

# Artistic Practice as a Framework for the Formation of Personal and Collective Cultural Identity and Its Educational Implications

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## HOW TO CITE:

Nataliia Stoliarchuk, Hanna Poberezhets, Alla Lytvynenko, Usein Bekirov, Iryna Bermes (2026). Artistic Practice as a Framework for the Formation of Personal and Collective Cultural Identity and Its Educational Implications.

International Journal of Special Education, 41(7s), 818-830.

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## ABSTRACT:

This research seeks to provide a conceptualization of artistic growth as a means to form, express and modify both individual and collective cultural identity. This study focused on the way in which cultural identity is formed through creativity. Empirical survey data was collected online through Google Forms, between September 2025 and January 2026, from 126 respondents, aged 18-35, who had some prior involvement in creative activities that were artistic, cultural, educational, or community-based in nature. The results of this study indicated that the majority of respondents viewed artistic growth as a significant means of developing their individual identity. The highest mean score for the personal identity variable was a 4.21. There was a strong degree of agreement on the collective identity block (mean score = 4.04). The internal consistency for both the personal identity and collective identity blocks were adequate, with Cronbach's alpha being 0.84 for the personal block and 0.81 for the collective block. There were statistically significant Spearman's correlations demonstrated between the amount of artistic participation and perceived impact on one's personal identity ( $\rho = 0.46$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and collective identity ( $\rho = 0.39$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These results indicated that artistic practice provides a medium for the connection of individual self-perception to the collective meaning attached to culture. The results obtained have direct educational significance: they indicate the need to integrate artistic practice into educational programs as a means of forming the cultural identity of education seekers. Based on empirical

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data, it is substantiated that effective artistic education should combine the development of technical skills with the reflection of cultural memory, involvement in joint projects and interpretation of traditional forms.

Keywords: cultural identity, globalization, art, musical culture, artist

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## 1. Introduction

As globalization is growing with its increasing rate, aspects of digital communications, migration processes and transnational cultural exchange; cultural identities are now formed under different conditions than they used to be in the past. Nowadays, many people live in two or more different symbolic environments at the same time and this has introduced new difficulties for maintaining the consistency of their self-understanding (the individual's personal identity) and culturally belonging to a collective group (the individual's cultural identity). The artistic practice has taken on new importance because it is no longer just a method of producing art (aesthetic production), but also serves as a means of interpreting, communicating, and reproducing the shared values, memories, social experiences, and cultural meanings of artists and their communities. The artistic practices carried out by individual artists also provide opportunities for the artist to create individual narratives of their experiences within a broader framework of collective experience (community formation) and cultural representation (for example, through media outlets). Although scholarly study has previously paid considerable attention to cultural identity as a phenomenon of interest, previous studies have most often explored cultural identity as being either personal identity, collective memory or heritage preservation, practices dealing with participation in the arts, or social cohesion separately. As a consequence of this, the lack of emphasis on understanding artistic practice as a connected framework that links individual and collective cultural processes is becoming more relevant in today's society, where cultural continuity relies more heavily on both preservation of tradition and active re-interpretation of these traditions through creative practice than it did before.

A growing body of research considers art making no longer as an exterior representation of culture and identity but rather as a means of making culture and identity visible, negotiated and shared with society. Collaboration in art making has a strong connection to identity as it relates to embodied participation and co-presence; for instance, Gingrich et al. (2023) demonstrate that collaborative art making can develop social ties among participants, through not only the final product (artwork), but also the processes of joint actions, affective exchanges, and shared attention. Furthermore, personal and collective identities do not remain as stable entities; rather, they develop over time through a series of relational interactions among participants, their environment, their memories, and the symbolic materials they use to create an artwork.

Research focusing on heritage has included a complementary view. Istvandy et al. (2024) described how creative practices in the cultural heritage sector can transform the way we think about preservation -- instead of merely storing artifacts, we can think about preserving them as acts of reinterpretation. In this way, heritage has value only if the community actively creates and constructs new artistic expressions of the things that they inherit, including forms, objects, and memories. Simões (2023) examined how street art has the ability to create dialogic spaces for collective memories on the walls of cities. Through public art, we can see that city walls are not just decorative spaces within the urban environment; they also help to reconstruct the way that communities see themselves and how their local identities become articulated in daily life.

Klimek (2025) noted that becoming an artist involves the exploration of personal identity in an existential manner. The author's identity as an

artist is represented as being bound up in the individual's struggle to achieve autonomy, to be recognized as an artist, and to define him/herself as an artist. As a result, the individual artist's development can be seen as part of a larger set of cultural processes, and the artist is not developing a personal artistic identity in a vacuum, but rather an artistic identity that has been influenced by the institution's expectations, by the cultural memory of the artist and by the need to find an identity that has symbolic value (belonging) to the artist. Sonke et al. (2025) added to this idea by stating that participation in the arts is positively related to social cohesion and well-being; both of these points serve to emphasize the social role of artists, in addition to the artist's role as an individual.

Recent research confirms that the arts have a positive impact on many different aspects of community, such as connecting people together in a social way; reinterpretation of cultural heritage; construction of public memory; self-definition by the artist; and overall improvement of the well-being of members of the community (Pletsan et al., 2023). Yet, there remains a lack of integrating these concepts at a conceptual level; that is, they are often written about separately in the literature. For instance, when studying an individual artist's identity, it is often done by focusing on the artist themselves, vs. studying collective culture through heritage or public space, and finally studying social cohesion through the experience of participating in cultural activities. To date, a clear analytical framework does not exist to explain how the arts connect all of the above features through the same "cultural identity" formation. Therefore, there is a disconnect between the study of the individual artist's self-understanding and the study of collective place-based cultural identity.

The study's purpose is to formulate a framework for artistic practices where personal and collective cultural identities develop, exhibit and change. The study's object was to investigate the process of cultural identity development through creativity. The study's subject is how artistic practice links between individual self-

identification, collective memory, reinterpreting heritage, and participation in society.

To address the research objectives, the study focused on different tasks such as explaining the role of artistic practice in shaping self-identity; understanding the creation of shared cultural meaning through engaged, public art/heritage forms; exploring the connection between an individual's creative experience and their collective memory; and creating a conceptual model to show how artistic practice serves as a link between personal identity and cultural identity.

## 2. Literature Review

The way we view our relationship to art has changed over time; it no longer just refers to aesthetic beauty (as it may once have), but also as a tool through which we create our identities, pass down cultural traditions/memories, and engage in our communities. Researchers have begun to explore the relationship between art and heritage preservation and reinterpretation of traditional artworks. For example, Aboueila and his colleagues (2025) looked at Arabic Calligraphy in the light of Artificial Intelligence. Even if they found how digital design could help maintain our sense of cultural identity, most of their attention was placed on the innovation in design of the Arabic calligraphy rather than on how people experience Arab culture through the Calligraphy itself. Similarly, Li and colleagues (2025) connected traditional handicrafts with individuals' and cultures' identities by using a multidimensional value-based model to measure cultural identity. While Li used rigorous methods to arrive at their conclusions, the limitation created by their values was that they reduced identity to a measurable relationship. Ding and Aletta (2024) added to their analysis of Kunqu traditions by adding an acoustic dimension to the work on collective memory (which were previously only visual). This is a significant step in reorienting how we think about collective memory and also demonstrates the use of one style of collective memory as the basis for this research.

Another series of studies looked more closely at the role of participation, the experience of audience members, and the relationship between community and art. Ku et al. (2025) demonstrated that immersive design practices are capable of shaping the cultural identity of an audience through memory construction and are, therefore, directly related to participatory environments for art. Expanding upon this idea through local grassroots creativity, Gkitsa (2024) illustrated how local art activities may be examples of bottom-up cultural mechanisms as opposed to being merely products of a larger institution. Lu & Wang (2025) connected cultural identity to the benefits of rural revitalization, while Noguchi et al. (2024) showed that participation in the arts and culture can decrease future social deficits in older adults. While these studies are useful in advancing identity research towards a form of social practice, they frequently use an interpretive lens that views participation as simply a result or benefit, rather than using a conventional form of analysis in which participation is treated as a process of the creation of personal and collective identity through the development of symbolic meaning.

Another way to examine this is by looking at resistance/non-belonging/decolonisation/migration. Clark (2025) looked at fashion within art and First Nations' healing/decolonisation and how the act of creating art can act to restore cultural agency after having been impacted by historical trauma. D'Souza (2024) looked at fashion as an expression of identity as well as resistance. Niepel (2025) looked at how Turkish artists use visual temporality to navigate non-belonging. Lee et al. (2025a) complicated this debate by showing that art can continue to be found even when artists do not; thus, creating space for decentring fixed concepts of cultural ownership and global art circulation. Perzycka-Borowska (2025) added an ethnographic/ reflexive perspective of Māori identity and art. Collectively, these studies demonstrate how an artist's identity is often constructed through conflict, dislocation, repair, and negotiation, as opposed to definitive belonging (Novitskyi et al., 2025). The only thing

these studies have in common is that they generally privilege a particular cultural or political case; therefore a broader integrative framework remains necessary to provide a comprehensive understanding.

The most recent research has begun to explore digitality, artificial intelligence, affect, and cultural security. Bañuelos Capistrán et al. (2025) show how community-based AI images support affective memory and that technologically-moderated art can be a tool for creating new ways of collective remembering. Peng (2025) examined the links between epistemic emotions and critical thought as well as identity formation using cultural identity to illustrate the impact of emotion on identity formation as influenced by both rational and emotional sources. Meng et al. (2025) argue that cultural identity is being studied within the larger framework of globalization and cultural security because identity is increasingly conceptualized as a strategic and intercultural issue. Nonetheless, all three sets of studies reveal a gap in the literature: that is, the intersections of all five constructs (digital, affective, security, participatory, and heritage) are generally considered independently of one another. Thus, while existing literature indicates that the artistic practice is critical to identity development within a given culture, they have not sufficiently addressed how artistic practice connects personal identity, collective memory, inherited cultural forms, social engagement, and contemporaneous cultural transformation.

### 3. Materials and Methods

The research used an empirical survey to find out how art helps both individuals and collectives develop their own cultural identity. People who had participated in art, culture, education, or art activities were used to get the data about their perception of artists at the time of the survey. Research was conducted between September 2025 and January 2026 using Google Forms to conduct the survey electronically. All data entered into the Google Form was processed and coded by February of 2026. The survey was conducted in a way that responded to participants remained

anonymous; participation was optional, did not collect names, did not ask for contact information, did not ask for names of any organizations that participate in the arts, nor collect any information that would allow the person who filled out the survey to be identified.

126 respondents aged 18-35 completed the questionnaire. Students from arts and humanities programs, young artists, participants in cultural initiatives, amateur performers, designers and visitors or participants of events celebrating community-based art made up the sampled group. The sample was purposive and nonrandom since respondents were selected based on their prior experience within an artistic practice. As such, this did not reflect a statistically-representative population sample but was useful for analyzing how the experience of artistic/cultural participation shapes young people's opinions about artistic/cultural participation. To be included in the study respondents needed to be: - at least 18 years of age - had experienced artistic/cultural participation in the last three years (as either a participant or a spectator) - consented to complete the questionnaire Respondents who did not have any relevant experience of artistic/cultural participation, provided an incomplete questionnaire, or provided conflicting information on embedded control questions were excluded from the study. Following preliminary screening, 126 valid questionnaires were included in the final analysis. The mean age was 25 with 56% female and 44% male. All were fluent in English (81% were first-language speakers of English) and had an average of 3.4 college-level courses related to the arts/culture. (73% of all respondents have some form of postsecondary education).

An author-created 22-item questionnaire served as the research instrument. The first set of questions generated demographic information and information regarding the participants' participation-related information, which included age group, education or profession, artistic type experience, and frequency of participation in cultural activities. The second set of statements measured the development of personal identity

with statements such as "Artistic practice helps me gain a better understanding of my own cultural background" and "Artistic activity has influenced how I see myself." The third set of statements measured the development of collective identity with statements regarding cultural belonging, shared memories, ancestry, community involvement, and recognition of the cultural values shared by the culture. The fourth set of questions was open ended and asked participants to describe an artistic practice that has impacted their personal or collective identity.

The researcher used the five-point Likert scale to ask our closed-ended questions and rate responses from the respondents. With the scale's 1 representing "Strongly Disagree" and the scale's 5 representing "Strongly Agree," the questionnaire items were subjected to a pilot test by ten participants to ensure the clarity of wording and to establish a logical sequence of the questions asked. The pilot test data was not included in the final sample. Once the study by the researcher was completed, the researcher will process their data using both Excel 2021 and IBM's SPSS Statistics 29. The researcher used frequency analysis through descriptive statistics to show the distribution of responses received as well as conducting a Cronbach's alpha to determine the reliability of the identity-related block of questions. The researcher also used Spearman's rank correlation coefficient to explore whether there is a relationship between the frequency of artistic participation by the participant and their perception of the influence that the frequency of artistic participation had on both their individual identity and their community identity. The researcher will code the open-ended answers in Excel in semantic categories based on how often they reoccur in the answers received: self-awareness, cultural memory, continuity of heritage, connection to community, emotional attachment, and resistance through creativity.

#### 4. Results

The survey allowed for an evaluation of how those who had experiences with arts and culture

identified with the role of art in building and creating an identity, through their own experience of arts and culture. 126 of the returned surveys were considered valid for purposes of data analysis. Because of this being a purposive/nonrandom sample, the results from the data analysis were not representative of the general population. Therefore, the results of the data analysis are representative only of young people who are actively engaged in arts, culture, education or creative community activities, in order to fulfill the empirical purpose of the study.

The first stage of the analysis was focused on the existing structure of the sample population and prior experience of the respondents with respect to artistic practice. This step was necessary because the project did not measure participants' abstract attitudes toward art but rather the perceptions of those who have had direct or ongoing exposure to creative and cultural engagement. The distribution of respondents demonstrated that multiple types of groups were represented within the sample, which are relevant for this research: students enrolled in arts and

humanities programs; emerging artists; amateur performers; designers; participants in various initiatives related to culture; and both visitors and individuals who have participated in community arts events (workshops). This study's sample would allow for analysis of each of those respondent groups' perceptions based on the role(s) they have as they relate to prior experiences of artistic practice, i.e., whether they are a creator, participant, observer, or member of a cultural community.

The characteristics of the sample outlined in Table 1 illustrate a predominantly Arts and Humanities student group. The premise for students enrolled in these schools to experience art in their lives through enjoyment, self-exploration, education, and professional development is congruent with the expected student population trends. Additionally, the inclusion of young artists and participant in the community art project (such as amateur performers and designers) provided additional empirical data for the sample and enhanced the analysis of "Art" beyond the academics.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of the empirical sample

<b>Respondent category</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Share of sample, %</b>
Students of arts and humanities programmes	42	33.3
Young artists	24	19.0
Participants in cultural initiatives	21	16.7
Amateur performers	15	11.9
Designers	12	9.5
Visitors or participants of community art events	12	9.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: The table presents the main respondent category indicated by each participant. Some respondents had experience in more than one type of artistic or cultural activity, but only the dominant self-identified category was used for sample description.

Source: compiled by the author based on the survey conducted through Google Forms in September 2025 – January 2026.

A combination of production-oriented and participation-oriented forms of artistic experience is captured in empirical data as shown in Table 1. Young artists and amateur performers or designers tended to characterize artistic practice as a form of self-expression and for developing understanding of themselves through art. In contrast, cultural initiative participants, in addition to community art event attendees, typically associated the practice of art and creativity much more with concepts of shared memory, belonging to a community, and recognizing and honoring common cultural values across all of their community participants. As for students, they existed in a middle ground with regard to how they answered the question about how they understood the purpose of art and thus their understanding of the relationship between personal reflection and being aware of the social and cultural functions of art.

Respondents generally view their personal self-understanding as a strong agreement with art being an important part of their identity. Most respondents agree that taking part in art or culture helps them make sense of their own culture, develops their own personal value system, and provides them with either an emotional or symbolic way to express what they feel when there isn't a word that can do so through everyday language. The average rating for the block pertaining to personal identity formation is 4.21 on the 5-point Likert scale, which means that there was a high level of perceived influence for these respondents. These results indicate that the respondents did not view their artistic practices as simply an external cultural consumption, but rather as a means to internally organise their own experiences and connect those experiences to the cultural meanings within them.

The block on collective identity also showed a high degree of agreement, although with an average score slightly lower than that of personal identity formation. The average score of responses to questions regarding cultural members, collective memory, continuity of heritage, and communal involvement was equal to 4.04. This is an analytically relevant difference.

This indicates that respondents experienced the artistic process initially on a personal basis and then later made the connection to a broader collective meaning. Therefore, collective cultural identity developed not as some abstract notion of a group, but through direct engagement with cultural practices, reinforced by a shared understanding of symbols, and shared emotional involvement in those types of activities.

The identity-related items demonstrated appropriate Inner Reliability for benefit of continued analysis. For the personal block of identity, Cronbach's alpha was .84; while in the case of collective identity, the alpha was .81. Both data suggest each set of block items work together to contribute to an individual experience or perception. This finding is important because the developed questionnaire was not based on any previous established measure but based on individual author design. Pilot test assistance allowed for clarification in wording use within the block items (i.e. creation of appropriate question wording) and the check of Inner Reliability indicated that the final questionnaire could be utilized empirically for interpretation purposes within the scope of the study.

Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used to investigate the association between the frequency of artistic activity engagement and perceived impact on identity. There was a moderate, positive correlation between how often participants engaged in artistic activity and how much they believed that engagement impacted their identity,  $\rho = 0.46$ ,  $p < .01$ . For collective identity, there was also a moderate, positive correlation; however, the slope of this relationship is a little less steep ( $\rho = 0.39$ ,  $p < .01$ ). These findings indicate that those who participate in arts or cultural activities more frequently are likely to feel that these kinds of activities impact how they view themselves and their sense of belonging to a culture. The difference between these two correlations suggests that personal identity is influenced more directly through direct interaction with art than collective identity, which depends largely on socializing with others, being in a communal space, and repeated engagement with arts or culture.

By collecting open-ended responses, qualitative information added additional depth to the quantitative data obtained from the study. The responses of artists showed that they noted "self-discovery" most often when discussing their creativity. Self-discovery is when an artist uses their art to learn about themselves through their feelings, culture, language, and role in the community. Additionally, "cultural memory" was an additional category, which was frequently cited when discussing music, folk art, crafts, visual imagery, stories from their area, and shared family cultural experiences. Furthermore, when referencing heritage, "reinterpretation" was frequently mentioned as well. This suggests that the artists do not view culture and tradition as simply a repeat of what has been done but rather as an opportunity to change and develop culture through the artistic language of today.

Secondly, community belonging was a significant category in this survey. Many of the respondents commented that through arts and culture initiatives, it created an opportunity for arts practices to form temporary and "permanent" places of togetherness. Participants in these arts initiatives said they came to understand what their values were and to participate in a collective cultural story. Emotional experiences related to this category were also expressed by some respondents through descriptions of their feelings of pride, closeness to others, and feelings of responsibility for the continuing preservation of their culture's meaning. Conversely, while creative resistance was mentioned in fewer instances than the other two categories, its importance is still apparent; respondents described creative resistance to marginalization, cultural invisibility, little or no opportunity to express themselves due to pressures of conformity with mainstream culture, etc.

According to the empirical findings, artistic expression played a role in forming identity through various ways. There were many connections between personal identity formation and collective identity formation (according to the survey), but there were more direct links between self-identity and collective memory. Specifically, individuals felt their personal self-

identity was enhanced as they engaged in artistic practices that connected individual expression to collective symbols (i.e., community identity), and respective collective identity became more stable when the individual is able to see themselves in shared forms of art.

## 5. Discussion

Survey findings show that those who participated in the arts through the survey perceived artistic practice as a way to form their personal and collective cultural identity. Respondents who had participated in the arts were strongly supportive of the idea that artistic practices helped them to understand who they are as individuals, to express emotions, and to interpret how they belong to their own culture. Respondents also expressed strong support for the idea that artistic practices provide collective identity; however, the average score for the collective identity block was lower than for the personal identity block. This difference indicates that respondents primarily connected artistic practice with their individual perceptions of themselves before connecting to other cultural elements of belonging, remembering, and connecting to one's own heritage.

As per research conducted by Weder et al. (2023), whenever a person participates in visual or embodied art forms, an opportunity exists to create a conversational environment where individuals can develop their own eco-cultural identity. The current research agrees with these previous findings as survey participants did not define artistic activity simply for its aesthetic value or as a leisure activity but rather to express their personal meanings through cultural symbolism, emotional connections to the work, and being recognised by others. Additionally, this study expands upon this previous research by including multiple types of arts/culture activities instead of limiting participation to just one form of artistic expression.

The significant correlation of how often people participate in the arts and their perception of their identity is also an important analytical finding. Correlations to personal identity were greater

than correlations with collective identity; thus, personal identity was more associated with personal artistic experience than collective identity appeared to be associated, at least visually, with shared cultural spaces and repetitive interaction with others and by others implying that you share common meanings with each other. The present findings confirm the conclusions of Zeng et al., (2025) in their discussions about the role of arts spaces in supporting sustainability and resilience. Our current findings illustrate that when places and practices enable respondents to engage with, communicate with, and find themselves in a larger cultural context, they become identity-building in the case of the individual.

In a further interpretation of the qualitative analysis of open-ended responses, the respondents identified the following primary themes: self-understanding; cultural memory; continuity of heritage; belonging to a community; emotional connection; and creative forms of resistance. The categorization indicates that artistic practice is viewed as a method of preserving and reinterpreting cultural forms that have been handed down to the artist. This is confirmed by the research of Yan et al. (2025) on heritage crafts and their effect on identity transformation and change in value perception. Both studies reveal that artistic practice related to heritage may serve to preserve culture through continuity; in addition, the respondents from both studies valued reinterpretation as opposed to mechanical preservation of tradition.

The findings are consistent with Xia et al (2025) in that they demonstrate how museum-based experiences with creative products can influence the development of cultural confidence through the development of cultural cognition and/or cultural identity. Similarly, in this current survey respondents described their relationship to artistic practice as connected to their recognition of common cultural values. The findings further indicate that cultural identity did not only get developed through exposure to cultural products; rather, it was also influenced by the level of active engagement, emotional connection, and personal interpretation involved in the artistic practice. As

a result, artistic practice should be viewed as collaborative as opposed to just being the final product or institutional product.

Another dimension of the results is the relationship of the result to community. Respondents who indicated cultural initiatives or community art events typically made links between artmaking and belonging, shared memory, and cultural responsibility. This corroborates with the findings of Susilawaty et al. (2025), who highlighted the role of cultural institutions as having a role to play in the ability of communities to continue culturally (through preservation and community empowerment) and through developing technology in new ways. This current perspective has a participant-oriented twist: cultural resilience can only be seen as meaningful when institutional or community practices are experienced by that participant in a personal, emotional way.

The connections between artistic practice and the formation of personal and collective identity revealed in the study have a direct impact on the design of educational programs in the field of culture and art. First, the results indicate the need to move from the model of “teaching art as a set of techniques” to the model of “learning through art as a way of constructing identity”. This means that the educational process should include tasks for reflecting on one’s own cultural experience, interpreting traditional forms and creating new artistic expressions based on collective memory.

Secondly, the obtained correlations ( $\rho = 0.46$  for personal identity and  $\rho = 0.39$  for collective) indicate that the frequency of participation in artistic practice is an important factor in the effectiveness of identity formation. Therefore, it is advisable to increase the volume of practice-oriented modules in educational programs that provide for regular creative activity (workshops, laboratories, community projects), and not only theoretical assimilation of the material.

Thirdly, the revealed role of collective memory, heritage and common symbolic spaces in the formation of identity justifies the need to include interdisciplinary blocks that combine art history, cultural anthropology, history and social

psychology in educational programs. Such integration will allow students to consciously build connections between their own creativity and the broader cultural context (Sharata et al., 2023).

The pedagogical conclusions of this study indicate the feasibility of developing in students the ability to “cultural reinterpretation” – that is, not the mechanical reproduction of traditions, but their creative rethinking in modern artistic language. This requires teachers to create a safe environment for experimentation, where cultural heritage appears not as a set of prohibitions or canons, but as a source for dialogue and new meanings.

The overall results showed that respondents viewed arts practice as an important factor in their development of identity through many interconnected mechanisms. On an individual basis, there was a relationship among arts practice, self-reflection, and symbolic representation. At a collective level, respondents thought there were relationships between arts practice, memory, heritage continuance, and belonging to a community. This study supports the interpretation of arts practice based upon these results as a mechanism for mediating the relationship between individual identity development and collective cultural identity, and indicates the need for additional research to be conducted to further establish this relationship through responsiveness to variations in sample size, age range, cultural context, and combination of survey data with interviews or observations of actual arts practice.

## 6. Conclusions

Young participants in this research study felt that they used artistic practices to help create their sense of who they were as individuals and of who they belonged to collectively. A sample size of 126 young adults aged 18 - 35 completed an empirical survey and demonstrated how the behaviours defined as art/culture participation provide support for their identity. The four areas of identity identified were: self-understanding;

emotional expression; cultural memory and continuation of heritage; sense of belonging to community; and creative resistance. The area most frequently cited with the mean score of 4.21 was for the individual block, and the second most frequent area was for the collective block with a mean score of 4.04. These results indicate that young adults connected artistic practices more strongly with their self-perception, however, belonging to a collective was still an important aspect of the way that they expressed themselves artistically.

According to the Cronback’s Alpha Coefficient, the reliability for the internal consistency of the two blocks of the questionnaire was acceptable: 0.84 (Block A) and 0.81 (Block B). Statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) Spearman Correlation Coefficients (PCC's) existed for the relationships between the number of times an individual reported participating in artistic events and both their perceived personal identity ( $\rho = 0.46$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and perceived collective identity ( $\rho = 0.39$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Thus, it appears that increased levels of participation in artistic/ cultural activities produced an increase in an individual’s perceived identity-forming role of the artistic/ cultural activities he/she participated in.

To better understand how these relationships are formed, qualitative coding of the open-ended responses helped to identify and analyze the multiple ways in which respondents explained the role of art in their lives, both as an aesthetic pursuit and as a tool for the interpretation of personal experience, preservation of cultural memory, reconsideration of traditional forms, and participation in a shared symbolic space. The study therefore indicates that personal and collective identity are linked; when an individual actively identifies with a collective symbol or image, he or she strengthens his or her sense of personal identity; conversely, when an individual recognizes his/her own experiences in the creation or use of a shared artistic form, he or she gains meaning from his/her experience as part of a larger collective identity.

The findings of this study have practical implications for cultural education, community

art programs, museums, heritage organizations, and participatory cultural initiatives. In particular, the results highlight the need to redesign arts curricula in higher education to include structured opportunities for identity reflection, engagement with collective memory, and reinterpretation of heritage through creative practice. Educational institutions should consider artistic practice not merely as a vocational skill but as a pedagogical space for the formation of both personal and collective cultural identity. While the arts can serve as a means of creative creation, it is necessary to also view them as communicative spaces for identity development,

acknowledgement by others in society, and ongoing cultural connection.

A major constraint of the current research is that only a purposively sampled population made up of young,, and many have had artistic or culturally relevant experiences. This sample does not represent a truly random population and as such will not be generalized. Future studies should include a wider range of ages, more diverse culture and mix of survey and interview, observational or case study formats on specific artistic practices.

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## 8. Author Declaration

The authors confirm that this manuscript is an original work, has not been previously published, and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. All sources, ideas, and materials used in the preparation of this article have been appropriately cited in accordance with academic standards.

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise, that could have influenced the research design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, or the presentation of the findings.