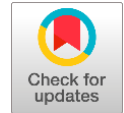


Special Issue: Educational articles from Asian and European countries

International exchanges and cooperation in art education in Ukraine: Challenges and opportunities

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Abstract The purpose of the article is to study international exchanges and cooperation in art education in Ukraine, to identify challenges and opportunities in the development of these areas in the future. To achieve this goal, the article uses general scientific methods of analysis and synthesis. The methods of abstraction, comparison, content analysis, and the prognostic method were also used, which made it possible to formulate some comments for the future development of international cooperation in art education in Ukraine. The results of the study highlight the importance of international cooperation, which is becoming an increasingly important aspect of modern art education. The analysis of the legislative framework has shown that Ukraine has created favourable conditions for academic exchange, and joining the Bologna system contributes to the internationalisation of higher education in the arts. These trends are also reflected in the development strategies of art universities in different regions of Ukraine, such as Kharkiv, Lviv and Kyiv, where establishing international exchanges is considered an important priority for educational institutions. In addition, the Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts actively uses digital channels to transmit information, especially in remote locations. Although distance learning has its limitations in art education, the conditions of modern reality, such as Russian aggression, create an opportunity to organise international cooperation with foreign partners without physical risk. It is important to note that there are common challenges to the successful implementation of international exchanges and cooperation in art education, such as cultural and language barriers, financial support, visa and administrative restrictions, as well as academic requirements and potential global threats. However, a possible way to overcome these difficulties is to use the international experience of involving NGOs or special state structures that would coordinate the provision of grants for academic mobility of arts students. The conclusions emphasise that it is also worth considering the possibility of special digital platforms that provide opportunities for internships and distance learning, which can be an effective solution for organising international cooperation in the current situation.

Keywords: art education, Ukraine, academic exchanges, international cooperation, development strategies

1. Introduction

Art has always been considered a language that unites cultures, and its impact on society and individuals is invaluable. Ukraine, rich in cultural heritage and gifted artists, does not stand aside from global trends in art education and international cooperation. On the contrary, international exchanges and cooperation in art education have become an important aspect of the development of the cultural movement in Ukraine, contributing to the expansion of horizons, exchange of ideas and mutual enrichment of art.

The proposed research article will focus on the challenges and opportunities associated with international exchanges and cooperation in contemporary art education in Ukraine. The article will also focus on the impact of such exchanges on students and teachers of art educational institutions, as well as on the development of the art scene in Ukraine in general. To this end, the role and importance of international cooperation in the formation of future artists and cultural leaders will be considered, as well as these processes in the context of preserving and promoting Ukrainian cultural heritage in the world. Our article aims to highlight a topic that is important for the development of art in Ukraine and its place in the global cultural context. To this end, we will examine various aspects of this topic, analyse the challenges and opportunities it brings, and discuss proposals for further steps to support international cooperation in art education in Ukraine.



The topic is partially presented in the scientific literature. In particular, Zinchenko et al. (2023) described the features of the innovative transformation of modern Ukraine based on an analysis of the national education system. Zawacki-Richter and Jung (2023) describe the key aspects of digital change in the field of education policy. Yolida and Marpaung (2023) identified certain aspects of critical thinking in modern students at different levels. The work of Tsekhmister (2022) is important, as the author describes certain prognostic aspects of the further development of the Ukrainian education system. The author drew attention to the analysis of existing educational trends and the identification of future directions for the development of education in Ukraine. Stoika (2022) described the peculiarities of the introduction of digital technologies in the Hungarian education system. Schneider and Rohmann (2021) conducted a thorough systematic literature review on the problem of researching major changes in the field of art. Rohmadin et al. (2021) described the peculiarities of the transformation of the art sector based on a thorough empirical analysis. Popyuk (2020) studied the integration of art education in Ukraine into the European educational space. At the same time, Polska and Konovalova (2021) analysed the main areas of music teaching in Ukrainian higher education institutions. A similar issue was also addressed by Lebid et al. (2021). Marner and Örtégren (2014) describe in detail the key aspects of the development of global digital art. Jacobson-Levy and Miller (2022) provide valuable insights into the practical aspects of using music. Modern teaching technologies are described in detail in Gumennykova et al. (2023). A similar issue was also addressed by Chychun et al. (2023). The importance of the digital university in the system of training specialists of the future is outlined in Gourlay (2020). At the same time, Almogren and Aljammaz (2022) outlined the key points of using machine learning in the system of training of cultural and artistic professionals. However, an important vector for further research is to establish the further organisation and support of academic mobility as a means of developing international cooperation in the context of further development of art education in Ukraine. Also, additional attention will be required to identify challenges and potential prospects, the overcoming of which will outline the potential improvement of the current state of art education in Ukraine.

Therefore, the purpose of the article is to analyse international exchanges and cooperation in art education in Ukraine, to identify challenges and opportunities for the development of these sectors in the future. The realization of this goal will require consideration of several urgent tasks: determining the current state of international cooperation and academic exchanges in higher art education in Ukraine, characterising the challenges that do not contribute to the development of this area, analysing opportunities for overcoming the crisis.

2. Materials and Methods

To achieve the aim of the study, several theoretical methods of pedagogical research were used, including analysis and synthesis. The use of these methods was defined as the basic basis in the study by Lavrentieva et al (2023). The analytical method was used to determine the current state-of-the-art teaching and to characterise the content of educational programmes and methods used in the education process. The work is also based on the method of abstraction, which involves the transition from the analysis of general theoretical positions to the formation of specific recommendations and generalisations. At the same time, a comparative method was used to conduct a comparative analysis between the educational approaches and methods used in Canada and the European Union and the approaches to the organisation of international cooperation used in Ukrainian realities.

The main research materials were legislative documents and strategies for the development of art education (Figure 1).



Figure 1 Research materials.

To study the issue of further changes in the establishment of academic exchange processes in Ukraine in the field of art education, the prognostic method was used. In addition, the article is based on the principles of critical analysis of educational programmes and subject syllabi in order to study the process of introducing innovative teaching methods. For this purpose, a content analysis of the professional scientific literature was carried out, which made it possible to trace the vulnerabilities of the existing exchange system operating in the world. The content analysis method was also applied to the development strategies of individual studied institutions of higher art education in Ukraine, as well as the legislative framework for the development of international cooperation in the field of higher education. As a result, the article identifies problematic areas in the functioning of the academic exchange sphere, the overcoming of which would improve the level of art education in general.

3. Results

3.1. International Cooperation and Exchanges in Higher Art Education in Ukraine: General Remarks

International cooperation in the Ukrainian context is recognised as an important prerequisite for the modern development of higher education in the arts and constitutes the main core principle, goal, and instrument of European educational reform. The mechanisms for its implementation are built into the strategy for the development of higher education in Ukraine, which is legally enshrined in the Law of Ukraine “On Higher Education”, adopted in 2014. This document established the philosophical foundations of such activities, emphasising the priorities of “academic mobility” and “academic freedom” (as described in Section 1), as well as the principles of state policy in the field of higher education, which are based, among other things, on the recognition of the importance of “international integration” (Article 3, Section I). In addition, Section XIII of the Law defines the mechanisms for the implementation of educational cooperation, forming the legal basis for establishing international cooperation between various higher education institutions, including artistic ones. According to this provision, the main aspects include participation in bilateral and multilateral interstate and inter-university exchange programmes for students, postgraduate students, doctoral students, teaching, research, and academic staff, as well as participation in international educational and research programmes.

At the same time, the Law also offers technological resources to address the complex issues related to the mutual recognition of academic diplomas at the international level. The need for flexible tools for comparison, understanding, and use in the European labour market contributed to the birth of the Bologna Process. The Law of Ukraine “On Education” has consolidated compliance with European higher education degrees, considering and promoting the implementation of concepts and concepts that have been researched in Ukrainian higher education for more than a decade, while adapting to modern educational experience. Together with the creation of the National Qualifications Framework in 2011, the Law defined a set of tools for the comparison and recognition of academic degrees obtained in different educational systems. Thus, at the legislative level, the necessary legal, pedagogical, and technological prerequisites for the successful implementation of joint educational programmes, student mobility and internship opportunities for teachers have been created.

This trend towards the internationalisation of educational activities in the field of art education has been thoroughly continued in practice. International exchanges and cooperation in art education in Ukraine are important components of the development of the artistic sphere in the country and its integration into the global artistic context. These initiatives have facilitated the exchange of knowledge, ideas, techniques, and creative experience between Ukrainian artists and their colleagues from other countries, which has opened up endless opportunities for the development and improvement of artistic learning and creation (Baldacchino & Vella, 2013). One of the key benefits of international exchanges in art education is the opportunity for students and teachers to study and work in different cultural environments. This contributes to broadening their horizons, developing tolerance and understanding of diversity in the art world (Burnard, 2006; Campbell, 2013). Higher education students have the opportunity to study in unique programmes, as well as participate in joint projects and exhibitions where they can demonstrate their creative abilities. In particular, exchange programmes between higher education institutions in the arts contribute to the creation of a cultural city where students and teachers can learn and exchange artistic traditions, methods, and ideas. This helps to enrich Ukraine's artistic heritage and fosters the emergence of new creative ideas and trends.

Thanks to international cooperation, according to researchers, Ukrainian art educational institutions have also been able to attract prominent artists and teachers from around the world to conduct master classes and lectures, which enriches the educational process and makes it more accessible and interesting for students (Trang & Kolley, 2022). In general, international exchanges and cooperation in art education in Ukraine contribute to improving the quality of education, developing creative opportunities, and strengthening international relations in the art sector. These initiatives play an important role in shaping the future generation of artists and in facilitating the exchange of cultural values between Ukraine and other countries (Zinchenko et al., 2023).

Opportunities for participation in exchange programmes were taken into account when drafting relevant documents that ensure the international activities of Ukrainian higher education institutions in the arts. For example, the Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Art and Design Education at the Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts states that the main goal of the Academy is to promote the development of various fields of art and design. At the same time, the expansion of the geography of international relations, the desire of foreign institutions to cooperate, as well as participation in the work of international organisations, testify to the recognition and growth of the Academy's authority in the international arena as a university in the field of design and art (Strategy of internationalisation of higher art and design education at the Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts, n.d.). Internationalisation is recognised as one of the key tasks of educational development and is an integral part of the Academy's life. At the same time, international cooperation is developing as part of the overall process of integrating Ukrainian higher education into the global higher education system.

The internationalisation strategy of the LNMA named after M.V. Lysenko defines the priority tasks of integrating the Academy into the international educational space through the internationalisation of educational programmes and disciplines, forming a base of joint educational programmes and disciplines for issuing double diplomas (together with the administrations of partner universities) (The internationalisation strategy of the LNMA named after M.V. Lysenko, 2020). It is also about

organising the teaching of educational disciplines in foreign languages, increasing the range of special academic courses for those students who have come to the Academy on exchange. It is also proposed to form international modules in the structure of academic disciplines, to ensure the exchange of higher education students and teachers with foreign partner institutions, which will generally increase the number of higher education students who will work abroad or receive art education there. The Development Strategy of the Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts for 2023-2028 provides for a thorough focus on the development of international academic mobility. First, it is about intensifying cooperation under the Erasmus+ programmes. An important innovation was the Virtual exchanges in higher education and youth programme, aimed at organising interaction between students from different countries, promoting intercultural dialogue, and developing communication skills between students from different countries (Development strategy of Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts for 2023-2028, 2022). This reflects general trends in the formation of an intercultural educational environment using modern digital technologies.

A comparative analysis of these documents shows common features. First, the importance of integration with the European educational field and the organisation of academic exchanges are clearly recognised as an important vector for the work of higher art education institutions in Ukraine. In particular, the traditional set of measures for organising such cooperation is proposed: teaching courses in English, increasing the number of students and teachers who will be able to undertake internships or continue their studies abroad. Paying attention to these aspects reflects the main European educational values that support academic mobility among students and teachers. It is important that Ukrainian universities have begun to understand the relevance of virtual cooperation, which is extremely important in the development of digitalisation of the educational process.

3.2. Challenges for international cooperation and exchange in art education

At the same time, according to the researchers, there are certain difficulties in organising international cooperation in the current circumstances. As the researchers emphasise, international cooperation and exchanges in art education can be extremely valuable for students and teachers, helping to broaden their horizons, deepen their understanding of cultural diversity and develop creative skills. For the successful implementation of such programmes, it is important to overcome challenges by developing adaptive and flexible approaches, fostering a favourable environment for international cooperation in arts education (see Table 1).

Table 1 Challenges for organising international cooperation in the field of art education.

Challenge	Meaning
Cultural and language barriers	Arts education and creativity are often linked to the cultural contexts of each country and national languages. Differences in culture and language can make it difficult to perceive learning and collaboration in a foreign environment.
Financial difficulties	Travelling, moving, living, and studying abroad can be expensive. Students and teachers may face financial constraints that limit their ability to participate in international art programmes. The importance of access to specialised equipment and other supplies, without which artistic work may be hampered, should also be mentioned.
Visa and immigration issues, bureaucratic details	Obtaining visas and securing the right to stay in another country can be challenging, especially for students from countries that require visas to travel. In addition, many formalities and bureaucratic procedures can arise when planning and organising international artistic exchanges and programmes
Academic requirements	Different countries may have different academic standards and requirements for arts courses and curricula. This can create difficulties in recognising credits and grades obtained abroad.
Global constraints	The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly complicated opportunities for international exchange and cooperation, leading to travel cancellations and a shift to remote learning

At the same time, researchers have paid little attention to the fact that geopolitical conflicts and political changes can affect the possibilities of organising international cooperation and exchange in art education. For Ukraine, this challenge has become extremely relevant, as Russian aggression in 2022 has limited opportunities for effective international cooperation. First, the number of students and teachers who would have undergone internships or exchange studies in Ukraine has decreased. Unfortunately, it is impossible to guarantee safety in the face of Russian artillery and missile attacks, so it is understandable that foreigners do not want to risk their lives and health. The academic mobility of Ukrainian students has also been restricted. Due to mobilisation restrictions, many artists are forced to stay in Ukraine, as opportunities to study abroad are currently closed to them. This greatly reduces the potential for international cooperation, although this challenge is also due to external circumstances and cannot be overcome now.

4. Discussion



For the development of international cooperation in the academic sphere in higher education in Ukraine, it is important to note the peculiarities of the functioning of global practices. For example, the American experience of developing academic mobility largely depends on the activities of various actors, such as national agencies, international organisations, university consortia, federal and provincial government departments, and higher education institutions themselves (Cardinal et al., 2020). Many of these organisations have been in place since the 1960s, indicating a well-coordinated, time-tested mechanism (Mackin et al., 2022). In Canada, there are special organisations that provide financial assistance and coordination services for international academic mobility programmes for both Canadian students studying abroad and international students receiving education (including art education) in Canada. Among these agencies are the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (founded in 1911), the Canadian University Service Abroad (founded in 1961), the Canadian Bureau for International Education (founded in 1966), the Canadian International Development Agency (founded in 1968), etc. Thanks to the work of such separate structures, the possibilities for supporting students and teachers seeking study or internships abroad are significantly increased. This positive experience is ignored in the Ukrainian reality, as the role of NGOs or certain university institutions in establishing international cooperation is rather formal (Lavrentieva et al., 2023). Intensification of activities in this area will make it possible to establish closer contacts in the “triangle” of student, higher education institution, and employer.

It is also important to note the need to integrate students into a different cultural environment. A positive example in this regard is Germany, which has applied the successful experience of drawing up special codes of conduct for teachers working with foreign students (Ceauşu, 2023). Student codes have also been implemented, which contain information about available educational programmes and artistic disciplines, the rights and obligations of students from the moment of admission to the end of the educational process. In Ukrainian realities, these opportunities are scattered in many regulations and other documents that are voluminous in their content and sometimes difficult for an outside reader to get acquainted with (Mutibwa, 2021). By reducing bureaucratic requirements to a common denominator, it is possible to overcome problematic issues, as in the Ukrainian reality, the language and cultural environment for foreign students can raise many questions. The German experience is also useful for the functioning of the DAAD system, which provides systematic financial support for mobility. In the Ukrainian context, no such fund exists, and in general, problems with additional funding for project organisation are extremely significant (Marner & Örtégren, 2014). At the official level, there is no fund that would support international cooperation and mobility arrangements at a common level for all universities. This situation is detrimental to international cooperation in the field of art education and does not contribute to the establishment of an international approach in Ukrainian education in general.

The French experience is like the German one. Established in 2010, Campus France is responsible for administering all grants related to international mobility provided by the French government or foreign educational institutions. The agency is jointly managed by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. One of the main missions of the agency is to stimulate and promote the French system of higher education (including arts education) and professional training abroad (Lavrentieva et al., 2023). In addition, the agency provides support on visa issues for international students and researchers and promotes the development of higher education through the latest information and communication technologies (Kárpáti, 2019). Obviously, there is no such supra-university national body in the Ukrainian structure of art education that would comprehensively facilitate the organisation of student mobility. This example demonstrates the need for some kind of state regulation. And although the experience of Germany and France is different from that of Canada (there is a certain opposition between state regulation and NGOs that promote academic mobility at the horizontal level), the creation of separate advisory structures to manage the processes of international art university cooperation would be an important prospect for further development, which would open up new opportunities.

At the same time, the theoretical study has certain limitations. For a long time, Ukrainian art education developed separately from the world, and even after the collapse of the USSR, the consequences of the old pedagogical and educational paradigms were extremely noticeable. After Ukraine joined the Bologna Process, the opportunities for academic mobility and international cooperation increased significantly (Popyuk, 2020; Polska & Konovalova, 2021; Vasiutiak et al., 2021). Obviously, it is physically impossible to go a long way in development (which, for example, Canada did not begin until the beginning of the twentieth century). At the same time, it is possible to formulate certain recommendations that would deepen the opportunities for further development of international exchanges and cooperation at the international level in higher art education in Ukraine. First of all, we are talking about the development of non-governmental organisations that would aim to support talented students and teachers of artistic specialisation. It is also possible to create a national agency that would oversee the organisation of grants and other support at the national level. It is also important to turn to the digital environment, which allows for remote mobility, internships, and training abroad. It should be acknowledged that in the field of art education, remote work resources are limited, but it is important to implement such projects, as they allow for international interaction even in times of war.

5. Final considerations

Therefore, the development of international exchanges and cooperation in art education in Ukraine is an urgent problem for research, since the establishment of international cooperation is a relevant phenomenon for modern art education. Based

on the analysed legislative framework, it was possible to establish that Ukraine has created conditions for fruitful academic exchange, and joining the Bologna system facilitates this process, in particular, it allows for the internationalisation of higher art education. These trends are also reflected in the relevant development strategies of higher education institutions. As can be seen from the analysis of the main documents of Kharkiv, Lviv, and Kyiv art universities, this vector is perceived by teachers and students at a high level, and the establishment of international exchanges is among the priorities of all the studied educational institutions. At the same time, we note the experience of the Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts, which also focuses on the use of digital channels of information transfer. Although distance learning and practice for art education has a rather limited potential, in the context of Russian aggression, it allows for international cooperation with foreign partners without exposing the latter to physical danger. It is additionally emphasised that the organisation of internships and international cooperation of Ukrainian art education is subject to the general difficulties of cultural and language barriers, financial support, visa and administrative barriers, academic requirements, and potential global threats. However, it is also proposed to use the international experience of involving NGOs or special government agencies that would coordinate at the inter-university level in providing grants for academic mobility for students of art education. The functioning of special digital platforms that would allow for internships or distance learning can also be considered a promising area for research - in the context of martial law, this option could be a reliable solution to establishing international cooperation.

Ethical Considerations

Not Applicable.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Funding

The current review did not receive any financial support.

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