

A Survey Study of Preschool Educators' Aesthetic Literacy of the Arts, Aesthetic Teaching Beliefs, and Aesthetic Teaching Practices in New Taipei City

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With the development of aesthetic education in Taiwan, aesthetic education in preschools is also valued. Using the survey research method, this study aimed to investigate preschool educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and their aesthetic teaching practices. Participants were 248 preschool educators at public and private preschools in New Taipei City. The results revealed that (1) the preschool educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and aesthetic teaching practices scored above the average. Moreover, they scored high on their aesthetic teaching beliefs. (2) Background variables affected the differences in the preschool educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and aesthetic teaching practices. (3) Aesthetic teaching beliefs were able to predict the preschool educators' aesthetic teaching practices. As for aesthetic literacy, knowledge of the arts and skills of visual arts and music/drama for performance and appreciation were significant predictors of the preschool educators' aesthetic teaching practices. This study examines the related issues of preschool educators' aesthetic teaching, and provides a reference for early childhood aesthetic education and teacher education.

Keywords: preschool educators, aesthetic teaching beliefs, aesthetic teaching practices, aesthetic literacy of the arts

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Introduction

In the 21st century, aesthetic education has become an important element of school curricula in various countries (e.g. Amadio, et al., 2006; Curriculum Development Council, 2006; Häikiö, 2020; Korea Institute of Child Care and Education, 2013; Ministry of Education, 2013, 2018; Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). It has also been valued in early childhood curricula in Taiwan. According to the *Early Childhood Education and Care Curriculum Framework* in Taiwan (Ministry of Education, 2012, 2016), the aesthetic domain has been incorporated into the early childhood curriculum. It aims to help young children develop their sensibilities regarding everything in the living environment, evoke their imagination and creativity, and develop their aesthetic preferences and aesthetic literacy through the various artistic forms of visual arts, music, and drama. Consequently, Taiwanese preschool educators can integrate the aesthetic domain into preschool curricula, and their teaching has become relatively important to the success of the curriculum reform.

Teachers' aesthetic literacy may influence their implementation of aesthetic education (Lee, 2012). Their teaching beliefs may also influence their teaching practices (Cheung, 2012; Wang, 2000). In aesthetic education, some researchers have found that primary school teachers' aesthetic cultivation of various art forms was correlated with their aesthetic teaching beliefs and aesthetic teaching practices (e.g. Wang, 1999). In early childhood education, some researchers have investigated the situation of early childhood educators' aesthetic teaching in the aesthetic domain (e.g. Wu, 2020; Yang, 2014). While some research has explored early childhood educators' aesthetic teaching beliefs and aesthetic teaching practices in the arts (Chen, 2014a), other research has examined the effect of preschool educators' aesthetic competence on their aesthetic teaching (Huang, 2021). However, little research has revealed the relationships among preschool educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and aesthetic teaching practices.

Because aesthetic education has been emphasized in early schooling in Taiwan, it is relatively important for us to understand preschool educators' aesthetic teaching of related issues. Therefore, this survey study aimed to investigate preschool educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and aesthetic teaching practices in New Taipei City. It will help us get a broad picture of preschool educators' aesthetic teaching in New Taipei City in north Taiwan. It will also provide

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us with references in early childhood aesthetic education and teacher education for the future.

Research Objectives and Questions

Using the survey research method, the purpose of this study is to investigate preschool educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and their aesthetic teaching practices. Furthermore, it investigates the influence of preschool educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts and aesthetic teaching beliefs on their aesthetic teaching practices. The research questions are presented as follows.

1. What is the status of preschool educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and aesthetic teaching practices?
2. Are there significant differences in aesthetic literacy of the arts, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and aesthetic teaching practices depending on preschool educators' background variables?
3. Are preschool educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts and aesthetic teaching beliefs able to predict their aesthetic teaching practices?

Literature Review

In the literature, we begin with a review of aesthetic literacy of the arts and the related research. We then discuss the research on teachers' teaching beliefs and teaching practices in aesthetic education.

Aesthetic Literacy of the Arts

Generally speaking, aesthetic literacy of the arts is the knowledge, skills, and experience of interacting with aesthetic subjects in different art forms (Chen, 2014b). Clinard and Foster (1998) further explained that aesthetic literacy is the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind to engage in, distinguish, and reflect on the experiences of the arts, such as literature, music, dance, theatre, and various forms of visual arts.

The Ministry of Education (2013) in Taiwan defines aesthetic literacy as the knowledge, skills, habits, and attitudes towards aesthetic subjects. Likewise, Chen

and Lin (2004) indicated the four elements in aesthetic literacy of the arts¹, namely, knowledge of the arts, skills of arts performance and arts appreciation, habits of participation in arts activities, and attitudes towards the arts. In empirical studies, some researchers have applied Chen and Lin's idea to conduct survey research to examine the aesthetic literacy of citizens, students, or preschool teachers (e.g. Chen, 2014b; Chen & Lin, 2004; Pan, 2006; Wu, 2017); some researchers have further studied the correlations among aesthetic literacy and other aspects, such as adults' aesthetic literacy, quality of work, and quality of life (Wu, 2013), primary school students' aesthetic literacy, creativity, and academic achievement (Ju, 2009), as well as primary school students' aesthetic literacy and their attitudes towards creation and the arts (Chang, 2012).

As for the aspect of teachers' aesthetic literacy of the arts, Chen (2014b) revealed that most preschool educators had the habit of participating in arts activities, held positive attitudes towards the arts², and performed better at understanding the features of painting; their skills of visual arts were better than those of music and performing arts (dance and drama). In addition, some researchers have investigated teachers' aesthetic cultivation or aesthetic competence in the related issues. For example, Wang (1999) revealed that primary school teachers' aesthetic cultivation³ in various modes of the arts was moderate, and that it was positively related to their aesthetic teaching beliefs and teaching practices in aesthetic education. Huang (2021) examined the effect of preschool educators' aesthetic competence⁴ on their aesthetic teaching. His findings revealed that the educators' aesthetic competence was above the average, that it was positively correlated with their aesthetic teaching, and was effective in terms of predicting their aesthetic teaching. In another study, Tsai (2017) investigated the correlation of community college teachers' pedagogical knowledge, aesthetic competence⁵, and job satisfaction. The results showed that the teachers'

¹ This refers to various forms, including visual arts, music, and performing arts (dance, drama, and films).

² This refers to various forms, including visual arts, music, and performing arts (dance and drama).

³ This refers to teachers' cultivation of a variety of arts, including architecture, crafts, calligraphy, painting, sculpture, photography, music, dance, literature, drama, Chinese opera, and film.

⁴ This refers to preschool educators' aesthetic knowledge, arrangements of learning environments, etc.

⁵ This refers to community teachers' art literacy (i.e. art knowledge and art attitude) and humanistic literacy (i.e. social concerns and humanistic thinking).

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pedagogical knowledge could effectively predict their aesthetic competence, and the strongest factor was their teaching beliefs. Moreover, their pedagogical knowledge and aesthetic competence could effectively predict their teaching job satisfaction.

In summary, researchers have applied survey research methods to investigate the aesthetic literacy of citizens, students, and teachers (e.g. Chen, 2014b; Chen & Lin, 2004; Pan, 2006; Wu, 2017). Some researchers have further revealed the positive correlation between preschool educators' aesthetic competence and aesthetic teaching, as well as primary school teachers' aesthetic cultivation and their aesthetic teaching beliefs and teaching practices (Huang, 2021; Wang, 1999). Although the terms of aesthetic literacy, aesthetic cultivation, and aesthetic competence are presented in different ways, they are related to educators' aesthetic activities in the arts. Because Chen and Lin's aesthetic literacy (Chen & Lin, 2004) provides a basic framework to investigate teachers' aesthetic literacy in the arts, this research applied their idea of aesthetic literacy to construct the survey questionnaire.

Teaching Beliefs and Teaching Practices in Aesthetic Education

Teachers' teaching beliefs are their beliefs about teaching matters which are associated with educational objectives, curriculum development, instructional methods, learning activities, and teacher-student relationships (Hsiao & Yang, 2010; Wang, 2000). Teachers' aesthetic teaching beliefs can be related to their beliefs about these teaching-related matters in aesthetic education. Their teaching beliefs may influence their actual teaching practices (Cheung, 2012; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017; Wang, 2000).

In empirical studies, some researchers have conducted research to investigate teachers' teaching beliefs and teaching practices in aesthetic education. For example, Wang (1999) applied a survey and interviews to explore primary school teachers' aesthetic cultivation, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and aesthetic teaching practices in Taiwan. In his study, aesthetic cultivation referred to the cultivation of a variety of arts; however, aesthetic teaching beliefs and aesthetic teaching practices referred to a larger context in aesthetic education. Aesthetic teaching beliefs referred to the beliefs of daily routines, curricula, teaching methods, and assessment, whereas aesthetic teaching practices referred to everyday lives, the school environment, and all subjects in primary school from the perspective of aesthetic education. The results indicated that teachers' average scores on aesthetic teaching beliefs

performed better than their aesthetic teaching practice scores. There were positive correlations among aesthetic cultivation, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and aesthetic teaching practices.

In another study, Chen (2014a) applied survey and interview methods to explore early childhood educators' aesthetic teaching beliefs and aesthetic teaching practices in southern Taiwan. In this study, aesthetic teaching beliefs consisted of knowledge and teaching methods in aesthetic education, whereas aesthetic teaching practices included arts integration and appreciation activities using the art media of visual arts, music, drama, and dance. The results revealed that early childhood educators' aesthetic teaching beliefs and practices were above the average, but their teaching beliefs were better than their actual practices. Their locations and education backgrounds resulted in significant differences in their aesthetic teaching beliefs and aesthetic teaching practices. Their aesthetic teaching beliefs were correlated with their aesthetic teaching practices. Moreover, the interviewed early childhood educators agreed with the importance of aesthetic education for young children and argued for developing young children's aesthetic feelings by exploring nature and arts, and for guiding young children to appreciate a variety of arts and local arts.

As stated, previous studies have revealed the correlation between teachers' teaching beliefs and teaching practices in aesthetic education. Aesthetic education involves the application of various modes of arts or everyday school life in aesthetic education. Wang's study revealed that primary school teachers' aesthetic cultivation was correlated with their aesthetic teaching beliefs and aesthetic teaching practices in aesthetic education (Wang, 1999). Nevertheless, little research has been undertaken to investigate the relationships among early childhood educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts and their aesthetic teaching beliefs and actual teaching practices in the aesthetic domain. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate preschool educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and aesthetic teaching practices.

Research Methods

This study applied the survey research method to investigate preschool educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and aesthetic teaching practices. The research design is presented as follows.

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Participants

The participants were preschool educators at public and private preschools in New Taipei City in north Taiwan. 272 questionnaires were distributed to the preschool educators in public and private preschools in each district of New Taipei City. Geographical cluster sampling was applied in this study. There are nine major districts of preschools in New Taipei City and the questionnaires were distributed to between two and five public and private preschools in each district. The ratio of public to private preschools was equal to 1.34:1. A total of 248 questionnaires were completed, equaling a retrieval rate of 91.2%. The age of the participants ranged from 20 to over 50 years old. Most respondents were female.

Instruments

A self-reported 5-point rating scale questionnaire ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was developed to investigate preschool educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and aesthetic teaching practices. This study applied Chen and Lin's idea of aesthetic literacy (Chen & Lin, 2004) to design the aesthetic literacy scale. Additionally, the researchers referred to the items of the preschool educators' aesthetic literacy questionnaire designed by Chen (2014b). The aesthetic subjects are the media of visual arts, music, and drama in the aesthetic domain of the *Curriculum Framework in Early Childhood Education and Care Activities* (Ministry of Education, 2012). There are four elements in aesthetic literacy of the arts, namely, knowledge of the arts, skills of arts performance and arts appreciation, habits of participation in arts activities, and attitudes toward the arts. Knowledge of the arts relates to the concepts, principles, media, and expression of the arts. Skills of arts performance refer to the application of the expressive art media, such as painting, musical instruments, or drama, while the skills of arts appreciation imply the ability to appreciate artworks in various forms. Habits of participation in arts activities means the frequency of attending arts activities. Attitudes toward the arts are beliefs about the arts and intention to engage in arts activities.

As for the items of the aesthetic teaching beliefs scale and the aesthetic teaching practices scale, they were based on the questionnaire designed by Chen (2014a) and the aesthetic domain in the *Curriculum Framework in Early Childhood Education and Care Activities* (Ministry of Education, 2012). The statements of

aesthetic teaching beliefs scale are related to knowledge of aesthetic education and teaching principles of aesthetic education. The statements of the aesthetic teaching practices scale concern exploring and perceiving the aesthetic environment, performing and creating the arts, and responding to and appreciating the arts in the aesthetic domain in the *Curriculum Framework* (Ministry of Education, 2012). To ensure content validity, five professors in the fields of early childhood education, visual arts, music education, and drama were invited to examine the questionnaire and to provide feedback⁶. Two experienced preschool teachers were invited to provide suggestions regarding the statements of the scales. The questionnaire items are shown in appendix A.

The overall reliability coefficient for the questionnaire, as measured by Cronbach's alpha, was .97. The questionnaire consisted of 51 items of statements relating to aesthetic literacy of the arts, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and aesthetic teaching practices. Table 1 shows the exploratory factor analysis results. The factor loadings of items weighted greater than .45 on the relevant scales, which was deemed to indicate adequate validity of the scales. We can explain 69.24% of the total variance with these seven factors: the Cronbach's alpha values are .89 for attitudes towards the arts (6 items), .79 for participation in arts activities (3 items), .91 for knowledge of the arts (7 items), .81 for skills of visual arts for performance and appreciation (3 items), .90 for skills of music and drama for performance and appreciation (6 items), .96 for aesthetic teaching beliefs (13 items), and .95 for aesthetic teaching practices (13 items). All the reliability coefficients for the questionnaire were greater than .70. Consequently, this questionnaire was deemed to be adequately reliable for measuring preschool educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and aesthetic teaching practices.

⁶ The five professors used to teach in visual arts, music, drama, or early childhood education programs in Tainan University of Technology and Nanhua University in Taiwan.

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Table 1

Factor structures and factor loadings of the questionnaire

Factor Structures	Factor loadings						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Attitudes towards the arts (Cronbach's alpha = .89)							
AA1	0.68						
AA2	0.59						
AA3	0.61						
AA4	0.57						
AA5	0.71						
AA6	0.70						
2. Participation in arts activities (Cronbach's alpha = .79)							
PA1		0.80					
PA2		0.71					
PA3		0.78					
3. Knowledge of the arts (Cronbach's alpha = .91)							
KA1			0.66				
KA2			0.69				
KA3			0.78				
KA4			0.79				
KA5			0.75				
KA6			0.75				
KA7			0.74				
4. Skills of visual arts for performance and appreciation (Cronbach's alpha = .81)							
SVA1				0.56			
SVA2				0.63			
SVA3				0.47			
5. Skills of music and drama for performance and appreciation (Cronbach's alpha = .90)							
SMD1					0.65		
SMD2					0.73		
SMD3					0.61		
SMD4					0.75		
SMD5					0.75		
SMD6					0.66		

Table 1
Factor structures and factor loadings of the questionnaire (continued)

Factor Structures	Factor loadings						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Aesthetic teaching beliefs (Cronbach's alpha = .96)							
ATB1						0.69	
ATB2						0.66	
ATB3						0.77	
ATB4						0.57	
ATB5						0.73	
ATB6						0.85	
ATB7						0.88	
ATB8						0.87	
ATB9						0.85	
ATB10						0.85	
ATB11						0.77	
ATB12						0.83	
ATB13						0.82	
7. Aesthetic teaching practices (Cronbach's alpha = .95)							
ADT1							0.55
ADT2							0.55
ADT3							0.74
ADT4							0.55
ADT5							0.71
ADT6							0.74
ADT7							0.71
ADT8							0.59
ADT9							0.78
ADT10							0.75
ADT11							0.84
ADT12							0.82
ADT13							0.82

Note: Total variance explained: 69.24%.

Data Analysis

The data collection was conducted in the fall semester in 2015. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Research Board in the university in Taiwan. The quantitative data were analyzed using the SPSS 17.0 program. In order to understand the general situation and any differences which may exist, descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA, and Scheffé's method were used. Furthermore, multiple

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regression analysis was applied to examine the effectiveness of aesthetic literacy of the arts and aesthetic teaching beliefs for predicting aesthetic teaching practices.

Results

In this section, the results of preschool educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and aesthetic teaching practices are presented according to the research questions.

Status of Aesthetic Literacy of the Arts, Aesthetic Teaching Beliefs, and Aesthetic Teaching Practices

In aesthetic literacy (AL), Table 2 shows that the preschool educators scored highest on the dimension of attitudes towards the arts ($M = 4.16$; $SD = .58$), followed by the dimension of participation in arts activities ($M = 4.00$; $SD = .65$), the dimension of skills of visual arts for performance and appreciation ($M = 3.97$; $SD = .61$), the dimension of knowledge of the arts ($M = 3.72$; $SD = .61$), and the dimension of skills of music and drama for performance and appreciation ($M = 3.65$; $SD = .71$). While the mean score of aesthetic teaching beliefs is 4.42 ($SD = .52$), the mean score of aesthetic domain teaching is 3.91 ($SD = .58$).

The results showed that the mean scores of these preschool educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and aesthetic teaching practices scored above the average (i.e. the theoretical mean of the 5-point Likert scale). They scored high on their aesthetic teaching beliefs. As for aesthetic literacy of the arts, the preschool educators scored high on their attitudes towards the arts and participation in arts activities, but lower on their knowledge of the arts and skills of music and drama for performance and appreciation.

Differences in Aesthetic Literacy of the Arts, Aesthetic Teaching Beliefs, and Aesthetic Teaching Practices in terms of Background Variables

Differences in aesthetic literacy of the arts. Table 3 shows that there is a significant difference in the dimension of attitudes towards the arts in AL in terms of educational backgrounds ($F = 4.76$; $p < .01$). In a multiple comparison, Scheffé's

method showed that the preschool educators with graduate degrees were significantly better than those with Bachelor's degrees and high school diplomas. However, no significant difference was found in terms of positions and years of teaching.

Table 2
Scores on the aesthetic literacy of the arts, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and aesthetic teaching practices scale (N = 248)

Dimension	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Attitudes towards the arts in AL	4.16	.58
Participation in arts activities in AL	4.00	.65
Knowledge of the arts in AL	3.72	.61
Skills of visual arts for performance and appreciation in AL	3.97	.61
Skills of music and drama for performance and appreciation in AL	3.65	.71
Aesthetic teaching beliefs	4.42	.52
Aesthetic teaching practices	3.91	.58

Table 3
Analysis of variance in attitudes in AL

	Variables	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Scheffé</i>
Educational Background	(1) High School	21	4.06	.65	4.76**	(3)>(1) (3)>(2)
	(2) College	207	4.14	.57		
	(3) Graduate School	20	4.53	.42		
Position	(1) Teacher	94	4.20	.57	2.36	
	(2) Educare Giver	133	4.18	.58		
	(3) Educare Assistant	21	3.90	.56		
Years of Teaching	(1) Below 6 years	75	4.05	.56	1.85	
	(2) 6~10 years	59	4.23	.56		
	(3) 11~15 years	38	4.11	.55		
	(4) 16~20 years	47	4.20	.61		
	(5) Above 20 years	29	4.35	.60		

** $p < .01$.

Table 4 shows that there is a significant difference in participation in arts activities in AL in terms of educational backgrounds ($F = 3.49$; $p < .05$) and years of

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teaching ($F = 2.99$; $p < .05$). In a multiple comparison, Scheffé's method showed that the preschool educators with graduate degrees were significantly better than those with Bachelor's degrees and high school diplomas; the preschool educators who had teaching experience of above 20 years were significantly better than those who had teaching experience below 6 years. However, no significant difference was found in terms of positions.

Table 4
Analysis of variance in participation in AL

	Variables	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Scheffé</i>
Educational Background	(1) High School	21	3.62	.82	3.49*	(3)>(1) (3)>(2)
	(2) College	207	3.35	.63		
	(3) Graduate School	20	3.67	.65		
Position	(1) Teacher	94	3.40	.69	.46	
	(2) Educare Giver	133	3.42	.64		
	(3) Educare Assistant	21	3.27	.58		
Years of Teaching	(1) Below 6 years	75	3.21	.60	2.99*	(5)>(1)
	(2) 6~10 years	59	3.44	.64		
	(3) 11~15 years	38	3.45	.76		
	(4) 16~20 years	47	3.46	.62		
	(5) Above 20 years	29	3.66	.65		

* $p < .05$.

Table 5 shows the result of analysis of variance in knowledge of the arts in AL. However, no significant difference was found in terms of educational backgrounds, positions, and years of teaching.

Table 5
Analysis of variance in knowledge in AL

	Variables	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>
Educational Background	(1) High School	21	3.73	.51	.04
	(2) College	207	3.71	.63	
	(3) Graduate School	20	3.75	.60	
Position	(1) Teacher	94	3.74	.67	.32
	(2) Educare Giver	133	3.72	.59	
	(3) Educare Assistant	21	3.62	.51	
Years of Teaching	(1) Below 6 years	75	3.55	.62	2.24
	(2) 6~10 years	59	3.79	.64	
	(3) 11~15 years	38	3.74	.60	
	(4) 16~20 years	47	3.86	.56	
	(5) Above 20 years	29	3.73	.57	

Table 6 shows the result of analysis of variance in skills of visual arts for performance and appreciation in AL. However, no significant difference was found in terms of educational backgrounds, positions, and years of teaching.

Table 7 shows that there is a significant difference in skills of music and drama for performance and appreciation in AL in terms of positions ($F = 4.99; p < .01$). In a multiple comparison, Scheffé's method showed that the teachers were significantly better than the educare givers and educare assistants. However, no significant difference was found in terms of educational backgrounds or years of teaching.

Table 6
Analysis of variance in skills of visual arts in AL

	Variables	N	M	SD	F
Educational Background	(1) High School	21	3.86	.48	.60
	(2) College	207	3.97	.62	
	(3) Graduate School	20	4.07	.65	
Position	(1) Teacher	94	4.04	.64	1.84
	(2) Educare Giver	133	3.95	.61	
	(3) Educare Assistant	21	3.76	.44	
Years of Teaching	(1) Below 6 years	75	3.83	.67	2.12
	(2) 6~10 years	59	4.00	.58	
	(3) 11~15 years	38	3.97	.63	
	(4) 16~20 years	47	3.98	.54	
	(5) Above 20 years	29	4.21	.56	

Table 7
Analysis of variance in skills of music and drama in AL

	Variables	N	M	SD	F	Scheffé
Educational Background	(1) High School	21	3.48	.63	.61	
	(2) College	207	3.66	.71		
	(3) Graduate School	20	3.67	.72		
Position	(1) Teacher	94	3.81	.68	4.99**	(1)>(2) (1)>(3)
	(2) Educare Giver	133	3.57	.73		
	(3) Educare Assistant	21	3.39	.43		
Years of Teaching	(1) Below 6 years	75	3.50	.73	2.24	
	(2) 6~10 years	59	3.69	.71		
	(3) 11~15 years	38	3.56	.76		
	(4) 16~20 years	47	3.85	.59		
	(5) Above 20 years	29	3.74	.70		

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** $p < .01$.

Differences in aesthetic teaching beliefs. Table 8 shows that there is a significant difference in aesthetic teaching beliefs in terms of educational backgrounds ($F = 3.44$; $p < .05$) and positions ($F = 8.73$; $p < .001$). In multiple comparisons, Scheffé's method showed that the preschool educators who had Bachelor's degrees were significantly better than those who had high school diplomas. The teachers and educare givers were significantly better than the educare assistants. However, no significant difference was found in terms of years of teaching experience.

Differences in aesthetic teaching practices. Table 9 shows that there is a significant difference in aesthetic teaching practices in terms of years of teaching ($F = 2.87$; $p < .05$). In multiple comparisons, Scheffé's method shows that the preschool educators who had teaching experience above 20 years were significantly better than those who had below 6 years. However, no significant difference was found in terms of educational backgrounds or positions.

In summary, educational backgrounds affected the differences in the preschool educators' attitudes towards the arts in AL, participation in arts activities in AL, and their aesthetic teaching beliefs. Positions affected the differences in the preschool educators' skills of music and drama for performance and appreciation in AL, and their aesthetic teaching beliefs. Years of teaching affected the differences in the preschool educators' participation in arts activities in AL, as well as their aesthetic teaching practices.

Table 8
Analysis of variance in aesthetic teaching beliefs

	Variables	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Scheffé</i>
Educational Background	(1) High School	21	4.15	.67	3.44*	(2)>(1)
	(2) College	207	4.44	.51		
	(3) Graduate School	20	4.52	.39		
Position	(1) Teacher	94	4.52	.45	8.73***	(1)>(3) (2)>(3)
	(2) Educare Giver	133	4.42	.52		
	(3) Educare Assistant	21	4.01	.60		
Years of Teaching	(1) Below 6 years	75	4.33	.57	1.55	
	(2) 6~10 years	59	4.47	.51		
	(3) 11~15 years	38	4.35	.45		
	(4) 16~20 years	47	4.51	.50		
	(5) Above 20 years	29	4.53	.49		

* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 9
Analysis of variance in aesthetic teaching practices

Variables		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Scheffé</i>
Educational Background	(1) High School	21	3.85	.50	.19	
	(2) College	207	3.92	.60		
	(3) Graduate School	20	3.88	.55		
Position	(1) Teacher	94	3.92	.63	.53	
	(2) Educare Giver	133	3.93	.56		
	(3) Educare Assistant	21	3.79	.57		
Years of Teaching	(1) Below 6 years	75	3.76	.63	2.87*	(5)>(1)
	(2) 6~10 years	59	3.96	.53		
	(3) 11~15 years	38	3.89	.53		
	(4) 16~20 years	47	3.98	.53		
	(5) Above 20 years	29	4.15	.65		

* $p < .05$.

Multiple Regression Analysis of Predicting Educators' Aesthetic Teaching Practices

Multiple regression was applied to predict educators' aesthetic teaching practices. The educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts (i.e. attitudes towards the arts in AL, habits of participation in arts activities in AL, knowledge of the arts in AL, skills of visual arts for performance and appreciation in AL, and skills of music and drama for performance and appreciation in AL) and aesthetic teaching beliefs were processed as the predictors, and aesthetic teaching practices was taken as the dependent variable. The results are shown in Table 10.

The multiple regression model statistically and significantly predicted the dependent variable ($F(6,241) = 37.42, p < .001$). The Durbin-Watson value is 1.99. When the Durbin-Watson value is close to about 2, it usually does not violate the assumption of independence.

The results indicate that aesthetic teaching beliefs ($B = .25, T = 4.26, p < .001$), knowledge of the arts in AL ($B = .11, T = 2.35, p < .05$), skills of visual arts for performance and appreciation in AL ($B = .15, T = 2.96, p < .01$) and skills of music and drama for performance and appreciation in AL ($B = .17, T = 3.79, p < .001$) were significant predictors of educators' aesthetic teaching practices. The beta coefficient value of the predictor of the aesthetic teaching beliefs was the largest,

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that is .27.

The results show that aesthetic teaching beliefs played an influential role in preschool educators' aesthetic teaching practices. As for aesthetic literacy, knowledge of the arts in AL, skills of visual arts for performance and appreciation in AL, and skills of music and drama for performance and appreciation in AL also played important roles in their aesthetic teaching practices.

Table 10
The results of multiple regression analysis

Predictors	B	S.E.	Beta	T	VIF	R ²	Adj-R ²
Constant	.43	.22		2.00*		.48	.47
Aesthetic teaching beliefs	.25	.06	.27	4.26***	1.88		
Attitudes in AL	.02	.06	.02	.33	2.14		
Habits in AL	.02	.04	.03	.51	1.36		
Knowledge in AL	.11	.05	.14	2.35*	1.62		
Skills of visual arts in AL	.15	.05	.20	2.96**	2.02		
Skills of music and drama in AL	.17	.04	.24	3.79***	1.88		

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Discussion

This study investigated preschool educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and aesthetic teaching practices in New Taipei City in Taiwan. The results showed that the mean scores of these preschool educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and aesthetic teaching practices were above the average. Moreover, they scored high on their aesthetic teaching beliefs. Wang (1999) also found that Taiwanese primary school teachers had higher scores for aesthetic teaching beliefs than for aesthetic teaching practices and aesthetic cultivation. Similarly, Chen (2014a) revealed that Taiwanese early childhood educators' aesthetic teaching beliefs were better than their aesthetic teaching practices. Because of the promotion of aesthetic education in early childhood curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2012, 2016), most preschool educators seem to have strong beliefs about the value of aesthetic education. Nevertheless, they can endeavor to improve their aesthetic literacy of the arts and aesthetic teaching practices in the aesthetic domain.

As for aesthetic literacy of the arts, this study revealed that the preschool educators scored high on their attitudes towards the arts and participation in arts activities, but lower on knowledge of the arts and skills of music and drama for performance and appreciation. This finding implies that the preschool educators had positive attitudes towards the arts and habits of participation in arts activities; however, they did not have enough knowledge of the arts and skills of music and drama in the areas of performance and appreciation. Chen (2014b) also found that the Taiwanese preschool educators' skills of music and performing arts (dance and drama) were weaker than those of visual arts. It may be because those preschool educators lacked sufficient opportunities to take courses related to music or drama performances in their preservice teacher education programs. To improve their skills, they are encouraged to attend teachers' workshops on the performance and appreciation of music and drama.

As for background variables, this study showed that educational backgrounds affected the differences in the preschool educators' attitudes towards the arts, participation in arts activities in AL, and their aesthetic teaching beliefs. Chen (2014a) also found that educational backgrounds affected the differences in early childhood educators' aesthetic teaching beliefs. The early childhood educators who had higher degrees seemed to have stronger aesthetic teaching beliefs. This study revealed that positions affected the differences in the preschool educators' skills of music and drama for performance and appreciation in AL, and their aesthetic teaching beliefs. The teachers were better than the educate givers and educate assistants. It may be because the teachers took more courses and workshops in the related arts and aesthetic education than the educate givers and educate assistants. This study also revealed that years of teaching affected the differences in the preschool educators' participation in arts activities in AL, as well as their aesthetic teaching practices. The educators who had more years of teaching experience seemed to have better performance of their aesthetic teaching practices than those with fewer years of teaching experience. This is similar to the results in Wang's and Chen's studies (Chen, 2014a; Wang, 1999). Therefore, preschool educators are encouraged to learn about aesthetic teaching practices from experienced educators. Future researchers may conduct research to explore how experienced early childhood educators implement their aesthetic teaching.

This study revealed that preschool educators' aesthetic teaching beliefs were able to predict their aesthetic teaching practices. As for aesthetic literacy of the arts,

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knowledge of the arts, skills of visual arts for performance and appreciation, and skills of music and drama for performance and appreciation were significant predictors of their aesthetic teaching practices. Therefore, aesthetic teaching beliefs and aesthetic literacy of the arts played an influential role in preschool educators' aesthetic teaching practices. Similarly, Huang (2021) found that preschool educators' aesthetic competence was able to predict their aesthetic teaching. Hence, preschool educators are encouraged to value their aesthetic teaching beliefs and aesthetic literacy of the arts as they demonstrate their aesthetic teaching practices.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this study revealed that the preschool educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and aesthetic teaching practices scored above the average. Moreover, they scored high on their aesthetic teaching beliefs. Background variables affected the differences in the preschool educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and aesthetic teaching practices. Educational backgrounds affected the differences in the preschool educators' attitudes towards the arts in AL, participation in arts activities in AL, and their aesthetic teaching beliefs. Positions affected the differences in the preschool educators' skills of music and drama for performance and appreciation in AL, and their aesthetic teaching beliefs. Years of teaching affected the differences in the preschool educators' participation in arts activities in AL, as well as their aesthetic teaching practices. Aesthetic teaching beliefs were able to predict the preschool educators' aesthetic teaching practices. As for aesthetic literacy of the arts, knowledge of the arts, skills of visual arts for performance and appreciation, and skills of music and drama for performance and appreciation were significant predictors of their aesthetic teaching practices.

There are recommendations for the future direction of early childhood aesthetic education and teacher education. First, the results showed that preschool educators had lower average scores regarding their knowledge of the arts and skills of music and drama for performance and appreciation. To improve preschool educators' aesthetic literacy of the arts, it is recommended that local governments provide professional development workshops on aesthetic literacy, such as knowledge of the arts as well as performance skills and appreciation of music and drama for educators.

They can also invite preschool educators to share their experiences of applying their aesthetic learning in the teaching of the aesthetic domain, to reflect on their aesthetic teaching, and to make further improvements in small group workshops during summer and winter vacations. Furthermore, they can provide online workshops and online platforms of aesthetic literacy and aesthetic curricula and instruction for educators. Since most universities in Taiwan put less emphasis on arts education and aesthetic education in the early childhood education and care programs, it is also recommended that those courses related to the arts, music, and drama be offered for preservice teachers and preservice educators.

Secondly, the results showed that preschool educators' aesthetic teaching beliefs and aesthetic literacy of the arts (i.e. knowledge of the arts, skills of visual arts for performance and appreciation, and skills of music and drama for performance and appreciation) were able to predict their aesthetic teaching practices. Therefore, it is important for preschool educators to place value on their aesthetic literacy of the arts and aesthetic teaching beliefs. They are also encouraged to improve their aesthetic literacy of the arts so that they will have better practices in aesthetic teaching.

Thirdly, to improve early childhood educators' aesthetic teaching practices, preschool curriculum leaders can invite preschool educators to integrate aesthetic education into daily routines, the main curricula, and the learning environment in their everyday life in preschools. Preschool educators are also encouraged to learn about aesthetic teaching practices from experienced educators.

Finally, future researchers can conduct a survey to investigate preschool educators in different areas, including the north, middle, south, and east of Taiwan. They can further compare preschool teachers in different areas or those in the cities versus the countryside. Moreover, future researchers can conduct qualitative research, such as interviews, to gain a deeper understanding of preschool educators' aesthetic literacy, aesthetic teaching beliefs, and aesthetic teaching practices in aesthetic education.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire Items

1. Attitudes towards the arts

- AA1 The arts are important to me in my life.
 - AA2 Attending arts activities is important to me.
 - AA3 I think that it is very important to express my ideas through the arts.
 - AA4 I actively attend arts exhibitions and performances.
 - AA5 I think that aesthetics can improve the quality of life.
 - AA6 I actively appreciate the beauty in life.
-

2. Participation in arts activities

- PA1 I usually appreciate visual arts in arts exhibitions (such as art galleries, museums, culture centers, and any other exhibitions).
 - PA2 I usually appreciate music performances in music performing places (such as culture centers, performing arts centers, and concert halls, both on and off campus).
 - PA3 I usually appreciate drama performances in drama performing centers (such as culture centers, performing arts centers, and performance halls, both on and off campus).
-

3. Knowledge of the arts

- KA1 I understand the features of the expression of visual arts, such as fine art, craft, and plastic arts.
 - KA2 I understand the features of visual arts elements, such as lines, colors, shapes, and textures.
 - KA3 I understand the features of the expression of music, such as notations, instrumental performance, singing, and improvisation.
 - KA4 I understand the features of music elements, such as melody, rhythm, tempo, dynamics, and harmony.
 - KA5 I understand the features of the expression of drama, such as voice and body expression, drama performance, and theater production.
 - KA6 I understand the features of drama elements, such as roles, plots, themes, dialogues, costume, and stage design.
 - KA7 I understand the features of artistic styles, such as the periods of arts in history, the arts in a country, and an artist's features.
-

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Questionnaire Items (continued)

4. Skills of visual arts for performance and appreciation

- | | |
|------|--|
| SVA1 | I can use at least one medium of visual arts (such as watercolor and clay) and its techniques. |
| SVA2 | I can apply the skills of visual arts to beautify the living environment. |
| SVA3 | I can talk about the features of artworks with the related terms in the visual arts. |
-

5. Skills of music and drama for performance and appreciation

- | | |
|------|--|
| SMD1 | I can play at least one musical instrument. |
| SMD2 | I can sing with accurate pitch and rhythm. |
| SMD3 | I can describe the features of music pieces with the related music terminology. |
| SMD4 | I can make at least one kind of drama performance. |
| SMD5 | I can improvise with body motion or speaking voice. |
| SMD6 | I can describe the features of drama pieces with the related dramatic terminology. |
-

6. Aesthetic teaching beliefs

- | | |
|------|---|
| ATB1 | I think that beauty is what makes people feel pleasant. |
| ATB2 | I think that aesthetic perception is the ability to perceive good things. |
| ATB3 | I think that aesthetic education is helpful to young children's development and learning. |
| ATB4 | I understand the content of the aesthetic domain in the new <i>Curriculum Framework</i> . |
| ATB5 | I think that aesthetic education can be implemented through children's exploration, creation, and appreciation of the arts (i.e., visual arts, music, and drama). |
| ATB6 | I think that preschool educators should provide young children with an aesthetic environment for exploration and creation. |
| ATB7 | I think that preschool educators should guide young children to explore the beauty in the living environment. |
| ATB8 | I think that preschool educators should provide different kinds of arts media for young children to create artworks. |
-

Questionnaire Items (continued)

6. Aesthetic teaching beliefs (cont.)

- | | |
|-------|---|
| ATB9 | I think that preschool educators should provide enough time for young children to have aesthetic experiences. |
| ATB10 | I think that preschool educators should focus on the process of young children's creation more than the results. |
| ATB11 | I think that preschool educators should incorporate the arts and culture resources in the community to enrich young children's art experiences. |
| ATB12 | I think that preschool educators should encourage young children to share their preferences and feelings for artworks. |
| ATB13 | I think that preschool educators should guide young children to appreciate the arts (including visual arts, music, and drama). |
-

7. Aesthetic teaching practices

- | | |
|-------|---|
| ADT1 | I provide an aesthetic environment for young children to explore and create. |
| ADT2 | I guide young children to explore the beauty in the living environment. |
| ADT3 | I provide enough time for young children to have aesthetic experiences. |
| ADT4 | I guide young children to create visual artworks. |
| ADT5 | I guide young children to perform and create music. |
| ADT6 | I guide young children to perform and create drama. |
| ADT7 | I incorporate the arts and culture resources in the community to enrich young children's art experiences. |
| ADT8 | I guide young children to appreciate artworks in the visual arts. |
| ADT9 | I guide young children to appreciate artworks with the terms of the visual arts. |
| ADT10 | I guide young children to appreciate music pieces. |
| ADT11 | I guide young children to appreciate music pieces with music terminology. |
| ADT12 | I guide young children to appreciate dramatic work. |
| ADT13 | I guide young children to appreciate dramatic work with dramatic terminology. |
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新北市幼兒教保服務人員藝術美感素養、美感教學信念與美感教學實務之調查研究

陳玉婷* 王佳文**

隨著美感教育在國內的蓬勃發展，幼兒園美感教育也受到相當的重視。本研究採調查研究法，探討幼兒教保服務人員的藝術美感素養、美感教學信念與美感教學實務。研究對象為新北市 248 位公私立幼兒園的幼兒教保服務人員。研究結果發現：(一) 幼兒教保服務人員在藝術美感素養、美感教學信念與美感教學實務呈現中上程度，且美感教學信念最佳。(二) 不同背景變項對藝術美感素養、美感教學信念與美感教學實務有顯著差異。(三) 美感教學信念對美感教學實務具有預測力；美感素養層面中，藝術知識及視覺藝術、音樂、戲劇的表現與欣賞技能對美感教學實務也具有預測力。本研究檢視了幼兒教保服務人員在美感教學的相關情形，可作為推展幼兒美感教育與師資培育之參考依據。

關鍵字：幼兒教保服務人員、美感教學信念、美感教學實務、藝術美感素養

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