In an effort to nurture teachers' unique, critical, and creative thinking, the activity was designed in four steps: *realize*, *think*, *design and reflect*, and *evaluate*.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using content analysis. The data set was analyzed during the data analysis process at different periods of time. The first drafts of similar words and emergent themes were developed. The content analysis revealed 4 main themes: 1) Realize: Perceptions

2) Think: Critical studies, 3) Design and Reflect: Design activities and 4) Evaluate: Outputs. The relations among the themes are shown in Figure 2.
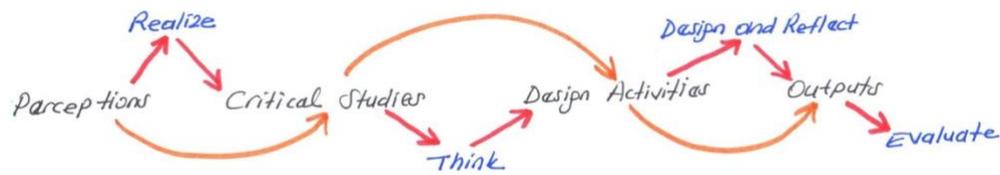

Figure 2. Lesson plan and relations among themes.

During the study, a researcher with a Ph.D. in visual culture pedagogy who was also a member of in-service teacher education was consulted as a second coder. The author of the research and the second coder revised the existing codes using the codebook provided below. The findings were supported by direct quotations and each participant was given a code name.

Table 1

Coding at a Glance

Activities (Themes)	Code	Data	Tools	Group Code
Realize	Perceptions	Describing human relations in the space	*Insincere, hasty, fast, egocentric and consumption-based human relations*	Worksheet (WS)	Group SY
Think	Critical studies	Aesthetic	*Impressive showcase designs, colour union, illuminated ambiance, and design for sense of eternity, artworks and activities in the space, thematic narration*	Concept map (CM)	Group DF
Design &Reflect	Making activities	Nostalgic design	*Our shopping malls are nostalgic. Line-up stores in open space, sincere relations, neighbourhood culture*	Reflective diary (RD)	Group Z
Evaluate	Outputs	Exploring the meaning behind what is seen	*We realized we should closely examine the visuals rather than just staring carelessly and what kind of problems they could lead us.*	Participant diary (PD)	T 42

Findings

Realize: Perceptions

With reference to teachers' evaluations of "the relationship between space-objects and humans" through shopping mall visuals, the objective of the first activity was to stimulate deep thinking and critical-based studies as a foundation for the next step of the teaching curriculum. This section describes findings from the introductory step that asked teachers to examine the space and the visuals and objects in the space through their own experiences, thereby initiating a group discussion. The codes obtained from the group discussion worksheets were first categorized under four sub-themes and, because the sub-themes include data relevant to first perceptions, the codes were combined under the theme of *Perceptions*. The four sub-themes are as follows: 1) describing the space, 2) reflecting the function/s of the space, 3) reflecting the meanings of objects and visuals in the space, and 4) describing human relations in the space.

While some teachers described malls using positive remarks such as *gorgeous/spectacular, attractive, illuminated, vibrant/dynamic/fluid, colorful, spacious, green nature effect, a wide variety of social opportunities and safe,* the others identified malls using such adverse remarks as *windowless, closed, tiring, crowded and noisy.* Accordingly, some of the teacher groups described malls as follows:

> *Colorful, attractive, noisy, and tiring. It is tiring because we can easily see the sign of fatigue in both employees and visitors (Group SY, WS 1)*
> *Eye-catching and luxurious outlook, gaudy, deceptive (Group D, WS 1)*
>
> *Natural green-blue combination, eco-friendly environment, spacious, bright (Group BY, WS 1)*

Teacher groups frequently described the shopping malls as "attractive," while some teachers considered malls as "luxury" spaces. Put simply, this represents "the aesthetic structure that has a significant impact on financial decisions" (Ozsoy, 2015, p.111). In other words, they are aesthetic experiences based on design and everyday life. We thus cannot ignore the existence of spaces in art education curricula.

When teachers were asked to express the most significant thing about the shopping mall, they underlined the following elements: *sell product, having fun, finding everything under one roof, hygiene and order, sense of timelessness, alienation from the reality of society*. However, some teachers had different views in terms of social context. To illustrate:

> *Alienation from the reality of the society by gathering people from different socioeconomic backgrounds, building charming spaces that expose salient inequality among individuals (Group BG, WS 1)*

When it came to the teachers' opinions on the relationship between *promotional banners, colourful showcase design, nature-inspired interiors, children's objects, and visuals and humans*, the following perspectives drew attention: *increase sales of products (Group B, WS 1), invite people into buying with a riot of colour, attract children under a certain age using cartoon characters, announce campaigns, discounts, deceive people (Group SY, WS 1), attract people, convince, cause shopping addiction (Group BS, WS 1), nature-inspired appearance with green trees in pots, the natural pathways, pools and water sounds (Group E, WS 1)*. On the other hand, the participants described the human relations in the space (the third element of the space-object-human context) with words like *insincere, hasty, fast, consumption-based, egocentric, superficial, social, having lack of empathy, kindness and dominance, loneliness and strange.* For example, teachers stated:

> *There is a fake relationship. People see each other as a rival. (Group SY, WS 1)*
> *Insincere, hasty, fast, egocentric and consumption-based human relations (Group SY, WS 1)*
> *Frosty, limited, having a lack of empathy, retailers are too kind, customers just try to dominate (Group SY, WS 1)*
> *People feel lonely. They are distant and stranger to each other. (Group E, WS 1)*

With respect to the teaching curriculum, teachers were expected to evaluate the space, visual culture elements in the space, and the relationship between these elements and humans. The main objective was to help them perceive the effects of shopping malls on human experiences by means of their own experiences. That is to say, as specified in Lefebvre's book (1974/2012) *The Production of Space*, teachers were expected to analyze the interconnected complex structure of the perceived-conceived-lived space. From Lefebvre's point of view, space is considered to be a moving social production within a conceptual triad that includes: (a) "conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers, and social engineers (representations of space)"; (b) "space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols (representational spaces)"; and (c) "a close association, within perceived space, between daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (spatial practice)" (1974/2012, p.38). According to Lefebvre, representations of space are tied to the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, signs, codes, and 'frontal' relations. Alternatively, representational spaces embody complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, and also to art. Spatial practice, on the other hand, embraces

production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation; and, put simply, spatial practice identifies the relationship between each member of a given society and the space (Lefebvre, 1974/2012, p.33).

Think: Critical Studies

Teachers were asked to generate a concept map so that they could explore the environmental, economic, and social contexts of the mall. Teachers were given a series of questions in an effort to improve group discussion, to lead them to multidimensional thinking and deep thinking along with sustainability. The questions posed can be outlined as follows: *How have shopping malls changed our lives? Are shopping malls public space? Which capital alarm bells do you think start to ring when you go out of a shopping mall? What is the impact of shopping mall projects on the aesthetic values of an urban space? What kind of attractions do shopping malls offer? How do the physical and interior design of the mall influence consumer's buying behaviour?* These questions were intended to enhance teachers' reading skills and trigger their interest in sustainability. Likewise, it was thought that concept mapping would positively influence teachers' thinking processes because of its harmony with visual culture theory.

The codes produced in teachers' concept maps were categorized as follows: 1) aesthetic, 2) function, 3) environment, 4) society, and 5) economic factors. Within the framework of teachers' views, the relationship among the categories is presented in Figure 3.
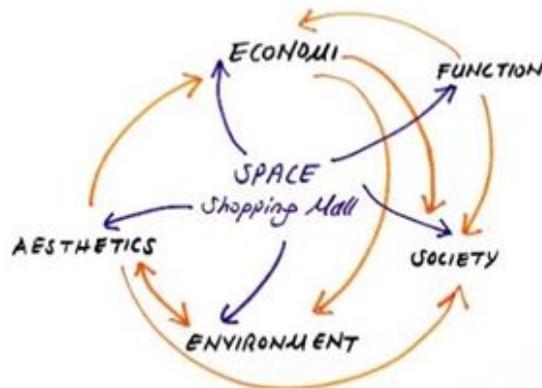

Figure 3. The overall structure of the associations in concept mapping.

Further, some concept map examples given during activities are provided in Figure 4.
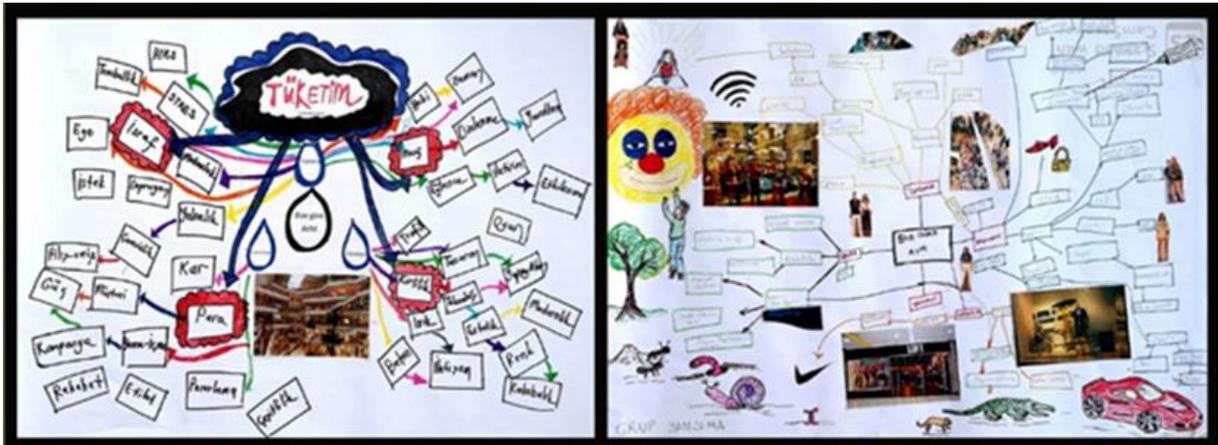
Figure 4. Some concept map examples.

The teachers highlighted aesthetic elements in the space as follows: *impressive showcase designs, colour union, illuminated ambiance, design for sense of eternity, artworks and activities in the space, thematic narration, artificial environment designs, and like a temple in size.* These concepts were mostly associated with individual and social psychology. As for the function of the space, teachers mostly used the following words: *a safe social environment, finding everything under one roof, air conditioning, and parking opportunities.*

It was evident that teachers mostly put forward concepts related to the social dimension. Therefore, the social dimension was divided into two sub-themes: individual psychology and social psychology. With respect to the impact of the shopping mall on individual psychology, teachers highlighted the following factors: *mental exhaustion, sense of obligation (feeling trapped), creating habit, happiness, unhappiness, stress, dissatisfaction, being insensitive, anger, passion for fashion, brand loyalty, introversion, illusion, deception and power (can't resist campaigns and discounts), statute, and sense of timelessness.* The social psychology factors, on the other hand, were coded as follows: *the increase in the rates of divorces and suicides due to overconsumption and debt, imposing a competition culture, causing social inequality, inciting children and women to consume, culture imperialism, standardized human model, preventing socialization, promoting popular culture industry, and creating a fast-food culture.*

Teachers also expressed their views on the impact of the shopping malls on economy and, consequently, two affirmatives and two adverse codes were produced. These codes include: *contribution of consumption to economy, job opportunities for young people, unequal working hours, and destruction of small retailers*. From an environmental point of view, teachers uttered the following factors: *disconnection from nature/isolation, excessive use of plastic and*

bags, air pollution due to heavy traffic. The codes produced mostly were associated with concepts related to the social dimension. Almost every teacher underlined the promotion of excessive use of plastic and bags in their concept maps.

Some teacher groups preferred to employ metaphoric narration while developing concept maps through shopping malls. For example, as shown in Figure 5, they preferred to portray the shopping mall using such metaphors as spider, funnel, eddy, octopus, fishbone, and cage; whereas they described the people in the shopping mall as birds hunted or robots. Although such contents do not exactly encompass the content of traditional concept maps, such metaphoric narratives were found to be efficient in terms of creative thinking.
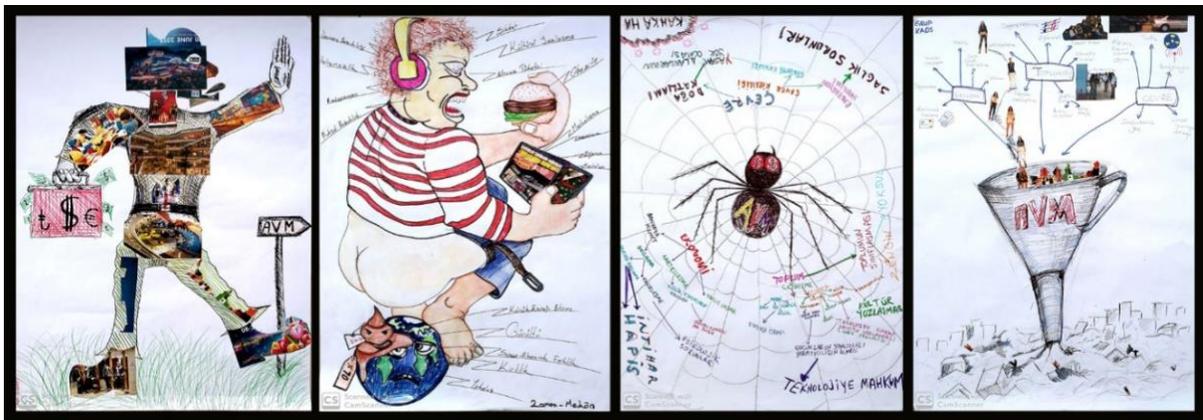
Figure 5. More concept map examples.

One of the teaching curriculum objectives was to motivate teachers to evaluate the shopping mall in the context of components of sustainable development. In addition to that, teachers were encouraged to generate new ideas regarding the direct or indirect cause-effect relationship of the shopping mall and the relations in the mall. As a result, the intent was to drive critical thinking and a sense of responsibility among teachers. The results obtained from the concept maps revealed that teachers were motivated by the subject very quickly. This was associated with teachers' experiences basing on their frequent visits to malls. In the concept mapping process, teachers first tended to evaluate shopping malls in the context of *economy and society*, the main components of sustainability, and then developed relational connections. As they worked on the concept map, they focused more on evaluating the environmental context. Teachers' real-life experiences were a determinative factor in their progression. Another factor was that the concept maps allowed them to see the conceptual relationships from a bird's eye view.

In the project, the vast majority of teachers were motivated to attend the event and tended to deepen their knowledge regarding the basic components of sustainability. However, in each province where the project was carried out, a small number of teachers showed reluctance toward participating in the collaborative concept mapping process. This was frequently observed in teachers with over 25 years of experience. As indicated in the participant diaries, it may be the case that these teachers associate visual arts courses with more technical-based actions such as drawing, painting, cutting-sticking, and examination of artworks.

Concept maps were believed to be important in terms of triggering teachers' high level of cognitive involvement and interdisciplinary thinking around the idea of sustainability. It was necessary to consider the space as an object produced and consumed in social practices in order to improve design activities that involve the production and proposal development processes with a new idea. As a matter of fact, the findings obtained from the participant diaries demonstrated that this process expanded the knowledge base and the skill of some teachers. This experience eventually influenced teachers' artistic works.

Design and Reflect: Design Activities

As can be seen in Figures 5 and 6, teachers adopted the following principles in their artistic narrations or designs: prioritizing respect for ecological life, production-based approach rather than consumption-based approach, building open spaces rather than close spaces, natural-inspired or nostalgic design rather than artificial spaces. To illustrate, the works made by Group BG and Group Z and their reflective opinions are presented in Images 3 and 4.

Figure 5. Group BG.

Note. A human-friendly shopping environment that cares for art and nature. Allowing the child to enhance their dreams without gaudiness. Promoting production rather than consumption, respecting not only humans but also nature and other all living creatures. In short, adopting empathy as a key for individuals and society (Group BG, WS 2).

Figure 6. Group Z.

Note. Our shopping malls are nostalgic. Line-up stores in open space, sincere relations, neighbourhood culture (Group Z, WS 2).

Some groups, however, preferred to critically examine shopping malls using metaphoric narrations rather than suggesting a new shopping mall. For instance, Group B used the labyrinth metaphor (Figure 7) whereas Group DF (Figure 8) considered the shopping malls as the hunters waiting for their hunt.
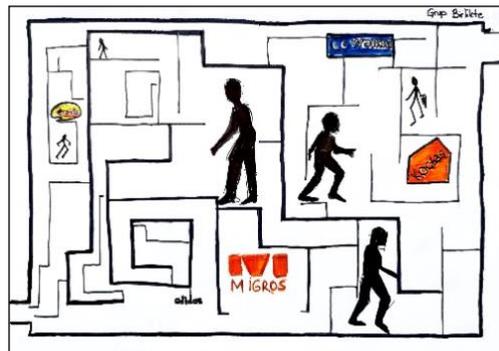

Figure 7. Group B.

Note. We did not want to create a new shopping mall, we wanted to show the consumption frenzy of people who were not aware that they were stuck in labyrinth. They are all inclined to act in a standardized way. Our labyrinth represents a complex shopping mall. The objects that we used symbolise the products consumed. The running figures are consumers (Group B, WS 2).

Figure 8. Group DF.

Note. Our work is about a hunter waiting for the hunt. He/she deceives them with illuminated, colourful, and entertaining things. Or, he/she offers tricky and charming campaigns (Group DF, WS 2).

The group C associated the mall with a disaster (Figure 9). People experienced the feeling of happiness due to possession, while they were heading to disaster by consuming. When it comes to Group SY's work given in Figure 10, they used a metaphor of world bringing everything under one roof and that was up for sale and did not let anyone live except for itself.

Figure 9. Group C.

Note. We tried to deliver messages from the current world, creating a utopia and choosing images. In fact, we meant to metaphorize the shopping as an immense sea, the shopping malls as a ship which sinks humanity and socialization and the happiness of belonging as a disaster moment (Group C, WS 2).

Figure 10. Group SY.

Note. It is beyond a new shopping mall. Offering everything in a one space and facilitating nothing other than itself, this space was put for sale with a 50% discount. We used the world as a metaphor. Shopping malls are the only spaces that bring everything under one roof. It symbolizes globalization. (Group SY, WS 2).

In some teacher groups' designs, it was observed that teachers focused on enhancing the power of the space with its ability to create a sense of belonging and community as well as focusing on urban sustainability with its aesthetic qualities. Some teacher groups continued their critical approach using metaphoric narrations. The designs provided in the examples highlight natural life and cultural identity through spatial practices, thereby contributing to efforts to raise awareness.

During this phase of design, the great majority of teachers designed environment-friendly spaces. These spaces could generate their own electricity, were underground spaces, and would harmonize with nature. Yet, some of them questioned uncontrolled development, overuse of natural resources, and the desire for excessive consumption rather than designing a space. In this sense, they investigated human actions looking at the underlying reasons behind insatiability, desires, and demand culture.

Evaluate: Outputs

The study aimed to provide teachers with a distinctive perspective on qualifications along with a critical viewpoint on shopping malls in every stage of the process, which extended from analysis of the shopping mall structure to spatial syntax. The study was intended to question the ideas and values that are transferred implicitly through social relations especially in daily life. During this stage of activity, teachers were motivated to critically think about the effects of space, objects, and images on human experiences. Following the activities, teachers

were asked to present their own concept maps and artistic designs to other participants. During the presentations, two questions were posed to teachers: "*What did the activity urge you to think about? What did you explore about yourself?*" While the first question included the expression of opinions regarding how a well-designed learning activity forces a high level of thinking skills in an art course, the second question allowed teachers to express how their perspectives evolved.

Teachers shared their thoughts regarding the contribution of the activity to their thinking processes using the following concepts: *comparative thinking, critically handle, exploring the meaning behind what is seen, multidimensional thinking about details, making connection, association of art with everyday life, exploring art-space-capitalism relationship, assigning different meanings to the same object/image.* Teachers made such comments as follows:

> *What I'm very pleased about is that I've changed my point of view not only about visuals but also about life (Art Teacher [AT], 10, RD)*
> *Similar complaints were made by everyone during the shopping mall activity, given they feel like me as to negative aspects of shopping malls. I don't know why but it made me happy. The masses that are aware of the problem also may think hard for the solution in the upcoming years (Primary School Teacher [PST], 55, RD).*

As understood by teachers' comments, individual learning outcomes resulted within the confines of cognitive, affective, and social context. The most important aspect that teachers explored about themselves was *the joy of developing ideas together and mixing different opinions.* In addition to that, as mentioned by the teacher (numbered 55) in the previous quote, explaining individual concerns about shopping malls within a group discussion was seen as a starting point for solutions. Milbrandt (2002) claims that personal concerns may become social concerns when shared collectively by a group or community. Social themes are thus of vital importance in art education in terms of meaningful learning.

In this activity, teachers made comments promoting learning as follows: *understanding of art with everyday life, interpreting art with previous experiences, different approaches of seeing and exploring the effects of visual images/objects on thoughts*. Some of these comments are presented below:

> *I realized that we could build a spirit of team together, how different opinions, viewpoints could enrich a subject. I realized that we don't have to think like everyone else (AT. 85, RD)*
> *I was satisfied with the result. I was pleased to be part of integrity in group work (PST. 102, PD).*

According to teachers' participatory diaries, it was clearly seen that teachers achieved learning outcomes that could make a professional contribution to their course processes. To illustrate, these outcomes were: *a new viewpoint for visual art course, the importance of dialogue before implementation, combining artistic works with daily life,* and *the sensitivity for choosing visual teaching material.*

> *It made me reconsider my lecturing techniques. I thus believed the importance of thinking on daily life and visual skills rather than just the ability. (AT. 76, PD).*
>
> *I sometimes find visual examples and show them in my classes. Yet, I realized that I should carefully think even for them. You need to be so sensitive. (PST. 9, PD).*

On the other hand, this visual culture activity yielded some concerns among teachers. Some of these concerns were related to the participants themselves, some of them were about the course, and the other concerns were associated with society and the next generations. For example:

> *I'm worried about whether we can administer it to our primary school classes (PST. 11, PD).*
>
> *Having seen sub-meanings in visual images, being aware of the danger concerned me (AT. 21, PD).*
>
> *I'm worried about whether I can teach being so critical (PST. 33, PD).*
>
> *Finally understanding the power of visual images worried me (PST. 47, PD).*
>
> *…I feel uneasy about being aware of… (AT. 80, RD).*

Teachers' concerns about the course indicated significant differences between classroom teachers and visual arts teachers. While classroom teachers were concerned about the implementation of the course in classes at the primary school level, visual art teachers pointed out the difficulties of planning a critical-based, 40 minutes-per-week visual art course. However, the common concern of the both teacher groups was the concern about the power of visual images and their impacts on young people. As a result, they mutually underscored the necessity of implementation of such activities in art courses.

Discussion and Conclusion

The research project specifically focused on visual culture and sustainable learning in the context of space and ideology through an in-service teacher education course that also examined existing professional values. The study was grounded in the perspective that teachers should offer opportunities for their students to critically examine social structures. Giroux (1983/2014) pointed out two necessities in today's educational practices: first, a focus

on daily life activities that shape personal and social actions; and second, analysis of "ideological" (p. 173) messages that create and develop knowledge.

Visual culture education centers on exploration of personal and social meanings by means of visual images. In the forming of cultural identity, visual culture education urges us to question the effective power of visual culture images. This study thus carried out an investigation on shopping malls, which offered a good example of how the cultural industry is reflected in space. In the study, respect, seeing, noticing, thinking about relations, understanding, and creating were the main pillars of critical thinking. This study drew teachers' attention to shopping malls and teachers were encouraged to consider the space, humans, and objects encountered, and to read the context among these elements.

Not only with their physical and architectural structures but also with their interior designs and decorations, shopping malls are charming spaces for consumers. Because of their fantastic ambiance, shopping malls motivate customers' sense of belonging. The society or city, yet, does not keep shopping malls in their memories in the same way they do places like Galata tower. In other words, the shopping malls do not reveal to us the urban identity. The total number of shopping malls in overall Turkey was 454 as of 2019 (Turkish real estate sector 2019 4th quarte report, Şubat, 2020). It has been projected that this figure will increase to 500 by 2023. Almost all cinemas have been moved to shopping malls. The number of concerts and various cultural activities in shopping malls are on the rise. Art exhibitions also use shopping malls as an art space because of the vast amount of visitor traffic in shopping malls. The belief seems to be that art enhances the image of shopping malls and reinforces their position in the luxury segment. Further, in recent years, these spaces have hosted various "shopping fest activities," thereby becoming the centre of attention.

Change in space is an indicator of social change. Space has been a key part of the efforts to change society (Serter, 2013). Nora's (1984/2006) concept of "Sites of Memory" posits that contemporary memory cultures are confronted with "globalization, democratization, and the advent of mass culture and media," the end of "societies based on memory," implying that the whole world is in play (p. 18). Space plays a major role in cultural values and beliefs with its emphasis on memory; that is to say, recalling and forgetting. Therefore, ideologies inherent in such cultural values and beliefs should be analysed and serve as the basis for educational activities. According to Giroux (1983/2014), "ideology addresses production, consumption, and representation of all kinds of ideas and behaviours that twist or enlighten the nature of reality" (p.173). In brief, examining ideology requires analysis of social context. Visual culture invites individuals to examine and understand the relationships among education, ideology, power, and culture (Tavin, 2003). Therefore, this study stimulated teachers to elaborately think about space, objects and images in the space, and consequently they

attempted to analyze the influences of such factors on individuals, society, and the environment. They were encouraged to adopt a solution-oriented perspective with an alternative environment-friendly space design based on social life dynamics. This process resulted in initiating discussion on daily life and social themes in art education and understanding the contribution of cooperative work to intellectual richness. To conclude, teachers developed some ideas in order to improve their class activities in line with the experiences they gained during the activity process.

The data obtained from reflective tools indicated that the in-service education course enhanced teachers' learning experiences and, by this means, promoted their professional and personal development. In particular, classroom teachers stated that they could see the potential of art as a learning experience more clearly. Concept maps were an effective way for most teachers to achieve meaningful learning and to approach the matter from different perspectives prior to design and implementation activities. Concept maps were, in fact, the strongest aspect of this project. In the study, the researcher observed that, especially in the group activities, classroom teachers were more easily able to think over concepts and to establish interdisciplinary connections, and visual arts teachers were effective in visualizing the thinking developed through concepts.

Teachers developed pedagogical approaches to sustainability while examining how consumption organizes space and the effect of art and aesthetics on this organization. In particular, classroom teachers stated that they were able to associate visual culture with some topics in courses such as life science, Turkish lessons, and social studies that would create environmental awareness and improve self- awareness among students. This is meaningful in the context of realizing the potential of art-based learning approaches in deepening environmental ideas. Experiencing, questioning, participation, and innovation were the cornerstones of this project. The teachers questioned the space through their own life experiences and were guided through problem-oriented learning. In solving the problem, innovative and design thinking came into play.

Teachers' reflective expressions revealed that visual art teachers rarely use learning approaches in art classes that nurture the intellectual process prior to implementation. In addition to that, the educational process enabled teachers to critique themselves with regard to the use of cognitive and interactive pedagogies in their classes. Therefore, teachers stressed the necessity of the following aspects:

- The importance of small and large group activities for promoting social interaction in classes

- Empowering students to connect with the world outside and interdisciplinary approaches.
- Designing learning environments that encourage students to explore and discuss.
- Planning learning activities with a strong emphasis on extending students' visions.
- Offering students opportunities for expressing their personal views on social issues in their creation process

In this research, teachers were invited to think about sustainability through visual culture pedagogy. Thus, while tracing the structure of aesthetics that leaks into every area of life with different functions through space, they examined the social, environmental, and economic dimensions of this leakage and were encouraged to question their own teaching processes. Among the subject areas of education for sustainable development, there are various topics that can be discussed with different approaches such as "social justice, social judgments, sustainable democratic society, [and] gender equality" that can be associated with visual culture pedagogy apart from "consumption habits." Teachers should be provided with different in-service training activities whereby they can improve their competencies and interpret these topics using art-based approaches.

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Appendix A

"The Ideology of Space" Activity Implementation Steps

NAME OF ACTIVITY: The Ideology of Space
Objective: This study attempts to encourage teachers to use information, critically think, and aesthetically judge malls they sometimes visit, and to elaborately investigate shopping malls considering not only economic parameters but also cultural, political, and environmental parameters. It is thus thought that children and teenagers will be equipped with information, skills, and viewpoints which help them use their value judgement to become a conscious consumer visually.   **Outcomes:**   • The student questions message goals in visual culture images in space.   • The student evaluates attractive elements in visual culture images inherent in space and types of persuasion.   • The student questions the meaning of aesthetics and the relationship between aesthetics and consumption.   • The student evaluates the space in the context of components of sustainable development.   • The student evaluates meanings of visual codes from different angles.   • The student questions the effects of images on human experiences.   • The student expresses his/her opinions through artistic works related to themes.   **Instruments, Visual and Written Materials:** Shopping mall images, adhesive, scissors, drawing paper (70 x 100 cm in size), spirituous colourful pencils   **Method and Technique**: Critical- Inquiry- Based Approach: Brainstorming, Concept map, Collaborative group work   **Working Process**   The study was carried out within groups of 5-6 people through collaborative work between classroom and visual art teachers and it was comprised of four activities. The first activity was designed to help teachers be familiar with the topic and to ensure an in-group dialogue. The second activity was designed to allow teachers to analyze the ideological structure of shopping malls and to evaluate the space in terms of sustainable growth. The third activity asked teachers to design a new shopping mall in line with their own ideologies. The fourth activity was based on evaluation and discussion processes.
Activity 1: REALİZE   This activity is an introduction to the topic. The teachers are expected to evaluate the relationship between space-objects and humans.   *Instruction: Please analyze images of the shopping mall and answer the following questions (10 photos)*   • How do you define the mall?   • What is the most important thing about the mall?   • What kinds of objects/visuals are inherent in the mall?   • Why do you think these objects/visuals are available in the mall?   • What is the relationship between objects/visuals and humans in the mall?   • How are the human relations in the mall?   Following the dialogue basing on the questions above, the second activity was initiated to prompt teachers to carry out an in-depth analysis of shopping malls.
Activity 2: THINK   This activity was designed to stimulate teachers to think about the meanings of scenes that reflect daily aesthetic experiences and to analyze the meanings of visual codes of everyday life as well as develop different viewpoints.   *Instruction: As part of a group work, please develop a concept map using the shopping mall visuals. You can utilize the diagram given below. You can employ the shopping mall visuals in your concept map.*

Developing concept map	Evaluating the space in terms of the components of sustainable development	Guiding Questions for group discussion

- List your concepts, brainstorming visuals and information you've had. - Develop new concepts about visuals, - Organize concepts, - Build relations between concepts.		- How have shopping malls changed our lives? - Are shopping malls public space? - Which capital alarm bells do you think start to ring when you go out of a shopping mall? - What is the impact of shopping mall projects on the aesthetic values of an urban space? - What kind of attractions do shopping malls offer? - How does the physical and interior design of the mall influence consumer's buying behaviour?