



A Comparative Study of Secondary School Art & Culture Curriculum in Australia, Canada, Malaysia and Iran

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Received: 14 November 2020 Revised: 25 December 2020 Accepted: 16 February 2021 Online: 01 December 2022</p>	<p>The aim of this research was to compare curriculum of school subject of arts & culture in Australia, Canada, Malaysia and Iran. This was a comparatively qualitative study and its research population included all countries of the world. The strategy of country selection was "different social systems, different educational results". The method of data collection was documentary included primary and secondary sources - such as art & culture curricula of selected countries, articles, the Ministry of Education's homepage, and national & international reports. In order to determine the reliability and validity of data, concepts & terms were selected based on a specific definition and researchers' self-review and opinions of comparative experts were used respectively. The method of analyzing and presenting the results was a four-step method of Bereday. The findings reveal that the content of the art curriculum in Iran and its evaluation method in Malaysia are clearly different from other selected countries. The most similarities of countries are in the teaching goals and method. In goals and evaluation method of the school subject of culture, Australia and Canada are clearly different from two other countries, while all four countries are similar in the content and teaching methods. It is suggested to the curriculum planners of Iran to increase the richness of the curriculum of art & culture through identification of the multicultural aspects of selected countries.</p>
<p>KEYWORDS</p> <p>Art Culture Curriculum Secondary Education</p>	

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1. Introduction

Art bring valuable experiences to students. Eisner (1994) emphasizes the content of school curricula and considers art to be one of the highest types of knowledge .He believes that art is considered in many educational systems of the world as a new literacy that makes students understand more about the world around them. According to Eisner (2002), the position and dignity of art curriculum is due to the role that this subject plays in realizing some basic goals of education. Insights and qualities that are cultivated in the shadow of attention to art in the best and most effective way highlight the key role of this subject in educational systems (Kian & Mehrmohammadi, 2012). According to Cunliffe (2010), art education has become one of the global concerns in educational systems. Many experts have spoken about the importance of art and its curriculum. Ohler (2000) is among the experts who mention art not only as a basic skill, but as a "Fourth-R". According to Laura Owen (2015), the arts curriculum provides learners with new ways of experiencing and learning. In other words, art is considered as a springboard for the symbolic growth of learners (Yang, 2005). The arts teach pupils that problems can have more than one solution and questions can have more than one answer. Through the arts, the concept is understood that things can be done in different ways (Eisner, 2002 as cited in Kian, Mehrmohammadi, Maleki & Mofidi, 2011). Danko & Slutsky (2003) believed that artistic experiences increase students' tolerance in accepting different cultures.

Despite what is stated in the upstream documents and researches about the importance of art and its training, in Iran's education system, a clear explanation of the meaning and boundary of art education has not been provided, which is partly influenced by the ambiguity of the place of art in education system (Kazempour, Rastgarpour & Saif Naraghi, 2007). Liaqat Dar, Amiri & Mousavi (2015) and Saberi & Mahram (2011) have pointed out the low importance of art in schools program and the inattention of administrators and teachers to art education. According to Kian and Mehrmohammadi (2012), one of the reasons for arts being a marginal and unimportant subject in Iran's education system is that this subject is considered as a "decorative" lesson, which, formally and concretely, student's performance is not measured. Also, the performance of students in this subject is not effective for entering higher education levels. In addition, the art has not been considered as a valuable job. Another issue that can be added about art lessons in Iran is that according to Saberi, Akbari Burang, Shokohi Fard & Ajam (2012), despite the explosion of knowledge, the necessary changes in content of schools textbook of art have not been made for more than two decades. In Iran's middle secondary schools, a book entitled "Art and Culture" has

been designed, and two hours a week are dedicated to it in each grade. Nouri & Farsi (2014) showed that despite dedicating few hours to teaching art, sometimes other subjects are taught by teachers in the same hours. The society does not adequately prepare people for effective performance in multicultural contexts and different ethnic, racial and cultural environments. In this sense, it is necessary for pupils to learn to interact properly with people who have ethnic, cultural and racial differences (Sadeghi, 2012). Arellano (2011) states that the diversity of society is increasing, in such a way that it can be seen among students, so it is necessary for learners to have a proper acceptance and understanding of different races, ethnicities, and cultures. In other words, the duty of the educational system is to respect all cultures and help to develop and promote all of them along with the formal and common culture (Barnett & Napoli, 2008). In schools, pupils should acquire the necessary skills and concepts to overcome the factors that hinder their effective interaction with others; skills such as identifying ethnic & cultural traditions and intercultural communication ability (Bogotch, 2010). Khan, Khalid & Abid (2019) consider the necessity of such training to create a sense of respect among students. Koppelman (2011) considers respecting individual and cultural differences and strengthening intercultural communication as one of the goals of educational systems. Sadeghi and Najafi, (2016) believe that education - like other social institutions - does not operate in a vacuum, but interacts with other social trends. Curriculum - as one of the important elements of education - cannot act in a vacuum and be insensitive to its cultural and social environment. The importance of the existence of different cultural types in each society - as an important issue - and attention to multicultural education - as a conventional method - are among the missions of multicultural societies.

In the upstream documents of Iran, the importance of attention to culture has been emphasized. For example, Principles 12, 13, and 14 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran are related to freedom of religions. In addition, Principles 15 and 19 are based on the freedom to use local languages in the press and educational system, as well as equal rights for all Iranian people. This document also obliges the Ministry of Education to respond to the demands and expectations of diverse cultures and to design and develop an educational system that fits these conditions (Mohammadi, Kamal-Kharazi, Kazemi Fard & Pourkarimi, 2015). To achieve this, it is necessary to provide the necessary cultural and educational background through schools curricula, while the present curriculum of Iran's educational system lacks a model and clear theoretical foundations in this regard (Sobhaninejad, Ahmadabadi Arani & Abdolahiyar, 2016). The finding of Sobhaninejad, Ahmadabadi Arani & Abdolahiyar (2016) and Abdoli Sultan Ahmadi & Sadeghi

(2013) indicated that Iran's education system has not been able to create the necessary national, ethnic and class awareness - among different groups of people - to create a national and social solidarity. It seems that one of the reasons for this is that the curricula in Iran are prepared centrally by the Ministry of Education, and for this reason, they cannot properly reflect the characteristics of the diverse cultures in the country (Sadeghi, 2013). In this regard, Iraque & Fathi Vajargah (2012) confirmed the Iran educational system's disregard for ethnic and cultural issues according to the results of their research. One method of teaching life skills in multicultural societies is to use art education. According to Abaci (2013) every culture and civilization expresses itself to others through art. Many experts have confirmed the importance of learning art and culture at the same time and have emphasized the need to pay attention to culture, cultural values and social issues in art education. For example, from the point of view of social agents, art education should provide suitable situations for promoting the values of society (Hickman, 2004). The arts provide unique opportunities for young people to understand and create their individual and cultural identities. The arts are the stimulus for cross-cultural studies and collaborative decision-making and motivate young people to engage in process of active learning and creative questioning (Mehrmohammadi & Kian, 2013). According to Dalvandi (2014), art is an effective tool for understanding, communication and cultural exchange between societies. The arts are more than the expression and interpretation of culture; they are a means of transmitting and producing culture (Johnson, 2004).

Considering the role of art and culture - especially in multicultural societies like Iran - and the need to apply and use school curricula to help introduce, identify and teach artistic and cultural works of different ethnicities to learners, the present researchers have tried to learn about the experiences of other countries. Also, the current neglect of art and culture education in Iran's education system shows the necessity of conducting the present research. With cultural diversity and as a result, there are many works of art originating from Iranian cultures, and also the lack of research that examines these two together, makes this research even more necessary. The basic and main question is that "what are the curriculums of art and culture in the middle secondary school in multicultural countries of Australia, Canada and Malaysia and whether there is a place for teaching these two topics in their schools. Also, what is the status of these two important subjects in the curricula of the middle secondary schools of Iran and what are the similarities and differences that stand out in the comparison between the four countries so that a step can be taken to advance

the curriculum of art and culture in Iran by taking advantage of the experiences of the countries under review. Therefore, the sub-questions of the current research are:

- What are the art and culture curricula of middle secondary schools in selected countries?
- What are the similarities and differences of the art and culture curriculum in the middle secondary schools in selected countries?

2. Research Method

The present research method was qualitatively comparative and research population includes all countries of the world and sample includes four countries of Australia, Canada, Malaysia & Iran. To select the countries, the strategy of "different social systems, different educational outputs" was used. Data collection method was documentary including primary sources (such as art and culture books and curricula in selected countries), and secondary sources - articles, information on the homepage of the Ministry of Education, and national & international reports. In this way, key words were searched in *Science Direct*; *Elsevier*, *ProQuest*, and *UNESCO* databases for the period from 2000 to 2020, and 74 references were selected and analyzed through targeted sampling. The tools of the current research were note-taking and data recording, and to determine the reliability, stability and consistency of the data, an effort was made to consider concepts and terms based on a specific definition. In addition, the researcher's self-review verifiability (verification of raw data during data collection and analysis) and the opinions of comparative studies experts were used to determine the validity of the research (Kian, 2020). The method of analyzing data and presenting results was Bereday's four-step method. According to this method, the data of the art and culture curriculum of the middle secondary schools in Australia, Canada, Malaysia, and Iran were extracted and analyzed from the perspective of four elements: Goal, content, teaching method, and evaluation method.

3. Findings

In this section, the description and interpretation of the art & culture curricula of Australia, Canada, Malaysia and Iran - in the four elements of goal, content, teaching method and evaluation method - will be discussed. Then the juxtaposition and comparison of data has been done. It should be noted that in selected countries - except Iran - there is no book entitled "Art & Culture" in the middle secondary schools. Of course, in Australia, Canada and Malaysia there is a separate book called "Art" which is taught in middle secondary schools and the subject of "culture" is mentioned in various textbooks - such as social sciences, history, and art. In this research, the "art & culture"

book of Iran and the art and cultural topics at school textbooks of three countries have been examined.

A. Description & Interpretation

At this stage, the educational phenomena under investigation are described based on the evidence and information obtained from different sources - through direct observation or the study of documents and reports. Also, this stage includes taking notes and preparing sufficient information for review in the interpretation stage (Khajooi, Soltani & Esmi, 2018). In the interpretation stage, the researcher analyzes the data collected from different sources in order to find the ability to make a correct judgment about the educational systems (Madandar Arani & Kakia, 2018).

1. Australia

- *Goals of art curriculum*

Australian education planners believe that art helps pupils live a healthier and happier life (Australian Government, 2020). Art programs in Australia can provide the context for the development of aesthetic knowledge in students (Ewing, 2010). Arts help to understand what was and is in different cultures (Australian Curriculum, 2020). Australian Council for Education & the Arts (ACEA) (2005) also stated in a statement that arts programs improve student learning through development of imagination, critical thought, creativity, and adaptability (Shillito, Beswick & Baguley, 2008).

- *Art curriculum content*

The art curriculum has topics such as dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts. In the content of art curricula, artistic achievements in local, national and global cultures have been discussed (Australian Curriculum, 2020).

- *Art curriculum teaching method*

The teacher uses a room namely "Song Room" during teaching to better present the lesson (Australian Government, 2020). Also, in order to better understand the material by the students, the teacher takes help from artists of different fields, art education institutions and organizations - as supplementary teaching. He also teaches art using new technologies, different workshops, Question-answer method, improvisation method, exploration, practice & performance, refinement,

and analysis of arts in different artistic traditions, and evaluation & criticism of different arts are some of the teaching methods of art teachers in Australia. In order to learn better, pupils are divided into different groups and each group presents a display of art in other cultures (Australian Curriculum, 2020).

- *Art curriculum evaluation*

During the academic year, students should explore the arts in different history and cultures and analyze their findings for the teacher to use in evaluation process (Australian Government, 2020). In evaluating students' performance, it is important to present and display practical and hand-made works of students. Pupils must perform programs - such as drama and dance - although sometimes teachers do the evaluation online because the presentation of some students' works and works of art is done in the context of new technologies. This method of teaching lessons - due to its attractiveness for students-, improves learning and more accurate evaluation (Australian Curriculum, 2020).

- *Goals of Culture Curriculum*

The most discussion of culture is in the course of art, social sciences and humanities. Australian Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting Authority (ACARA)(2010, 2017) emphasizes that the topic of culture in school curriculum is a platform for raising informed and active citizens. Through this curriculum, students learn to be flexible and develop their creative thinking. The purpose of the culture curriculum is to transform pupils into active and informed citizens, develop their knowledge about values, develop deep self-knowledge, and choose the proper path of education and career in the future. Developing capabilities such as increasing tolerance of other people's opinions, creating intercultural understanding, developing civil & citizenship capabilities, creating a positive attitude about the multiculturalism of Australian societies, and understanding values & traditions of different cultures in Australia are other goals of this subject (Australian Curriculum, 2020).

- *Content of Culture Curriculum*

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting Authority (2010, 2017) stated that the content of culture-related curricula deals with issues such as development of national identity and recognition of different cultures - especially Asian cultures. The content of the social and human studies course includes the following topics: Cultural heritage, nature of society's culture, keeping

cultural artifacts in appropriate places, destructive effects of looting and illegal trade of cultural artifacts, role of museums in identifying culture & cultural achievements, contribution of different communities in advancing cultural situation, citizenship laws & skills, people's identity & civic identity, examining concept of justice & values in different groups of society, examining diverse nature of different cultures in Australia and the world, and examining art in different cultures (Australian Curriculum, 2020).

- *Method of teaching culture curriculum*

According to Joseph (2011), teachers teach topics related to cultural diversity and multiculturalism through students' participation in art festivals, group discussion, and Question – answer method. They also use a variety of teaching methods such as lectures & analysis, forming different groups of students and presenting assignments to groups. Usually, the teacher presents information to the learners by using different sources, quotations, and graphic representations. Also, she/he takes help from scientific associations, archaeologists and historians to better understand the material to students (Australian Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting Authority, 2010, 2017).

- *Evaluation of culture curriculum*

In Australian schools, after examining the cultural situation of their society, students must explain values and present their historical investigation along with the analysis of the data. The degree of participation of pupils in different groups, degree of production of new ideas, power of reasoning and analysis of different ideas, way the drama is performed, and ability of learners to read diagrams, tables, and analyze films and animations are effective in their evaluation. Assessment is done in oral, written, graphic, digital and online formats (Australian Curriculum, 2020). The Australian Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting Authority (2010, 2017) stated that students' ability to work and communicate with diverse people and cultures, as well as their knowledge about different cultures, are important elements in their evaluation process.

2. Canada

- *Goals of art curriculum*

Through learning traditional and contemporary arts in Canadian schools, pupils consider themselves part of the living culture of society. For them, art causes them to identify cultures and arts of this land and strengthens their personal and national feeling (Ministry of Education, Canada,

2006). For example, at Toronto State, the goal of the arts curriculum is for students to appreciate the skills and accomplishments of others. In this program, emphasis is also placed on cultivating creativity, critical thinking and developing students' aesthetic sense. Learners should expand their understanding of how artworks influence history, values, beliefs, societies, and different cultures and be able to examine artworks from different cultures (Toronto District School Board, 2020). By comparing the curriculum of Canada and Finland, Ketovuori (2007) believes that art is a subject that causes the growth and development of students' knowledge and skills and is an effective way to teach other subjects.

- *Content of Art curriculum*

Drama programs, media arts, visual arts, dance and music are part of the content of art curriculum. Familiarity with the music of different cultures is also one of the topics of music lesson. In media arts, photographs, films, animations and television are used. In music education, the focus is on teaching guitar, various instruments, orchestra and strings. The content in visual arts includes examining artistic characters, describing elements and rules of visual arts, introducing students to various types of paintings (painting on ceramics, etc.), sculpture and photography, and in the dance section, introducing students to types of dance - ballet, modern dance and mixed dance - considered by teachers (Ministry of Education, Canada, 2006).

- *Method of Art curriculum teaching*

Art teachers integrate art programs with computer, digital, and audio recording technologies to enhance instructional engagement. They use traditional cooperative teaching method - such as participating in orchestra, theater and dance - while methods such as presenting cultural motifs, pictures, stories, songs, drama of different cultures and buying different art publications are also of interest to teachers. Visiting galleries, art associations, participating in university art groups, art teachers' associations, provincial and national art councils, cultural associations, recreation centers with works of art, and art and cultural festivals are among the programs of art teachers (Toronto District School Board, 2020). The Ministry of Education of Canada also supports the discussion and analysis of works of art in the teaching method of art curricula (Ministry of Education, Canada, 2006).

- *Evaluation of Art curriculum*

All students at Toronto State are required to obtain a valid arts certificate in order to graduate in an educational stage. They can participate in several dance classes. In the evaluation of the art

lesson, attention is paid to discovery, research and respect for art and works of art, analysis and combination of art elements, ideas and solutions, and connection of new knowledge & previous knowledge (Toronto District School Board, 2020). The development of creativity, analysis and production of works of art, understanding of culture, and communication are among the things that are considered in the evaluation of learners (Ministry of Education, 2006).

- *Goals of culture curriculum*

In Canadian schools, efforts are made to help create a peaceful global society through intercultural understanding and respect (Gary, Scott & Auld, 2014). Providing education about indigenous values and cultures makes students who are unfamiliar with those cultures understand the value of these cultural traditions and mutual cultural understanding and common commitment arise in them and creates a fair learning environment (Toronto District School Board, 2020).). The topic of culture in Canadian curricula is mainly included in school textbooks of social sciences, humanities and arts. The purpose of the social and humanities course is to understand the history, literature and culture of Canada and the changing conditions and human conditions over time. Also, other goal is to increase students' understanding of behaviors, roles and norms related to gender, popular culture and arts (Ministry of Education, 2006).

- *Content of Culture curriculum*

The content of social and humanities subjects in schools of Toronto state includes the following: Family studies, general social sciences, equal rights of people & cultures, philosophy, religions & world religions, geography, history & culture of Canada and the world, city & citizenship, equality of gender & race, evaluation of ethnicities and dimensions of social justice, respect for cultures, ethnic & cultural diversity in Canada, inequalities in interpersonal relationships (family, school, workplace, etc.), evaluation of the elements & functions of culture, and analysis of various cultures (Toronto District School Board, 2020). In his article, Ciftci (2013) mentioned the topics related to culture in Canadian school textbooks as the history of formation of different ethnic & cultural groups in society, study of ancient & artistic works, and cultural exchanges.

- *Method of teaching culture curriculum*

To better familiarize students with different cultures, the teacher uses movies, music, TV shows and humor. Also, she/he asks students to prepare research and display blogs to learn more about cultures. Another teaching method is making documentaries by teacher and students, performing

show and playing different roles in the cultures by the pupils. Analysis of different form of art, philosophy & religions in different cultures, group discussion, analysis of cultures' dimensions (customs, clothes, art, music, food, architecture, dance, handicrafts, etc.), presentation of Questions - answers are other teaching methods (Toronto District School Board, 2020). Eddy & Isabel (2014) believe that in teaching multicultural curricula, teachers give students the opportunity to search so that they can better understand themselves, personal identity and their ancestors.

- *Evaluation of culture curriculum*

The evaluation of students in this subject is based on their skills in conducting systematic investigation and research, acquiring critical literacy, solving important problems of themselves and others, and having a local and global mindset (Toronto District School Board, 2020). Also, pupils should be able to examine popular culture. The ability to analyze and compare different ideas of cultures, analyze the continuity and changes of different cultures (in different times and places), explain their opinions about the current and past status of different cultures (Ministry of Education, 2006). Gary, Scott & Auld (2014) believe that Canadian teachers participate and intervene in all areas of evaluation. The evaluation results are made available to the provincial education departments, school board and students.

3. Malaysia

- *Goals of art curriculum*

Mohamad Sharif & Kong (2001) believed that developing creativity and problem solving skills in art curriculum is one of the main goals of this lesson in Malaysian schools.

- *Content of Art curriculum*

The description of the types of arts (dance, music, theater, media, etc), the artworks of artists in different fields, familiarity with traditional arts and types of arts in different cultures, evolution of art in the context of media & technologies, forms the content of art curriculum in Malaysia.

- *Method of teaching Art curriculum*

Isa (2006) emphasizes that the teacher has a facilitating role in art lessons in Malaysian schools. Teacher takes the students to see local clothes, handicrafts, calligraphy and all types of native arts so that they can get to know the works of art. Kaur, Hashim & Noman (2017) states that teachers

should encourage pupils to participate in concerts and visit art exhibitions in order to better understand art.

- *Evaluation of Art curriculum*

Isa (2006) believes that in the evaluation of art curriculum, Malaysian teachers pay attention to the production of artistic works of students. According to Mohammad Sharif & Kong (2001), the ability to solve problems and produce a work of art is considered in the evaluation process of Malaysian pupils in art lessons.

- *Goals of culture curriculum*

Part of Malaysian cultural issues is taught to students in the history lesson and part of it in the art lesson. According to Kaur, Hashim & Noman (2017), diversity has become a global phenomenon and human societies have become different and heterogeneous in terms of cultures, religions, languages, perspectives and ideologies. Therefore, achieving social cohesion has become an important issue for every nation. In order to achieve this goal, the Malaysian education system has tried to provide the conditions of social cohesion by integrating cultural elements in the curriculum and civic education. Cultural education is a potential tool for strengthening social values and cohesion and causes recognition, understanding, respect and celebration of different cultures. Due to the existence of racial and cultural diversity in Malaysia, the design and implementation of courses related to the education of cultures and intercultural relations are recommended. Ibrahim, Muslim & Buang (2011) believe that the teaching of multicultural topics in Malaysian schools is recognized as an important educational principle and recognizing, affirming differences, tolerating the opinions of others and interacting form the foundations of multicultural education.

- *Content of Culture curriculum*

The description of various ethnicities and nations in Malaysia (Chinese, Indian, Malay, etc.), and works of art in different cultures form the content of culture curriculum in Malaysian school textbooks. Ellie states that in the Teaching for Creativity: Introducing Culture and the Arts in Asian School Education Conference in Bangkok (2005) it is stated that the local culture of Malaysia is represented in school curricula through subjects such as study of monuments, cultural heritage, folk arts, and festivals. Fiji (2002) in an article taken from the Regional Art Education Conference, acknowledged that subjects such as national, indigenous and local history and culture and ways of life in different cultures of Malaysia are included in the art curriculum of schools.

- *Method of teaching culture curriculum*

Yusuf & Marimuthu (2018) believed that Malaysian school teachers display symbols, signs, pictures, posters, maps and works of art from around the world in the process of teaching subject of culture. They also offer different types of books, magazines, and music CDs of different cultures to the students in class and plan cultural puzzles & local games. According to Omar, Che Neh, Hamzah & Abdul Majid (2015), the most important methods of teaching multicultural topics in Malaysian middle secondary schools are counseling, exploring different cultures, lectures, storytelling, and forming student discussion groups.

- *Evaluation of culture curriculum*

Isa (2006) believes that in the evaluation of cultural programs in Malaysian middle secondary schools, the discovery, interpretation and description of different cultures, implementation of an example of a cultural subject and then its analysis are considered by teachers.

4. Iran

- ❖ *Goals of art curriculum*

The Fundamental Reform Document of Iran Education is a national document that specifies the goals and missions of the education system and has been approved by the State and the Islamic Parliament (Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution, 2011). In one chapter of this document, aesthetic and artistic education has been emphasized. According to this document, the goal of the educational system is to foster pupils who will gain the necessary ability to create works of art by appreciating and aesthetic understanding of divine creation and human artistic artifacts and using the power of imagination. Also, Iran's National Curriculum as one of the main subsystems of the fundamental transformation document and as a comprehensive learning plan - provides the basis for comprehensive transformation in educational concepts and content. This document, which has been approved by the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution and the Supreme Council of Education (2011), emphasizes the education of learners who can consciously benefit from artistic works and make effective efforts in their production and development. One of the curricula of the first year of middle secondary schools that has paid the most attention to the above objectives is the "Art and Culture" textbook. The goals and expectations of the authors of this book are as below:

“Enhancing different senses, attention to and enjoying God's creation and beauty of our environment, attention to the similarities and differences in art works, ability to design a variety of artistic designs, getting to know the cultural and artistic heritage of different periods of Iran, developing creative mental images, ability to produce and classification of works of art, creation of imaginative & creative works, and development of visual abilities of learners” (Educational Research & Planning Organization, 2019:1)

❖ *Content of Art curriculum*

The content of “culture & art” school textbooks for middle secondary schools includes visual arts (design, painting & photography), calligraphy, traditional arts (traditional design, carpet weaving & pottery), phonetic arts, performing arts, illustration, poster and advertisement design. In this book, after stating the objectives of each lesson, some questions with the theme of "Think!" are raised in order to create mental preparation in students. Then each lesson is listed with examples. In the following, there is a practical work to complete the teacher's teaching. After that, the student should evaluate their own performance. At the end, some activities entitled "More Experiences" are presented. In addition, there are many pictures in each “culture & art” book that represent people's lifestyle, their attitude towards art, rituals and customs, and importance of art in each period. These images include: Images of natural landscapes (such as mountains, deserts, plains, caves); image of blessed places (mosques, baths, tombs, churches), image of human-made products (such as urban elements), image of various products (metal, felt, wood, wicker, brass, copper, etc.), image of artistic works of different cities, pictures of works by Iranian calligraphers and poets, and pictures of various music instruments (Educational Research & Planning Organization, 2019).

❖ *Method of teaching Art curriculum*

In the document "National Curriculum of Iran" it is stated that the teaching method should be such that it provides the basis for creativity and exploration in the student. The teacher should use active teaching methods and provide context for intelligent use of new educational technologies (Curriculum Production Plan Secretariat, 2012). In teaching the art and culture curriculum of middle secondary school the teacher plays a more facilitating role and students' assignments include individual and group exploration of the environment, asking and searching questions in order to solve problems, discussing in multi-person groups, comparing and examining similarities

and differences of art in different periods and cultures, design of theater scenes and performance of plays and music. Students are also taught how to write different types of handwriting.

❖ *Evaluation of Art curriculum*

In document of national curriculum, it has been emphasized that evaluation process should reflect the abilities of students in a meaningful way by using a variety of methods and tools, prepare diverse and sufficient evidence to judge the learners and provide the basis for their flourishing (Curriculum Production Plan Secretariat, 2012). In the "Culture and Art" school textbooks of middle secondary school, evaluation is done continuously during and at the end of the semester. What is important in the evaluation is students' skill in recognizing similarities and differences, familiarity with artworks, ability to do group work, explanation of their research, present examples of practical work, understanding pictures, group performances (music, drama) , ability to classify artworks, and present creative designs (photography, illustration, calligraphy, etc.). Pupils should be able to design a practical example of media advertising, write and read reports, stories and dramas, and have the ability to analyze cultural and artistic works (Educational Research & Planning Organization, 2019).

❖ *Goals of culture curriculum*

In document of national curriculum of Iran, culture is mentioned as most important source of achieving identity (Curriculum Production Plan Secretariat, 2012). Also, in the document of fundamental reform of Iran's education, one missions of education system is to strengthen public culture. One of the operational goals of this document is also foster students who, by understanding cultural and cross-cultural concepts, gain the necessary ability to create cultural works. In this direction and to achieve the above goals (Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution, 2011), textbooks such as "Culture and Art" and "Social Studies" have been designed and compiled in the middle secondary schools. In some of these books, the issue of culture has been discussed. The objectives of this subject - which have been determined by the authors - are:

“The art & culture curriculum should provide a background for student to know and respect the cultural heritage and handicrafts of Iranian peoples and their artworks and traditions. Also, the student should understand importance of communication and become proficient in team work. He should be familiar with artistic and cultural figures, works of different cultures of the society, and

services of cultures of different eras to the people of Iran. Pupils should understand importance of preserving cultural works and understand similarities and differences of cultural works and become interested in Iran and Iran's cultural and civilizational identity, so that the skill of research, search, questioning and group discussion will grow in him" (Educational Research & Planning Organization,2019:2).

❖ *Content of Culture curriculum*

In national curriculum document of Iran, it is emphasized that the school textbook's content should be based on cultural and educational values (Curriculum Production Plan Secretariat, 2012). Also, in the "Social Studies" book after stating the goals and expectations of each lesson, activities for better learning of the pupils have been specified, and at the end, there are glossaries. Some topics of this book are as follow: Social system, citizenship, culture & identity, influence of media on culture of violence & peace in society, the golden age of Iranian-Islamic culture and civilization, Iranian architecture, equal rights of ethnic and tribes groups, creating a sense of empathy between people and tribes, cultural heritage, art, and architecture (Educational research and planning organization,2019). The content of the book "Culture & Art" also presents and introduces various cultural works, customs, handicrafts and traditions of Iranian cultures (Educational Research & Planning Organization, 2019).

❖ *Method of teaching culture curriculum*

In the social studies book, it is stated that teachers should avoid teaching based on passive methods or mere lectures, incorrect question-answer method and stereotypical questions. This book includes activities in the text of each lesson and worksheets at the end of the book. Worksheets should mainly be done in class and during the teaching process. Teachers take students to visit geographical environments, historical buildings, museums, cultural centers and social institutions. Common teaching methods in presenting cultural topics in this book include group discussion, group question & answer, exploring social environment (in order to familiarize with cultural heritage),and expressing students' experiences (Educational research and planning organization, 2019).Teaching method in the book "Culture and Art" includes creating an exhibition of artworks of different cultures, and preparing the conditions for performance by students to familiarize them with rituals and customs of different cultures (Educational Research & Planning Organization, 2019).

❖ Evaluation of culture curriculum

In the book of social studies it is emphasized to avoid the traditional methods of evaluation based on reservations. Evaluation should be done continuously and at the end of each semester. In continuous evaluation, the teacher takes into account all activities outside and inside the classroom - such as doing assigned activities, participating in discussions, making wall newspapers and replicas, researching and writing articles and reports, collecting photos and completing worksheets and doing activities (Educational research and planning organization,2019). In the book "Culture and Art" it is emphasized that the ability of learners to analyze cultural and artistic works of different periods and understanding similarities and differences of the artworks in different cultures should be considered in the evaluation process. Evaluation is done continuously and at the end of the semester (Educational Research & Planning Organization, 2019).

2. Juxtaposition & Comparison Stages

2-1. Juxtaposition stage

In this stage, the results obtained from the description and interpretation stage are combined with educational characteristics of selected countries.

Table 1- Juxtaposition of art curriculum elements in four countries: Australia, Canada, Malaysia and Iran

Country	Goal	Content	Teaching Method	Evaluation
Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating a healthy and cheerful life - Development of imagination, aesthetic & cognitive development, development of self-confidence - Increasing literacy & better learning of other subjects - Understanding history, tradition & culture of country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drama - Dance - Media arts - Music - Visual Arts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Inviting artists from different fields & presenting their work samples in class - Using art institutions & organizations - Forming workshops, question / answer, improvisation, exploration, analysis, performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Presentation of exploration results - Presentation of artistic works by students during semester and at the end of semester - Performing music, shows, etc. during and at the end of semester
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying and solving environmental problems - Empathy and effective communication with others - Development of critical thinking, creativity, imagination - Development of aesthetic sense - Increasing learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drama - Media arts (photo, film, animation & television) - Visual arts (painting, sculpture & photography) - Dance (types of ballet, modern & mixed dance) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using new technologies, audio recording & video equipment - Collaborative teaching method: students' participation in orchestra, theater & dance, art groups, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learners' feedback about examples of work done during the academic year - Attention to discovery & research about art, analysis of artworks, production

	<p>potential & motivation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discovering self, expressing & identifying own identity - Learning history, values & different cultures - Positive effect on learning other subjects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Music (teaching guitar, instrument, orchestra and strings) 	<p>associations and cultural & artistic festivals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performance by learners (improvisation, storytelling) - Discussion - Analysis of artworks 	<p>& presentation of artworks in evaluation process.</p>
Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growing awareness, self-confidence, verbal & non-verbal skills, creativity & observation skills - Respecting others artworks & appreciating them - Communicating with others and sharing feelings - Proper understanding of environment and other cultures - Creating opportunity to explore & discover 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Description of the types of arts: - Music - Dance - Theater - Media - Types of arts in cultures - Arts in the context of media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher as a facilitator - Exploratory method (individual & group) - Negotiation & group discussion - Demonstration of artistic abilities of students in the classroom (show, music performance, etc.) - Participation in festivals, artistic programs such as music and drama - Inviting artists to attend the classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Researching about artworks & presenting research results - Teaching in elementary school according to specialization - Performing or producing programs & works of art by students (performance, improvisation, making instruments, photography & filming) - Ability to solve problems
Iran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening different senses - Attention to and enjoying God's creation & environment - Attention to similarities & differences in artworks - Power of designing all types of designs & shapes, creating imaginative and creative images & works - Familiarity with cultural & artistic heritage - Identification of talents & abilities - Development and growth of mental, creative & visual images - Ability to produce, recognize & classify, analyze artworks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visual arts (design, painting and photography) - calligraphy - Traditional arts (traditional design, carpet-weaving & pottery) - Phonetic arts - Performing Arts - illustration (handwriting) - Designing posters, advertisements & layouts - Page layout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher as a facilitator - Encouraging students to do homework - Individual and group exploration - Discussion in multi-person groups - Comparison and review of similarities and differences - Designing scenes for shows and music performances - Presenting and explaining examples of students' activities - Using technologies in art education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuous & final evaluation - Evaluation of students' skills in recognizing similarities and differences - Level of familiarity with artworks - Ability to do group work - Explanation of research by students - Group performance (music, show) - Presenting creative projects (photography, illustration, calligraphy, media advertisement design, report and story writing)

Table 2- Juxtaposition of culture curriculum dimensions in the four countries of Australia, Canada, Malaysia & Iran

Country	Goal	Content	Teaching Method	Evaluation
Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Converting students into successful learners, with high self-confidence, creative, active and informed citizens - Development of civil & 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural Heritage - Nature of society's culture - Importance and role of museums in culture - Contribution of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lecture - Question & answer - Analysis of cultural & social issues - Group division & presentation of assignments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducting oral, written, graphic, digital, online evaluations - Evaluation appropriate to age and sensitive to cultural

	<p>citizenship skills of learners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating knowledge, understanding about values - Developing self-awareness and ability to choose prepare field of study and job - Development of flexible & analytical thinking - Increasing tolerance of other people's opinions -Creating intercultural understanding and positive attitude towards different cultures 	<p>different communities in advancing cultural and social heritages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Citizenship issues - Individual and civil identity - Justice & value in society - Art in different cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group discussion 	<p>differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exploring community issues & presenting results in class during and at the end of semester - Generation of different ideas - Carrying out cultural research - Performing a show to introduce society & different cultures
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Familiarity with cultural diversity - Intercultural understanding & respect - Understanding values & traditions of different cultures, appreciating & respecting them - Creating a fair learning environment - Understanding history, literature & culture of Canada - Creating strength & self-confidence in students in order to face changing world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family studies - General social sciences - Equality of rights of individuals, cultures, gender and race - Examining world religions and ethnicities, races, cultures - Geography, history & culture and artworks of Canada and the world - City & citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using movies, music, television shows & advertisements, dialogue - Discovery about cultures - Creating a blog - Documentary making & acting - Exploring cultures & analyzing them - Critical examination of ethnic & cultural characteristics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students' skills in conducting research, acquiring critical literacy, problem solving - Investigating & exploring popular culture, evaluating & comparing cultures - Analysis of ideas
Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Familiarity with customs & traditions and acquiring knowledge about them - Tolerating others and their opinions, confirming differences & respecting them in every culture and race - Welcoming diversity of ideas -Appreciation of cultures & traditions - Strengthening values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Description types of tribes & nations - Description of artworks in different cultures -Study of buildings, cultural heritage - History, national, indigenous , local culture and ways of life in different cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Question & answer - Participating in celebrations & ceremonies of different tribes - Using symbols, signs, images, posters, maps & artwork from around the world - Using books, magazines, and CDs from different cultures - Design of cultural puzzles - Playing local games - Exploring different cultures - Lecturer - Story telling - Discussion and review - Group discussion - Exploring environment - Expression of students' experiences in class - Creating an exhibition of artworks of different cultures - Performance by students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performance of the show - Analysis of different cultures & ethnic groups - Ability to discover, interpret & describe different cultures
Iran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Familiarity with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Topic of culture, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Continuous & final

	cultural heritage and handicrafts, artworks and tradition of different periods of Iranian peoples - Creating a sense of appreciation & respect for cultural and artistic heritage works - Understanding cultural & social environment of society, importance of public relations & government relations - Proficiency in teamwork - Familiarity with artistic & cultural figures - Familiarity with human rights - Understanding similarities and differences of cultural works - Being interested in Iran & Iran's cultural and civilizational identity	identity, cultural heritage - Social system - Influence of media on culture of violence & peace in society - Iranian art and architecture - Equal rights of tribes and men and women	- Question & answer - Exploring environment - Expression of students' experiences in class - Creating an exhibition of artworks of different cultures - Performance by students	evaluation - Ability to analyze cultural & artistic works of different periods - Understanding similarities & differences of artworks in different cultures
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2.2. Comparison stage

At this stage, the research problem is examined and compared carefully with attention to details, based on similarities and differences.

Table 3-Comparison of art curriculum elements in four countries of Australia, Canada, Malaysia & Iran

Elements	Components	Australia	Canada	Malaysia	Iran
Goals	Growth, development and cultivation of creativity	*	*	*	*
	Development of aesthetic sense	*	*	*	*
	Understanding history, tradition and culture	*	*	*	*
	Developing self-confidence	*	-	*	-
	Positive effect of art in learning other subjects	*	*	-	-
	Increase learning potential	*	*	-	-
	Empathy and effective communication with others	-	*	*	*
	Discover self talents and abilities	-	*	-	*
	Intellectual, physical, communication and emotional	-	*	*	*

	development				
Content	Presenting drama, media arts and music	*	*	*	*
	Visual Arts	*	*	-	*
	Traditional arts			*	*
	Dance	*	*	*	*
	Calligraphy	-	-	-	*
Teaching method	Use of students' artistic abilities	*	*	*	*
	Use discussion methods	*	*	*	*
	exploration	*	*	*	*
	Teacher as a facilitator	*	*	*	*
	Invitation artists	*	-	*	-
	Participation in festivals	-	*	*	-
	Use of new technologies	-	*		*
Assessment	Continuous and final evaluation	*	*	*	*
	Exploring art	*	*	*	*
	Providing artistic activities	*	*	*	*
	Teaching by Grade 1 students of high school in primary schools	-	-	*	-

As the data in table 3 shows:

- a) In the objective element of art curriculum, the development of imagination and creativity of students in four countries is emphasized.
- b) In the content element of the art curriculum, attention to music and vocal arts is emphasized in the four countries.
- c) In the teaching method element of art curriculum, cooperative teaching method and group discussion are emphasized in four countries.
- d) In the evaluation element of the art curriculum, presenting artistic designs and doing work in a practical way is emphasized in four countries.

Table 4- Comparison of culture curriculum elements in four countries of Australia, Canada, Malaysia & Iran

Elements	Components	Australia	Canada	Malaysia	Iran
Goals	Familiarity with values, traditions, cultures	*	*	*	*
	Acceptance of values, views and cultures	*	*	*	*
	Development of civic capabilities	*	*	*	*
	A way to know, choose a field and job	*	-	-	-
	Development of flexible and analytical thinking	*	-	-	-
	Fair learning environment	-	*	-	-
	Developing search and group discussion skills	-	-	-	*
Content	Familiarity with cultural heritage	*	*	*	*
	Examining the nature and importance of cultures	*	*	*	*
	Citizenship issues	*	*	-	*
	Justice and equality of gender and ethnic groups	*	*	-	*
	Art in different cultures	*	-	*	*
Teaching method	Question and answer	*	*	*	*
	Exploring and analyzing different cultures	*	*	*	*
	Group discussion	*	*	*	*
	Use movies, music, CDs, magazines	-	*	*	-
	Participating in ceremonies of different cultures	-	-	*	-
	Organizing an art exhibition	-	-	-	*
	Performance of the show	-	*	*	*
	Creating a blog and using technologies	-	*	-	-
Assessment	Identifying and analyzing different cultures	*	*	*	*
	Oral, written, graphic, digital and online evaluation	*	-	-	-
	Evaluation sensitive to cultural differences	*	-	-	-
	Presenting results about different cultures	*	*	*	-
	Performance of the show	*	-	*	-

As the data in table 4 shows:

- a. In the target element of the culture curriculum, familiarity with different cultures and customs in four countries is emphasized.
- b. In the content element of the culture curriculum, the topics of identity, cultures and cultural heritage are emphasized in four countries.
- c. In the teaching method element of the culture curriculum, the group discussion method is emphasized in four countries.
- d. In the evaluation element of culture curriculum, the ability to explore cultures and describe and compare them in four countries is emphasized.

4. Conclusion

The purpose of current study was to comparative investigate art and culture curriculum of middle secondary schools in Australia, Canada, Malaysia and Iran. The findings showed that in Australian art and culture curricula, special attention is paid to the development of students' mental skills (such as cultivating creativity and imagination), self-confidence, self-knowledge, students' connection with society, and understanding of history, tradition, and culture. It is also necessary for Australian students to achieve a suitable level of artistic abilities (ability to perform artistic works) and to conduct cultural research. Another finding of research indicated that main goal of Canadian art & culture curriculums is the development of students' mental skills - such as development of creativity & imagination, self-discovery and self-expression, and development of self-confidence. On the other hand, the learners' intellectual, physical, social and emotional aspects are important. Learners are encouraged to participate in festivals, explore the outdoors, research various arts, and learn about history, values, and cultures. In the Malaysian curriculum, the development of physical, mental and cognitive skills of learners is one of the important goals of art and culture education. Students of this country are encouraged to participate and explore the society and participate in festivals to identify artistic & cultural works and accept and respect them. The ability to discover, analyze society and its cultural and artistic works and implement art programs are among the goals of art & culture courses too. In the curriculum of art & culture in Iranian schools, attention has been paid to the development of physical and mental skills of students - such as strengthening different senses, development of creativity & imagination, development of aesthetic sense and attention to the works and creation of God and human artifacts. In these curricula, pupils are encouraged to

research, explore and debate so that they can get to know the cultural and artistic heritage of Iran and its various ethnic groups, as well as interest in Iran, Iranian identity and culture, the ability to do group work, the ability to analyze cultural and artistic works, and performing and presenting artistic activities are other goals of art & culture courses.

According to the research of the researchers of this article, so far no research has investigated the two curricula of art and culture at the same time. The findings of the present research in the field of art are in line with findings of Ketovuori (2007) regarding the effect of teaching and learning art on the learning of other school subjects and academic progress of Canadian students. Also, the findings are in line with the research of Eddy & Isabel (2014), in terms of goals and teaching methods of multicultural programs in Canada and Australia. In the content section of the art curriculum, the findings of the present research are in line with the findings of Saberi & Mahram (2011) regarding the lack of attention of curriculum planners to music education in Iran. According to the findings, the experiences of the countries under study can be used to improve the art and culture curricula of Iran, and the following suggestions should be taken into consideration by the curriculum planners of Iran. :

- Development of educational facilities (appointment of music rooms, creation of permanent exhibitions of artistic and cultural works in schools, expansion of new technologies for teaching art in the context of media) for better implementation of the curriculum of art and culture,
- Designing art and native culture textbooks of each region in addition to official textbooks to better familiarize students of each region with art, artistic personalities, and cultural heritage of their place of residence,
- Connecting the school with artistic and cultural associations and inviting artists to present their artistic expertise to school students.

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