Visual Culture as New Educational Socio-Technological Paradigm

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Abstract

Digital technology has enabled the predominance of visual communication and rapid and simultaneous image transmission beyond the original context. In the "culture of the image," communication, identity formation, and social patterns are transmitted by image. Under such conditions, visual literacy is considered as elementary literacy and goes towards the critical reading of visual content messages. This situation has also prompted a reflection on the art education paradigm turn towards the broader concept of visual culture as a new socio-technological paradigm. The Croatian results of the Delphi method survey showed that most experts see the paradigm turn, from fine art to visual culture, because of technological changes in society. Technological developments manifested through the Internet, mass media, and social networks affect new generations testing and understanding the world in new ways, most often through technology. It is essential to change the content, practices, and teaching methods.

Keywords: art education, educational paradigm, digital technology, visual communication, visual culture.

1. Introduction

Today's society is marked by an image turn where the image is the leading creator of culture and an essential communication tool. The literature analysis of numerous authors about visual studies and image issues shows that the pictorial/visual/iconic turn is a set of symptoms that we notice in Western postcapitalist societies, characterized by the dominance of image and visual communication in everyday life (Purgar, 2009: VIII). Communication takes place using an image, so visual literacy has become a vital life skill and one of the most critical competencies in education. In today's culture, visuality needs a new approach to academic research, so the field of visuality and vision is widely explored from the various humanistic and social disciplines' points of view (Dikovitskaya, 2012). There are several reasons for that.

In the second half of the 19th and 20th centuries, pluralism of styles became a normal artistic state. It can no longer be reviewed exclusively from the point of art aesthetics, an approach familiar to art history. Requires a multidisciplinary method of different disciplines. The aesthetic model was created on the ideas of *the innocent eye* for understanding and interpreting modern art to develop an aesthetic sensitivity to the form achieved by a naturalistic approach to perception and awareness of literal observation (Ruskin, 1837). The model of the innocent eye was abandoned

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in the second half of the 20th century because it ignores the cultural aspects of the gaze in transmitting image meaning and appreciation, which is why the relativistic approach to perception extends the naturalistic approach. The intermediate characteristics of most avant-garde styles have exceeded the rigid boundaries, which can no longer be structured according to the elements of analysis of individual art branches. At the end of the 20th century, fine arts were replaced by visual arts, bringing novelties to the image's theoretical aspects, and changing the image's paradigm (Paić, 2008).

Visual culture appeared in the 1980s as an interdisciplinary field that interests art history, anthropology, filmology, linguistics, comparative literature, cultural studies, and poststructuralist theory. It is an area of research and a curricula initiative that puts the visual image at the heart of creating meaning in a cultural context. The concept of visual culture implies two things: an interest in visual artifacts that often include non-visual codes and the idea of culture that goes beyond the artifacts themselves according to their production, distribution, and use (Dikovitskaya, 2012). Images are approached in their contextual wealth as part of a lasting social discourse that includes their influence on social life (Duncum, 2001; Duncum, 2002). Visual culture is accomplished with observation techniques involving optical apparatuses and technologies as an ordinary view of everyday life (Purgar, 2009; Mitchel, 1995). That is why the emergence and understanding of the visual culture of the 20th century must be seen in the context of technological, mainly digital development.

Interest in visual culture has been present in education since the 1990s for several reasons. The contents of visual culture are transmitted by digital technology, which has become the primary tool in the life of young people. Social patterns are sent through various forms of advertisements, films, videos, and social networks and impact identity formation. In addition, visual culture is also the main inspiration of contemporary art practice, which is why it is necessary to include the content of visual culture in art education. This research aims to determine the extent to which the social aspect of visual culture is dependent on the technology with which it is transmitted and how the culture dependent on the image affects education. Therefore, visual culture is considered a new paradigm with educational aspects related to socio-technological development.

2. Literature review

The literature review will discuss the texts of relevant authors dealing with the problem of education, visual art education, and visual culture. Their attitudes will be analyzed according to the contribution to cultural roots of the visual culture educational paradigm, change in visual art education, and socio-technological impact on identity formation.

2.1 *Cultural roots of the visual culture educational paradigm*

Education always occurs within a culture and is determined by cultural beliefs more than scientific discoveries. For this reason, it is necessary to establish the interrelationships and influences between culture and education. The metaphor of education as a continent of culture suggests that education isn't an isolated island but a much stronger foundation on which civilization is embodied (Bruner, 2000). Any form of thought and learning cannot be isolated from social circumstances because culture influences any action of the human mind as a social habitat. Culturalism is based on the opinion that reality is constituted by symbols common to members of a cultural community and that the purpose of such a symbolic system is not only to create a community framework for the opinion but to maintain the identity of culture and lifestyle achieved by preserving, improving, and passing on to future generations. One of the primary mechanisms for conveying the culture is undoubtedly education, which is carried out through non-formal and

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formal forms of learning (Bruner, 2000). One of the psycho-cultural approaches to education settings is based on the opinion that the meaning of any fact is related to the perspective or frame of reference within which it is realized and that interpretations of meaning reflect the history of individuals' cultural canons (Bruner, 2000).

In modern society, culture as an image has replaced the paradigm of culture as text because we are faced with the visual construction of culture instead of the visual construction of society (Paić, 2008: 58). Our culture is predominantly visual because our world is filled with visual images essential for presenting ourselves and creating meanings to communicate with the environment (Cartwright & Sturken, 2001). The turn towards images has resulted in a fascination with the image, so our values, opinions, and beliefs are formed under the strong influence of the various visuals we encounter daily. According to this fact, art education has new challenges: the problem of understanding the process by which images and their observers create meanings and determining the role that image plays in our culture (Cartwright & Sturken, 2001: 1). Culture could be defined as a common practice of groups, communities, and societies whose purpose is expressed through visual, spiritual, and verbal representation (Cartwright & Sturken, 2001). Although it is the sum of processes or practices that individuals and groups understand and give meaning to (Hall, 1993). According to visual culture that includes various forms of media, questions arise about whether all these forms, including fine art, can be studied together as part of the same cultural phenomenon and what theories can contribute to understanding the functioning of the image in the broader cultural sphere and shaping the reception through the practice of viewing.

Since the 1980s, cultural research has become essential for society. It takes place according to two paradigms: one that organizes the breakdown of society according to natural science and another that approaches from an interpretative hermeneutical point of view and emphasizes human subjectivity and contextual meaning (Dikovitskaya, 2012). Studies have shown that cultural contexts arise according to how people interpret symbols, rituals, and discourses and that our interpretations are burdened with ideological assumptions. While the previous paradigm started with language and symbols as the leading indicators of culture, the cultural approach ranges from the complex relationships between power and knowledge embedded in the image (Dikovitskaya, 2012). Perception is no longer understood as purely a physical experience but as a product of acculturation. At the same time, representation is explored as the structure and process of ideological production of the subject's position. The idea of the autonomy of a work of art has been replaced by the concept of intertextuality and a specific discursive system of art. A work of art is a repository of the dominant culture's values.

Visual culture can be seen as a new paradigm that puts at the heart of its interest the visual representation of the world realized not only in works of art but also in a vast population of images in our environment that do not have artistic status. Although it is related to the history of art, a science that is the only one in its focus that has visual representation as a reflection of artistic desires, in many ways, it differs. Even today, there is controversy about whether it is a new discipline or the epistemological development of the old field of art history. The key differences are found in the domain of the object of research, which expands with all the images that we see in the environment regardless of their intention to be works of art, and in the interdisciplinary approach to the hermeneutical reading of the image in which it uses not only historical art methods of analysis but expands its methodology with methods from other disciplines.

The interest of visual culture research focuses on the spectator, who is treated as a consumer of visual phenomena, and on the conditions in which observation occurs and depends on the spectator's cultural environment and personal preferences. Interpretation is not approached as an airtight description of the context in which the work is created. Still, the possibilities of understanding are opened to new arrangements in the present moment.

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2.2 *Change of educational paradigm of visual art education*

The interest in changing the teaching paradigm of art history and visual art education comes from special cultural conditions after the 1990s when society's habits changed and turned towards a visual form of communication and cultural construction. Art history influenced various interdisciplinary cultural theories about the impact of mass media, advertisements, and films on individual identity and their power in conveying patterns and political messages; art history changed the methodology of art interpretation to a more interdisciplinary approach. Mass production of paintings in the second half of the 20th century changed the way of communication, which affected the artistic practice and reception of the spectator. The spectators' visual experience does not occur in isolation but is formed by memories and images from different aspects of life. He does not encounter the visual domain exclusively through fine art but builds his visuality on all visible contents in the surroundings. In contrast, he meets art only in isolated galleries and museums. In such conditions, understanding only the art in the visual world is no longer enough. Still, it should consider how different ideologies are embedded in the image and the methods by which the image influences identity formation (Cartwright & Sturken, 2001). Visual education in the past focuses exclusively on the work of art exploring the authors' idea and the historical context, which arises solely from the circumstances of its creation. That approach can no longer respond to the contemporary meanings of works of art that occur in the present. Therefore, it is necessary to change the paradigm of teaching relying solely on understanding artistic language and recognizing styles toward understanding the conditions of visuality in which viewing occurs. One of the general features of culture and modern education is constantly changing, so such changes should be considered a natural development.

The idea of the conceptual framework of postmodern visual culture is essential for any modern teaching of critical reflection. The postmodern curriculum aims to train students to contribute constructively to society. In that case, teaching visual art must be directed to the problems of modern society, not within the framework of learning discipline-based visual art education (DBAE - *Discipline-Based Art Education*) and a standardized form of evaluation. The development of teaching visual culture will criticize this approach and achieve a new concept that will develop new methods of interpretation and educational content. Shaping the goals and outcomes of visual culture within visual arts education is rooted in recent changes in curriculum theory and the postmodern philosophy of education that has changed how we approach knowledge and learning. In the 1990s and in Croatia in the 2000s, visual art education was criticized because it did not sufficiently follow students' modern needs and experiences and ignored the influence of popular and mass media on the design of contemporary artistic practices. With the development of digital image technology, more and more theorists are turning to visual culture as a new theoretical starting point for learning about art.

Since the 1990s, in scientific journals and symposiums dedicated to visual art education, much has been written about the necessity of changes in the pedagogy of artistic education. The contribution to visual culture in visual arts education, about changes in content and practice, is found in the special issue of *Studies in Art Education* (2003) and *Art Education* (2003) (Boughton, 2004). Most of these works deal with the criticism of the modernist approach to the curriculum and formalistic aesthetics, which was adopted at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries to structure the art profession scientifically. The modernist approach considers only the characteristics of the work of art without a broader social context. It prevents non-academic forms from being understood as a work of art. It is closed to symbolic meanings and social and cultural contexts. This raises the question of the importance of understanding the work of art and the boundaries between high and popular culture. Popular culture forms a large part of visual culture, including fine arts, advertising, television, performing arts, and all visual production and communication forms.

Learning in the postmodern world occurs outside the traditional framework and tends to have interdisciplinary connections between the different subjects in curricula. Arts education is critical in the concepts of education that go beyond the framework because visual culture implies breaking down the boundaries between traditional and new visual art forms and often involves pervasiveness with non-visual art forms. Critical reviews of visual culture also relate significantly to the technological production of the image, which has also been applied in non-artistic areas (Freedman, 2003).

Changes and discussions focus primarily on the relationship between artistic and visual because visual culture has been integrated into art education and on a significant expansion of creative content with a broader field of visual images. Visual art education is a reasonable basis for incorporating visual culture because it provides a foundation for exploring visual communication in a broader historical context (Freedman, 2003). Fine art is still critically important for the concept of visual culture, but it constitutes only one segment. In contrast, the contents of visual culture are viewed as an essential factor in students' everyday experiences. Visual communication is most often taken by representations that rely on combinations of possible meanings and thus shape our opinions. From the educational point of view, understanding the importance of expression is critical because it affects the construction of knowledge and art experience (Freedman, 2003).

Based on the literature on visual culture in art education, several conclusions can be singled out, leading to a change in the teaching paradigm. Visual culture is a broad term that encompasses all forms of cultural production in which fine art occupies a significant space. In such a concept, institutionalized fine art is no longer the primary focus of attention, and the learning content extends to all visual production. In the past, the media, the level of technical skill shown by the artist, and aesthetic sophistication, determined mainly whether an object could be considered a work of art or not. It was believed that exclusively traditional fine art objects, such as paintings, drawings, and sculptures, possess these characteristics. In contrast, popular culture does not have these qualities, such as cartoons, graffiti, and virtual reality. Today, these qualitative differences between visual forms are no longer clearly defined. The same level of aesthetic sophistication appears in a wide range of genres, including fine art, popular films, tribal masks, toys, environmental design, television, websites, manga, and video games (Boughton, 2004).

Another motive for changing the teaching paradigm is that we no longer live in a time when selected masterpieces are valued for their aesthetic quality. Still, all forms of visual cultural production are critically examined, especially their social and individual meanings. Visual culture is a complex concept that is not homogeneous but refers to a multitude of visual cultures and, at the same time, is multicultural and intercultural. Different world cultures use additional images representing the complexity of their lifeworlds and influencing each other (Boughton, 2004). The visual culture approach determines that learning content is no longer defined only by the teacher. Teachers and students do not share the same images and construct their meanings by negotiating between different meaning layers of images. Two people, such as students and teachers, can live in the same urban or rural world without even noticing the images intended for the other (Boughton, 2004).

The teacher can no longer be the sole guardian of all artistic knowledge passed on to the students quickly and presented in the same linear sequence. In the visual culture approach in art education, children create their own visual culture and become partners in learning and making art. The learning experience now varies considerably because children know about aspects of the visual culture, that their teachers may not know (Boughton, 2004).

2.3 *Socio-technological impact on identity formation*

The development of new areas, such as visual culture, which focuses on a broad aspect of visual phenomena in the environment and thus puts works of art on an equal footing with other images, has prompted reflections around the world on the inclusion of a broader concept of visual literacy in the education system, most often by integrating visual culture with visual art education. Since the 1980s, social change has been driven more by the technological development of mass media and digital image than by political ideologies, so we can say that society has transformed into *a technosphere,* lost its established ways of functioning, and developed new methods of communication and education (Paić, 2016). Today's culture is predominantly visual because our world is organized around visual pleasure. Images are vital to presenting, creating meanings, and communicating with the environment. Our values, opinions, and beliefs are shaped under the strong influence of various forms of visual culture that put new challenges ahead of us: understanding how images and observers create meanings and determining the role of the image in our culture (Cartwright & Sturken, 2001).

Modern education focuses on developing holistic approaches to teaching through integrated forms of teaching in which the contents of several areas are connected. Visual culture has, in various ways, become part of the world's curricula because of its connection with real-life experiences. The link of contemporary artistic practice with popular culture, and the influence that popular and mass culture has on the creation of the identity and social constructions of an individual, have directed the competencies of the spectator towards critical questioning of the content mediated by the image. Therefore, critical thinking is emphasized as a crucial competence in education in most world curricula, and visual literacy is highlighted as equally essential to verbal literacy. For this reason, initiatives are emerging worldwide that have successfully integrated visual culture into visual art education through the content and methodology of a visual phenomenon.

Freedman and Stuhr stress that curriculum transformations should not happen in a way that expands the content and methods of teaching but by shaping a new concept in which art will be approached from the perspective of postmodern philosophy from the point of view of intercultural, intracultural, and transcultural visual expressions (Freedman and Stuhr, 2004). This approach explores the problems of representation, the formation of cultural identities, the functioning of creative production, the meaning of visual narratives, critical reflection, and interdisciplinary connections (Freedman and Stuhr, 2004). Visual culture aims to improve students' ability in aesthetic evaluation and make the perception process more self-conscious and thoughtful (Chapman, 2003). In today's world of excessive materialistic consumption and media bombardment, learning visual culture within visual art education aims to recognize and think critically about the hidden ideological messages (Chin, 2015). Scientific discussions about the importance of visual literacy in everyday life and the need to incorporate this type of literacy into curricula began in the 1970s due to visual hegemony, based on visual turn and dominance of image communication. In the 1990s, discussions about visual culture appeared, treated as a new social paradigm. It was observed that pictorial representations primarily influence the formation of identities and the transmission of cultural patterns.

Visual literacy includes many interpretations. Visual literacy skills are defined as interpreting and understanding the meaning of visual messages, communicating using the basic principles and concepts of visual design, creating a visual message using a computer and other technology, and visual thinking to conceptualize problem solutions (Christopherson, 1996). Teaching visual literacy includes visual analysis skills such as interpreting, experiencing, creating, and reconstructing an image (Brown, 2004). Some processes complement each other and encourage image coding and decoding skills (Brown, 2004). The skill of critical analysis, during which the student explores and examines the meaning of an image, integrates researching arguments for justifying the conclusion, which is more valuable than simply describing it.

We must be aware of the structure and function of visual language in developing a critical attitude toward images. Visual language and compositional principles are essential to producing effective visual material. At the same time, image analysis is crucial in experiencing, judging, and decoding the image (description of the elements, analysis of how relationships are established, interpretation of the message, aesthetic appreciation) (Avgerinou & Ericson, 1997). The Jacobs University Research Group from Bremen distinguishes between four interrelated but different competencies: perceptual competence, decoding and interpretation competence, production competence, and intercultural competence (Pauwels, 2008).

The introduction of a cultural context to the problem of visual literacy suggests that literacy has shifted from individual cognitive skills to social practice and that literacy is done in specific social contexts. Accordingly, a three-dimensional literacy model has been developed, including functional, critical, and cultural literacy (Green, 2014). The operational dimension includes using the communication system by identifying and decoding codes and conventions and refers to literacy's basic skills and functionality. The cultural size involves utilizing the communication system with specific context-appropriate ways to create meaning. The critical dimension includes questioning ideological patterns in conventions and cultural forms and recognizing power's social structure patterns.

Visual literacy is an interdisciplinary skill that cannot be classified within a single scientific field or strive exclusively for visual skills. It includes visual perception, functional use of visual language and symbols in communication, the ability to read visual messages embedded in representations and mediums, and critical questioning of connotative meanings and ideological patterns. Acknowledging the importance of the social context in which visual literacy develops and practices has prompted the consideration of visual literacy as a social practice, paving the way for her to pursue generic curriculum competencies. This is also contributed by the development of multimedia didactics, which deals with the role of the media in learning and teaching, relying on the constructivist theory of knowledge.

Constructivist learning considers the functional possibilities of digital technology in teaching and studies how to support digital media with constructivist learning that is contextual and collaborative. Because classes have become multimedia due to different media, various actions during learning take place with digital support. The greatest revolution with digital image was experienced by visual education, but the elements of visual communication, which is the basis for most multimedia content, spread to all subjects. Constructivist learning theories and the application of digital media separate learning from teaching, which relativizes the meaning of formal education in favor of the non-formal because it becomes possible to discover without instruction (Matijević & Topolovčan, 2017). Multimedia classes are explained as a type of teaching, which takes place directly or remotely, and is supported by the meaningful application of various materials, procedures, and media (Matijević & Topolovčan, 2017). This educational process takes place in a multimedia environment, and mastering tasks requires multimodal literacy, which relies significantly on the ability to communicate and read visual messages visually. To this end, the development of visual literacy has become one of the critical topics in education and is recognized as a crucial competence in life.

3. Hypothesis

According to the specified theme of Visual culture as a new educational socio-technological paradigm, the following hypothesis was set:

1) Culture of the image had a significant impact on education;

2) The concept of visual culture is conditioned by technological progress and social identity formation.

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4. Methods

The hypothesis is demonstrated by analyzing the literature on the field of visual art education from Croatia and the world, which deals with the emergence of the paradigm of visual culture and the opinion of Croatian experts collected by the Delphi method for the doctoral thesis.

In theoretical texts dealing with the problem of visual culture in visual art education, the content analysis method is applied to determine the constituent issues. Groups of related terms, concepts, and assumptions are combined into a new theoretical foundation that determinates visual culture as an educational socio-technological paradigm by synthesis method. The comparison method will be used to compare attitudes in Croatia, considering the thoughts of two Croatian theorists who wrote about the problem in the first decade of the 21st century and the reflections of contemporary theorists and opinions of experts from various fields (curriculum theory, art theory, art history methodologies and methods of fine culture) collected by the Delphi method 20 years after.

5. Results

According to analyzed literature abroad, the several determinants were classified considering visual culture issues in education: (1) Today's culture is predominantly visual because digital media constitute reality; (2) Developing critical competence is very important for visual literacy; (3) New digital media should be used in learning and creating art; (4) Visual culture is connected with students' daily experiences due to growing up in the digital world; (5) Visual culture has a significant influence on identity formation; (6) Examples of visual culture should be incorporated into teaching about art.

Thinking of experts collected by the Delphi method shows that 37% of experts mention that today's culture is predominantly visual because digital media constitute reality, 25% point out the importance of developing critical competence in visual literacy, and 37% think that new digital media should be used in learning, 25% established the connection of visual culture with students' daily experiences due to growing up in the digital world, 25% highlight influence of visual culture on identity formation and 63% think that digital visual culture content should be incorporated into teaching (Figure 1).
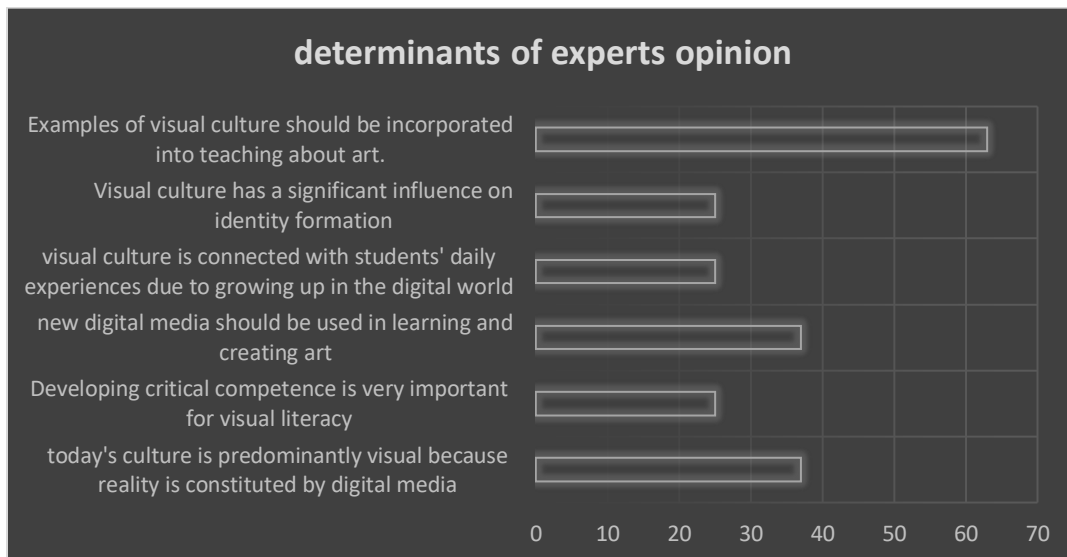

Figure 1. The results of Delphi method – experts' opinions
according to the technological aspect of visual culture

According to selected literature written in the first decade of the 21st century in Croatia by Radovan Ivančević and Vera Turković, Croatian visual art education needs an educational paradigm shift that considers the needs of modern times and is more directly connected with student experiences from everyday life and respect that we live in a time of visual culture dominion (Ivančević, 2001; Turković, 2001). It is deep below the possibilities of the 20th century because it was reduced to only one hour per week in elementary school when the visual culture critically impacted the individual sociological development (Ivančević, 2001: 77).

Some authors pointed out, 20 years later, that a student's reality is inextricably linked to mass media and digital imagery. Various forms of commercial imagery undeniably affect the development of his identity and deserve critical reflection. The story of a critical attitude and selective relationship concerning visual messages is a crucial competence of today's observers; essential tools considering the visual constructs of the environment should be developed (Skender, 2018; Skender, 2019; Alviž & Nestić, 2019). They also emphasize that in the age of image communication, visual culture must undoubtedly be included in education due to the commercialization of visuals and understanding of the visual code.

6. Discussion

Considerations about visual culture in Croatian visual art education are like those in the world but are not so prevalent in literature. The first critiques of visual arts education appear at the beginning of the 21st century by Radovan Ivančević and Vera Turković. They were guided by the experiences they gained from participating in the International Society for Education through Arts (InSEA). These authors were fully aware of the outdated approach in visual art education. Although their thoughts were contemporary to world trends, they did not particularly affect Croatian education because curriculum reform, which brought noticeable changes in the modernization of visual art education, took place in 2019. Their considerations coincide with the determinants excreted after a content analysis of the world literature. They pointed out that today's notion of reality is dependent on digital technology, which strongly influences the formation of young people's identities and accounts for most of their daily experiences. Teaching visual art from the visual culture point of view would contribute to understanding contemporary art because established art history methods cannot explain the meaning. Today, this problem is considered the major hermeneutical crisis in the discipline. The change of cultural paradigms, which affect the character of contemporary art, also draws changes in the methodological approach to analysis and the application of new/different methods of interpretation (Turković, 2009).

The initiated curricular reform probably encouraged similar ideas in Croatian scientific literature almost 20 years later. The most emphasis is on developing critical thinking that would allow young people to have a critical attitude toward media-mediated messages (Alviž & Nestić, 2019). Teaching in the context of visual culture is one of the essential preconditions for developing critical thinking in the educational process of the subject of visual arts. The concept for stimulating critical thinking is determined by using four conditions that need to be achieved to create and express a critical attitude: issues problem approaches, new interpretive approaches, a relation of teaching content with examples of popular visual culture, and a democratic environment (Skender, 2018). To encourage critical thinking, he considers it essential to connect content with everyday student experiences that can be achieved by establishing links between works of art and commercial visual messages in which a work of art is exploited. It lists two elementary ways to establish interpictural relationships between visual arts and visual culture. One is the influence that popular culture exerts on artists and works of art, and the other is the influence of works of art in popular culture media (Skender, 2020). With the help of these

approaches and the establishment of direct links between the past and the present, these influences can be explored and significantly modernized teaching.

The opinion of experts collected by the Delphi method for the doctoral thesis gave a comprehensive approach to considering visual culture in education. Experts selected from different scientific fields gave an interdisciplinary insight into the possibilities of visual culture's impact on education. Although they expressed views on many aspects of visual culture in education in this research, we considered only those who deal with the relationship between visual culture and technology. By common consensus, they reached 12 conclusions, 4 of which considered relations between technology, identity formation, and visual culture (Skender, 2021).

After comprehensive analyses of the literature and research in visual art education, visual culture has been the primary trend in the world since the last decade of the 20th century. In the first decade of the 21st century, only two Croatian authors dealt with the problem of visual culture in education, when it was almost a modern world trend. Their observations and criticisms of visual arts education are current today. They are confirmed in the thinking of educational experts who participated in the Delphi method and authors who write about it today.

7. Conclusion

Analyses of mentioned visual art education literature, originating from the world and Croatian authors, show that the primary trend in the last 20 years is the consideration of the influence of visual culture on education. The specifics of the visual culture of the traditional art are indicated, primarily due to the interdisciplinary nature of such content and the involvement of images that are not strictly artistic.

This paper presents the thesis that visual culture is a new educational paradigm that is technologically conditioned due to the influence of mass media, technology, and the Internet on the identity formation of young people. According to that, two hypotheses were set: (1) the culture of the image had a significant impact on education, and (2) the concept of visual culture is conditioned by technological progress and social identity formation.

Answers to these research questions are seen in the emphasis of several determinants equally confirmed in the world and Croatian literature around the 2000s as in the opinions of Croatian experts in the 2020s. Some authors have pointed out that today's culture is predominantly visual because digital media constitute reality. Another one refers to the importance of developing the critical competence of visual literacy. Some highlight the necessity of using new digital media in learning and incorporating the contents of digital visual culture into teaching. Most of them agreed about the connection of visual culture with students' daily experiences due to growing up in the digital world and the influence of visual culture on identity formation. All involved authors and experts must link technological progress towards digital image reproduction, the dominance of the image in the creation of today's culture, and the importance stated for education due to the impact on the development of young people. Therefore, we can argue that visual culture is a new educational socio-technological paradigm because, in a specific way, it connects education, social identities, and technology.

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