



Expressive Art Workshops and Early Psychosocial Detection: A Mixed-Methods Study

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Abstract

Background and Aims: Early psychosocial challenges in basic education can adversely impact learners' engagement and well-being, especially when their language expression abilities are constrained. Expressive art activities provide developmentally appropriate, non-verbal environments that may facilitate the observation of psychosocial indicators within educational contexts. Conducted in the Philippine basic education setting, this study is framed within an education management perspective, examining how expressive art workshops support facilitator observation, early psychosocial awareness, and preventive support processes within structured school systems rather than functioning as therapeutic interventions. This study sought to evaluate the effectiveness of an expressive art workshop as a supplementary, screening-supportive instrument for early psychosocial identification in primary school.

Methods: An applied mixed-methods design utilised facilitator feedback from 29 facilitators across basic education contexts. Quantitative data were gathered via standardised Likert-scale items and analysed using descriptive statistics, composite indices, one-sample t-tests, and exploratory Pearson correlation analysis. Primary composite results indicated a Workshop Implementation Index (WII) mean of 4.42 and a Detection Capacity Index (DCI) mean of 3.73. The methodology emphasised facilitators' roles as structured observers within the educational process, supporting early awareness and informed follow-up rather than clinical detection. Reflexive thematic analysis was employed to analyze qualitative responses, identifying observable engagement patterns and contextual influences.

Results: The findings showed that implementation quality and perceived detection capacity were both significantly above neutral levels (WII = 4.42, $t = 14.86$, $p < .001$; DCI = 3.73, $t = 6.03$, $p < .001$). Qualitative analysis revealed themes of expressive art as a safe medium for non-verbal communication, the emergence of psychosocial markers through engagement patterns, and the influence of environmental conditions on observation quality. These results suggest the workshop's preventive and screening-supportive value, supporting early awareness and informed follow-up within existing school support systems rather than diagnostic identification.

Conclusion: Expressive art workshops can serve as ethical, non-intrusive, and supportive practices that enhance existing psychosocial support frameworks in basic education. The study's unique contribution lies in repositioning expressive art activities as structured observation tools for facilitators within routine school settings. From an education management perspective, the approach strengthens early monitoring processes, supports facilitator observation roles, and contributes to preventive, system-level support practices aligned with safety-oriented educational frameworks.

Keywords: Expressive art workshops; Early psychosocial awareness; Facilitator observation; Screening-supportive education; Mixed-methods research; Education management

Introduction

In the Philippine educational landscape, schools are increasingly acknowledged as crucial locations for fostering learners' psychosocial welfare alongside academic development. In basic education, particularly within diverse and often challenging community settings, early psychosocial difficulties such as emotional dysregulation, withdrawal, or persistent behavioral challenges can significantly hinder students' engagement, learning outcomes, and social relationships if not identified promptly (Haire et al., 2023). The urgency of early identification has become more pronounced following the COVID-19 pandemic, which intensified psychosocial stressors among Filipino youth and exposed gaps in school-based support systems.





Educators and school-based facilitators are often among the first to notice changes in learner behavior. However, early identification remains difficult, especially when learners have limited ability or willingness to express emotional experiences verbally (Schnyder et al., 2021). Many children, particularly in linguistically diverse contexts, may lack the proficiency to describe their internal states in the medium of instruction, making direct verbal assessment problematic (Schnyder et al., 2021). Internalizing difficulties are also less visible than externalizing behaviors, which further complicates early recognition (Taresh et al., 2021). Teachers, already facing heavy workloads, may feel insufficiently prepared for psychosocial observation, limiting their capacity for early identification (Maten & Rommes, 2024).

From an education management perspective, this situation reflects a system-level challenge: schools often lack practical, low-risk tools that support structured observation and early awareness within existing support frameworks. Early psychosocial awareness is therefore not only a pedagogical concern but also a management function related to monitoring, facilitator decision-making, and preventive support processes.

Expressive arts-based approaches have gained attention as developmentally appropriate practices that promote emotional expression, engagement, and inclusion (Ringsmose, 2019). These activities allow learners to communicate symbolically and non-verbally, reducing reliance on language proficiency and lowering barriers to participation (Birrell et al., 2024; Schnyder et al., 2021). This is particularly relevant in culturally and linguistically diverse school contexts, where verbal self-report may not adequately reflect learners' internal experiences (Daikoku et al., 2025). Beyond their expressive value, arts-based activities also provide contexts for facilitator observation of engagement patterns, emotional regulation, and behavioral responses (Matias et al., 2020).

It is important to distinguish between clinical art therapy and the screening-supportive expressive art workshops examined in this study. Unlike therapeutic interventions conducted by clinicians, the workshop is designed as a non-clinical, facilitator-led educational activity intended to support observation, early awareness, and referral within existing school systems. This distinction clarifies ethical boundaries and aligns the study with professional educational roles.

Despite this potential, empirical research on expressive art workshops as screening-supportive practices within Philippine basic education remains limited. Existing literature often focuses on therapeutic outcomes rather than non-clinical, facilitator-led observation in everyday school settings. This reveals a gap in research on ethical, non-diagnostic observation tools that can be integrated into routine education systems.

Facilitator feedback is used as the primary data source because facilitators function as frontline observers, and direct psychological assessment of children in school settings often involves ethical and logistical constraints. Accordingly, this study addresses a management-level research gap by examining how an expressive art workshop can function as a structured, screening-supportive observation context within routine educational practice. The workshop is framed not as a diagnostic or therapeutic intervention, but as a non-clinical practice intended to enhance early awareness and referral within existing school support structures.

Objectives

The major purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of an expressive art workshop as a supplementary, screening-supportive tool for early psychosocial awareness in basic education using an applied mixed-methods approach. The objectives are framed from an education management perspective, focusing on facilitator observation and system-level early awareness rather than clinical detection.

Specifically, the study aimed to:

1. Evaluate the quality of workshop implementation, with attention to learner engagement, emotional safety, age appropriateness, non-verbal expression, and facilitator confidence.
2. Assess facilitators' perceived capacity to observe early psychosocial indicators during the workshop, including withdrawal, emotional responses, and emerging support needs. This objective emphasises facilitator roles as structured observers within educational support systems.





3. Determine whether implementation quality and perceived psychosocial observation capacity exceeded neutral levels using descriptive statistics and one-sample t-tests appropriate for applied educational research. This supports evaluation of the workshop as a preventive, system-level monitoring tool.
4. Examine the relationship between implementation quality and psychosocial observation capacity through an exploratory Pearson correlation analysis.
5. Identify qualitative themes from facilitator reflections describing how expressive art activities support psychosocial observation and how contextual factors influence effectiveness.
6. Generate practice-oriented insights to inform the ethical, non-intrusive integration of expressive art workshops as screening-supportive practices within routine basic education systems. This objective highlights the study's contribution to structured observation and preventive support processes in education management.

Literature review

Psychosocial Wellbeing and Early Identification in Basic Education

Psychosocial well-being is widely regarded as a foundational component of effective learning and holistic development in basic education. Emotional distress, behavioral issues, and social retreat during childhood and early adolescence have been connected with reduced classroom involvement, academic underachievement, and difficulty in peer interactions (Haire et al., 2023). When such issues are not identified early, they may grow over time and impede learners' educational participation. Schools have a unique position in early identification efforts, as educators and school-based facilitators interact with learners daily and can see changes in behavior across contexts.

However, early psychosocial detection in educational contexts provides continuing obstacles. Learners may lack the developmental competence, emotional awareness, or inclination to explain internal experiences orally (Schnyder et al., 2021). This difficulty is reinforced in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts, where reliance on spoken self-report may further impede early recognition of psychosocial needs. Internalizing indicators of psychosocial challenges are generally less obvious than externalizing concerns, making them tougher for instructors to discover (Taresh et al., 2021). Teachers, who already face enormous expectations, may also feel insufficiently qualified or have their observational talents hampered by their considerable teaching commitments, compromising the quality of early diagnosis of social, emotional, and behavioral disorders (Maten & Rommes, 2024).

From an education management perspective, these challenges highlight the need for structured, low-risk observation tools that support early awareness within existing school support systems. Early psychosocial awareness may therefore be understood not only as a pedagogical concern but also as a system-level monitoring and preventive support function linked to facilitator decision-making and organisational learning processes.

Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Expressive Arts for Psychosocial Support

The efficacy of expressive arts in encouraging psychosocial well-being and facilitating non-verbal expression is anchored in numerous theoretical viewpoints and backed by empirical research. Developmentally, children often process and transmit emotions through play and creative activities before they completely develop sophisticated verbal skills (Schnyder et al., 2021). Expressive arts-based approaches have earned growing attention in educational research as developmentally appropriate practices that foster emotional expression, engagement, and inclusion (Ringsmose, 2019). These activities give learners opportunities to communicate symbolically and non-verbally, minimising reliance on language proficiency and lowering obstacles to participation (Birrell et al., 2024; Schnyder et al., 2021). Expressive art therapy, for instance, blends psychological and creative processes to encourage growth and emotional healing, integrating cognitive, sensory, interaction, and kinesthetic experiences (Sampurno et al., 2020).

From a trauma-informed viewpoint, expressive arts provide non-threatening channels for self-expression (Lo et al., 2023). The process of art-making can be naturally regulating, helping individuals to have a sense of control and agency (Svozilová et al., 2025). Furthermore, theories of non-verbal communication emphasize that engagement patterns, choice of materials, and interactions during creative projects can reveal considerable information about an individual's emotional state, cognitive





processes, and relational dynamics (Daikoku et al., 2025). This accords with the concept that observation of behavior can provide useful insights about psychological markers without requiring explicit verbalization or symbolic interpretation. Art-making itself encompasses production, observation, contemplation, meaning-making, and insight that may lead to transformation (Binson & Lev-Wiesel, 2018).

Empirical research increasingly supports the usefulness of arts-based treatments in boosting children's mental health and well-being within educational contexts. Reviews of arts-inclusive programs reveal positive impacts on young children's mental health and well-being, often by offering safe spaces for emotional expression and establishing healthy coping skills (Birrell et al., 2024). Art therapy, a specialized application of expressive arts, has been intensively examined for its usefulness in resolving psychosocial difficulties in children and adolescents, particularly within school-based settings (Bosgraaf et al., 2020; Moula, 2020).

However, much of this literature focuses on clinical or therapeutic applications rather than non-clinical, facilitator-led observation in everyday school environments. It is therefore important to distinguish between clinical art therapy and the screening-supportive expressive art workshops examined in this study. While art therapy aims at treatment or psychological intervention, the present study positions expressive art workshops as non-clinical, facilitator-led educational activities intended to support observation, early awareness, and referral. This distinction clarifies ethical boundaries and aligns the approach with professional educational roles.

Arts-Based Activities as Screening-Supportive Contexts

Beyond their immediate expressive value, arts-based activities have increasingly been investigated as environments that permit facilitator observation of student behavior and engagement (Matias et al., 2020). During organised creative exercises, facilitators may identify indicators such as persistent concentration, avoidance, irritation, or quiet engagement. These behavioral patterns can provide insight into learners' emotional control and psychosocial functioning without needing direct questioning or disclosure.

The literature cautions against symbolic interpretation or diagnostic use of art in educational contexts (Bosgraaf et al., 2020). Instead, arts-based observation is best positioned as screening-supportive, offering contextual information that may guide monitoring, assistance, or referral decisions. This distinction fits with ethical norms in education, which encourage non-intrusive techniques and clear professional limits between educational support and clinical assessment (Bosgraaf et al., 2020).

In education management literature, facilitators and instructors are often described as frontline observers responsible for identifying early behavioural or emotional risks within structured support systems. Expressive art workshops may therefore enhance facilitator observational competence, which is a key component of preventive education management practices. Nevertheless, existing literature remains heavily oriented toward clinical intervention rather than facilitator-led observation in routine educational settings.

Trauma-Informed and Design-Oriented Perspectives

Trauma-informed approaches in education emphasize emotional safety, predictability, choice, and relational presence as key conditions for learner engagement. These ideas are increasingly reflected in discussions about classroom design, activity structuring, and facilitation approaches. Research suggests that tranquil surroundings, flexible pace, and non-evaluative tasks might lower anxiety and enhance emotional regulation, particularly for learners who have encountered stress or adversity (Lo et al., 2023).

Design-oriented viewpoints further underline that accessibility in education is impacted not just by curriculum content but also by how learning activities are designed and facilitated. Expressive art workshops that combine trauma-informed design features may therefore generate conditions that encourage both learner expression and facilitator observation, improving their potential as screening-supportive activities.

These design considerations also reflect management-level concerns related to learning environment quality, facilitator workload, and structured observation conditions, which are central to preventive education systems.





Expressive Arts and Psychosocial Detection in the Philippine Context

The Philippine educational setting gives a unique and compelling context for the application of expressive arts in psychosocial detection. Schools in the archipelago are crucial to both academic learning and comprehensive child development. However, basic education in the Philippines, particularly in diverse and frequently challenging community contexts, has specific obstacles in early psychological identification.

Empirical research indicates major psychosocial issues among Filipino youth. There is a disturbing frequency of mental problems among youngsters in the Philippines, estimated at 16% (Estrada et al., 2020). Filipino school-going teenagers report a significant prevalence of psychological distress, with over three out of every ten (27.8%) suffering such distress (Mallari & Peltzer, 2025). Youth in low-to-middle income countries like the Philippines are particularly vulnerable due to increased exposure to risk factors and limited access to effective mental health services (Bradshaw et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly damaged the mental health of Filipino children and adolescents, leading to higher cases of child labor, interpersonal violence, and child maltreatment, all connected with mental health difficulties (Ocampo et al., 2024).

A substantial problem in the Philippines derives from the language and cultural variety of the student population. With multiple local languages and dialects, many children may fail to describe their emotional experiences vocally in the major medium of teaching (Schnyder et al., 2021). Filipino communication patterns often value indirect communication (*pagpapahiwatig*) and non-verbal cues (Villanueva, 2021), which may obscure internalising concerns during direct verbal assessment.

While global literature largely emphasises clinical art therapy, there is limited empirical research on non-clinical, facilitator-led observation practices within Philippine basic education. This reveals a gap in studies examining ethical, screening-supportive tools embedded in routine education systems. Additionally, many existing psychological frameworks are derived from Western contexts, underscoring the need for culturally responsive research grounded in Philippine educational realities.

Accordingly, this study seeks to address this gap by examining the insights derived from facilitator observations within expressive art workshops conducted in the Philippine basic education setting. The study frames these workshops as screening-supportive observation contexts embedded within organised educational systems rather than as therapeutic interventions. This positioning reflects a management-level approach that integrates expressive art activities into structured monitoring and referral processes.

Conceptual Framework

This study is guided by a conceptual framework that describes how expressive art workshops act as supplemental, screening-supportive instruments for early psychological detection in basic education. As illustrated in Figure 1, the framework is structured around four interrelated components: Inputs, Process, Mechanism, and Outcomes, which together describe the pathway through which expressive art activities support facilitator observation without engaging in diagnostic or therapeutic practice, consistent with ethical guidelines for arts in education (Bosgraaf et al., 2020).

From an education management perspective, the framework positions expressive art workshops as part of a structured support system rather than as isolated classroom activities. This systems view reflects preventive and human-factors-oriented approaches in education, where learner wellbeing, engagement, and early awareness are integrated into organisational processes. The framework, therefore, links classroom-level activities with facilitator decision-making, monitoring processes, and referral pathways within the broader education system.



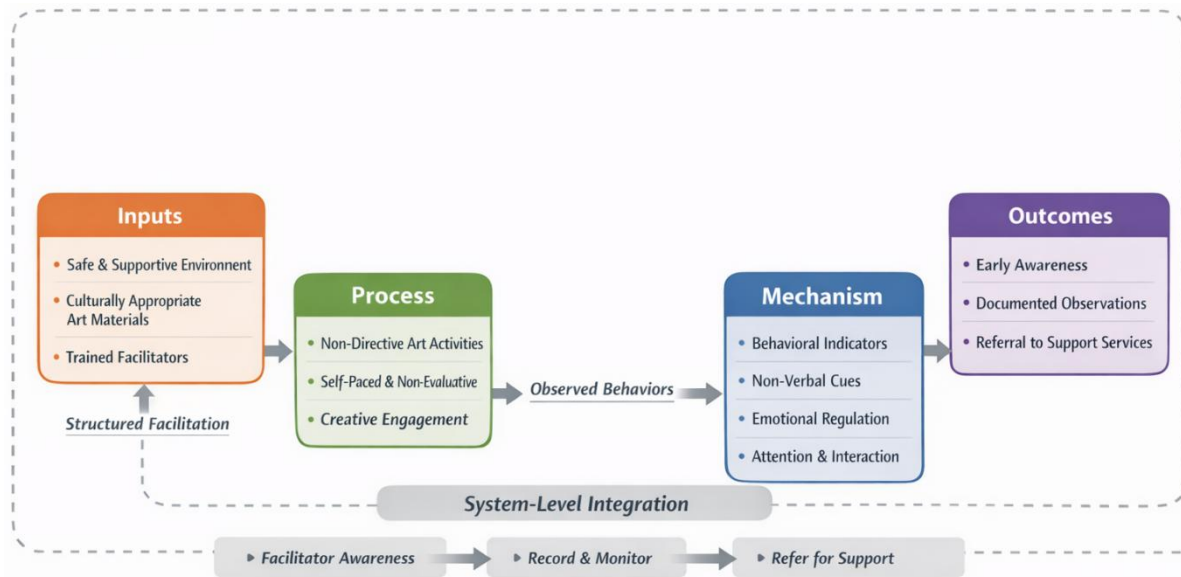


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Screening-Supportive Expressive Art Workshop

Inputs

The Inputs component relates to the contextual and preparatory factors required for effective implementation within school settings. These include a safe and supportive learning atmosphere, the availability of culturally identifiable art materials, and suitably prepared facilitators. These settings assist in eliminating obstacles to participation and limit performance pressure, promoting accessibility, emotional safety, and ethical facilitation rather than artistic competence or output (Birrell et al., 2024; Bosgraaf et al., 2020).

Within the conceptual model, facilitators are positioned as structured observers operating within an organised educational process, rather than as therapeutic assessors. This distinction reinforces ethical boundaries and clarifies professional roles in line with non-diagnostic educational practices.

Process

The Process component centers on the expressive art workshop itself, created as a non-directive and process-focused exercise. Learners engage in art-making at their own pace with minimum instruction, no necessity for vocal explanation, and no emphasis on representational accuracy. This strategy fosters self-regulated participation and lowers evaluation anxiety, portraying the workshop as a typical educational activity rather than a therapy intervention (Birrell et al., 2024; Bosgraaf et al., 2020).

The process is therefore conceptualised as a structured facilitation context that enables observation within a safe, predictable learning environment, consistent with preventive education management principles.

Mechanism

The Mechanism through which early psychosocial markers become evident is student engagement during the art-making process. Engagement is demonstrated in non-verbal actions such as persistence, withdrawal, emotional regulation, interaction with materials, and responsiveness to the learning environment. These observable patterns may provide indications relating to learners' emotional and psychological states, without requiring symbolic interpretation of artwork (Daikoku et al., 2025; Bosgraaf et al., 2020).

Within the framework, engagement operates as the central observational mechanism linking workshop activities to facilitator awareness. Specific non-verbal behavioural markers, such as withdrawal, sustained focus, emotional reactivity, or avoidance, serve as practical indicators that inform facilitator observation. This mechanism reflects education management approaches that rely on behavioural cues and structured observation to support early awareness and preventive action.



Outcomes

The Outcomes comprise screening-supportive observations that inform early awareness of potential psychosocial needs, including persistent withdrawal, heightened emotional reactivity, or difficulty with regulation and focus (Haire et al., 2023). These outcomes are deliberately non-diagnostic and serve to enable monitoring, record-keeping, and appropriate referral within current school-based support systems (Bosgraaf et al., 2020).

To maintain ethical and professional clarity, the framework emphasises preventive and screening-supportive outcomes rather than clinical detection. Outcomes are therefore framed as early awareness, informed observation, and supportive referral processes embedded within the education system. This approach aligns with non-diagnostic educational roles and supports system-level monitoring and decision-making.

System-Level Integration

At the system level, the framework illustrates how inputs (facilitator preparation and safe environments) support the workshop process, which promotes learner engagement as the key mechanism for observation. This engagement enables facilitators to identify early psychosocial indicators, leading to outcomes related to awareness, documentation, and referral within existing support structures. By connecting classroom activities to organisational processes, the framework demonstrates how expressive art workshops can function as components of structured educational support systems.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed an applied mixed-methods design to examine the effectiveness of expressive art workshops as screening-supportive tools for early psychosocial awareness in basic education. The design combined quantitative facilitator ratings with qualitative reflections to provide both measurable trends and contextual insights into workshop implementation and observation practices.

Mixed-methods approaches are widely used in applied educational and psychosocial research because they allow integration of statistical trends with practitioner-based insights, particularly in complex school environments where emotional, behavioral, and contextual factors intersect (Moula et al., 2020; Katz-Buonincontro et al., 2020). Such designs are appropriate when interventions are evaluated both for measurable outcomes and for experiential or observational insights derived from facilitators.

The mixed-methods approach was selected because structured educational environments require both measurable indicators and professional judgement to support decision-making and preventive monitoring processes. This approach aligns with education management practices that integrate quantitative trends with practitioner observations to support early awareness and system-level decision-making.

Participants and Setting

The study involved 29 facilitators who conducted expressive art workshops in basic education contexts. Participants included well-being personnel, counselors, healing arts practitioners, and trained volunteers involved in student support activities.

All facilitators were practitioners of mental health awareness and included pastoral counselors, counselors, art counselors, healing arts practitioners, and trained volunteers who had undergone preparation in expressive art workshops, trauma-informed reflective questioning, and child safety protocols related to trauma and crisis care. This preparation positioned facilitators as reflective practitioners capable of ethical observation and supportive engagement rather than clinical assessment.

This sampling reflects typical school-based environments in which facilitators act as frontline observers of learner behaviour, making the findings relevant to routine educational settings that require early psychosocial awareness. However, the relatively small sample size should be interpreted as exploratory, and the findings should be viewed as indicative rather than conclusive.





Table 1: Facilitator Demographic Breakdown

| Role | Number of Participants | Percentage |
|---|------------------------|-------------|
| Wellbeing Personnel / Counselors | 15 | 52% |
| Healing Arts Practitioner | 1 | 3% |
| Trained Volunteers (with mental health and child safety training) | 13 | 45% |
| Total | 29 | 100% |

Providing this breakdown offers a clearer contextual understanding of the facilitators' professional backgrounds and supports the reflective-practitioner perspective of the study.

Workshop Procedures

The expressive art workshops were conducted as non-directive, process-focused activities designed to promote emotional safety and non-verbal expression (Birrell et al., 2024; Bosgraaf et al., 2020).

Each session was guided by a trained art facilitator who initiated the workshop with a brief grounding exercise to help learners settle emotionally and focus their attention. Grounding techniques are commonly used in trauma-informed educational practices to establish emotional safety and readiness for participation (Lo et al., 2023).

Following the grounding activity, students were invited into an imaginative exercise in which they were asked to imagine describing their life using a blank canvas and to paint their imagination freely. This process-oriented invitation encouraged symbolic expression without requiring verbal disclosure, consistent with expressive arts approaches to non-verbal communication (Daikoku et al., 2025; Schnyder et al., 2021).

The art facilitator then provided a short demonstration of painting using sensorimotor methods, such as using fingers, palms, hands, and brushes to apply paint. Sensorimotor art engagement has been associated with emotional regulation and experiential expression in trauma-informed creative practices (Svozilová et al., 2025).

During the art-making phase, facilitators were seated around the learners, observing engagement patterns and remaining available to provide gentle support if needed. This arrangement supported both emotional safety and observational awareness, consistent with screening-supportive educational approaches (Bosgraaf et al., 2020).

After the art-making activity, a structured processing period was conducted using three reflective questions. These questions invited learners to describe their painting, share the emotions connected to it, and respond to selected trauma-informed reflective prompts. This reflective stage was designed to encourage voluntary sharing without pressure, consistent with trauma-informed communication practices (Lo et al., 2023).

Facilitators were oriented to their roles as structured observers rather than assessors, with emphasis on ethical, non-diagnostic observation and supportive facilitation. This role clarification aligns the workshop with screening-supportive educational practices and reduces ethical risk.

To promote consistency across sessions, facilitators followed a brief structured guide outlining activity flow, observation focus areas, and ethical boundaries. The workshop ended with a debriefing session with the facilitators and observation sharing.

Data Collection Instruments

Instruments and Measures: Facilitator Feedback Questionnaire

Data were collected using a Facilitator Feedback Questionnaire consisting of Likert-scale items and open-ended reflection prompts. The instrument assessed two primary constructs:

Workshop Implementation Quality

Detection Capacity (perceived ability to observe psychosocial indicators)

Table 1 presents the instrument structure and alignment with study variables.





Table 1: Facilitator Feedback Instrument Description

| Domain | Sample Indicators | Scale |
|--|--|--|
| Workshop Implementation Quality | Engagement, emotional safety, appropriateness, facilitator confidence | 1 (Strongly disagree) – 5 (Strongly agree) |
| Psychosocial Detection Capacity | Observation of withdrawal, emotional responses, and emerging support needs | 1 (Not observed) – 5 (Strongly observed) |
| Qualitative Reflection | Observations of learner behavior, context, and facilitation experience | Open-ended |

The questionnaire was designed to reflect facilitators’ roles as reflective observers within an educational support system rather than as clinical assessors. Instrument reliability was examined using internal consistency analysis (Cronbach’s alpha) to ensure acceptable psychometric properties.

Reliability Analysis

Table 2: Internal Consistency of Composite Indices

| Index | Number of Items | Cronbach’s Alpha |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Workshop Implementation Index (WII) | 5 | 0.88 |
| Detection Capacity Index (DCI) | 5 | 0.84 |

Both indices demonstrated acceptable to strong reliability, indicating consistent responses across items measuring each construct.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative responses were analysed using descriptive statistics, composite indices, one-sample t-tests, and exploratory correlation analysis.

Composite indices were used to provide system-level performance indicators rather than isolated item results, consistent with education management practices that rely on aggregated measures for monitoring and decision-making.

Composite Index Formulas

Workshop Implementation Index (WII)

$$WII = \frac{Q_1 + Q_2 + Q_3 + Q_4 + Q_5}{5}$$

Detection Capacity Index (DCI)

$$DCI = \frac{D_1 + D_2 + D_3 + D_4 + D_5}{5}$$

One-Sample t-Test

$$t = \frac{\bar{x} - \mu}{s / \sqrt{n}}$$

Effect size interpretation was also considered to assess the practical significance of findings, as statistical significance alone may not fully reflect applied educational value.

Correlation Analysis

$$r = \frac{\sum (X - \bar{X})(Y - \bar{Y})}{\sqrt{\sum (X - \bar{X})^2 \sum (Y - \bar{Y})^2}}$$

Given the small sample size, correlation results were interpreted cautiously as exploratory trends rather than definitive relationships.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Open-ended responses were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Moula et al., 2020). Facilitator reflections were coded and grouped into themes related to engagement patterns, emotional safety, observable behavioral markers, and contextual influences.





To reduce facilitator bias, the analysis included iterative coding, theme comparison, and reflective memoing to enhance trustworthiness. Facilitators were treated as reflective practitioners whose observations provided practice-based insights rather than diagnostic conclusions.

Ethical Considerations

The study followed ethical principles for non-clinical, school-based research (Bosgraaf et al., 2020). Participation was voluntary, and facilitators were instructed to avoid diagnostic interpretation of artwork.

The workshops were framed as screening-supportive, non-diagnostic activities aligned with professional educational roles, and this distinction was emphasised throughout the facilitation process.

Ethical safeguards were also linked to management responsibility, ensuring that observations were used only for monitoring, documentation, and appropriate referral within existing school support systems.

Results

Quantitative Findings

Descriptive statistics were computed to assess facilitator perceptions of workshop implementation quality and psychosocial observation capacity. Composite index results indicated generally high ratings across both constructs.

Facilitators reported strong confidence in the overall quality of workshop implementation, including engagement, emotional safety, and age appropriateness. Detection capacity scores were moderately high, suggesting that facilitators perceived the workshop as supportive of early psychosocial observation within an educational context.

These elevated mean scores suggest that the workshop created emotionally stable and engaging learning environments, which are essential conditions for effective observation in preventive education systems.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Facilitator Ratings (N = 29)

| Index | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
|-------------------------------------|------|--------------------|---------|---------|
| Workshop Implementation Index (WII) | 4.42 | 0.51 | 3.40 | 5.00 |
| Detection Capacity Index (DCI) | 3.73 | 0.62 | 2.60 | 4.80 |

The Workshop Implementation Index showed a high mean score, indicating that facilitators perceived the workshop as engaging, emotionally safe, and developmentally appropriate. The Detection Capacity Index reflected moderate to strong facilitator confidence in observing psychosocial indicators during the workshop.

Table 4: Item-Level Descriptive Statistics of Facilitator Ratings (N = 29)

| Domain | Item | Mean | SD | Min | Max |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|------|------|-----|-----|
| Workshop Implementation | Learner engagement | 4.69 | 0.48 | 4 | 5 |
| | Emotional safety | 4.38 | 1.09 | 1 | 5 |
| | Age appropriateness | 4.56 | 0.63 | 3 | 5 |
| | Support for non-verbal expression | 3.88 | 1.31 | 1 | 5 |
| | Facilitator confidence | 4.44 | 0.63 | 3 | 5 |
| Psychosocial Observation | Observation of withdrawal | 3.81 | 1.28 | 1 | 5 |
| | Emotional reactions observed | 3.94 | 0.77 | 3 | 5 |
| | Unseen behaviors/emotions surfaced | 3.50 | 1.10 | 1 | 5 |
| | Identification of support needs | 4.25 | 0.77 | 3 | 5 |
| Overall Utility | Usefulness as detection support | 4.50 | 0.63 | 3 | 5 |
| | Intention to reuse workshop | 4.44 | 0.73 | 3 | 5 |

Facilitators reported the highest scores in learner engagement, age appropriateness, and perceived usefulness of the workshop. Scores related to psychosocial observation were moderately high, particularly for the identification of support needs and emotional reactions observed.





The slightly lower means and higher variability in some observation-related items reflect contextual differences in learner behaviour rather than measurement weakness. Such variability is expected in applied educational settings where learner engagement and emotional responses differ across groups and contexts.

Overall utility scores indicate that facilitators perceived the workshop as a practical and reusable screening-supportive tool within routine educational settings.

One-Sample t-Test Results

To determine whether the observed mean scores differed significantly from the neutral midpoint, one-sample t-tests were conducted.

Table 5: One-Sample t-Test Results

| Index | Mean | t-value | p-value | Interpretation |
|-------------------------------------|------|---------|---------|-----------------------------|
| Workshop Implementation Index (WII) | 4.42 | 14.86 | < .001 | Significantly above neutral |
| Detection Capacity Index (DCI) | 3.73 | 6.03 | < .001 | Significantly above neutral |

Both indices were significantly above the neutral midpoint, indicating that facilitators rated the quality of workshop implementation and their ability to observe psychosocial indicators as positive.

In applied educational contexts, such elevated scores suggest that the workshop provides a supportive environment for structured observation without increasing learner stress.

Correlation Analysis

An exploratory Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between workshop implementation quality and detection capacity.

Table 6: Correlation Between Implementation Quality and Detection Capacity

| Variables | r | p-value | Interpretation |
|-----------|------|---------|--------------------------------|
| WII – DCI | 0.34 | .071 | Non-significant positive trend |

The analysis showed a positive but non-significant relationship between implementation quality and detection capacity.

This result should be interpreted as a non-significant but positive trend rather than a confirmed relationship. Given the small sample size, such trends should be viewed as exploratory indicators rather than definitive evidence.

Summary of Quantitative Findings

The quantitative results indicate generally positive facilitator ratings across workshop implementation, psychosocial observation, and overall utility. The **Workshop Implementation Index (WII)** showed a high mean of **4.42**, while the **Detection Capacity Index (DCI)** had a moderately high mean of **3.73**, both significantly above the neutral midpoint. These findings suggest that the workshop was perceived as engaging, emotionally safe, and supportive of early psychosocial observation. Item-level results showed the highest ratings in learner engagement, age appropriateness, and overall usefulness, while observation-related items reflected moderate to strong facilitator confidence in identifying emotional reactions and support needs.

The correlation between implementation quality and detection capacity was positive but non-significant ($r = 0.34$, $p = .071$), indicating a trend that requires further investigation with larger samples.

The findings support the feasibility and ethical suitability of expressive art workshops as screening-supportive practices that enhance early awareness without functioning as diagnostic interventions.

Qualitative Findings: A Deeper Look

Qualitative responses from facilitators were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis. Three major themes emerged: (1) expressive art as a safe medium for non-verbal communication, (2) emergence of psychosocial markers through engagement patterns, and (3) contextual factors influencing observation quality.





Across themes, facilitators' reflections highlighted their roles as structured observers within preventive education systems, where emotionally safe environments support early awareness and monitoring processes.

Theme 1: Expressive Art as a Safe Avenue for Non-Verbal Communication

Facilitators consistently described the workshop as a safe and non-threatening environment that allowed learners to express emotions without relying on verbal explanation. Many observed that children who were usually quiet or reserved were more willing to participate in art-making activities.

Table 7: Expressive Art as a Safe Channel for Non-Verbal Expression

Table with 3 columns: Category, Formulated Meanings, Sample Verbatim Excerpts*. Rows include Emotional safety, Reduced verbal pressure, and Sustained engagement.

Several facilitators emphasized that the non-directive structure reduced performance pressure and encouraged authentic expression.

These observations align with the high implementation scores reported in the quantitative findings, particularly learner engagement (M = 4.69) and emotional safety (M = 4.38), indicating that the workshop conditions supported both participation and observation.

From a management perspective, emotionally safe and structured environments are critical conditions that allow facilitators to perform their observation roles effectively within preventive support systems.

Theme 2: Observing Psychosocial Indicators Through Engagement Patterns

Facilitators reported that learners' engagement behaviors provided observable cues related to emotional states and support needs. These included signs such as withdrawal, intense focus, emotional reactions, or sudden changes in behavior during the reflection phase. These engagement patterns were often interpreted as possible indicators of underlying psychosocial concerns.

Table 8: Visibility of Psychosocial Indicators Through Engagement Patterns

Table with 3 columns: Category, Formulated Meanings, Sample Verbatim Excerpts*. Rows include Withdrawal, Emotional reactivity, and Emerging support needs.

This theme corresponds with the moderate to strong detection capacity scores in the quantitative findings, particularly identification of support needs (M = 4.25) and emotional reactions observed (M = 3.94).

The findings suggest that learner engagement patterns functioned as practical behavioral markers, supporting facilitators' observation roles within structured educational systems.

Theme 3: The Influence of Environmental and Facilitation Conditions

Facilitators underlined that the effectiveness of the expressive art workshop was substantially dependent on the prevailing ambient and facilitation conditions. Factors such as peaceful environments, reasonable group sizes, and appropriate times were recognised as boosting both learner engagement and the quality of facilitator observation. Conversely, noisy or overcrowded situations were found to detract from focus and hamper effective observation.

This theme contributes to understanding the diversity reported in the quantitative detection





capability ratings, showing the crucial importance of context as a moderating element in screening-supportive practices.

Table 9: Influence of Environmental and Facilitation Conditions¹

| Category | Formulated Meanings | Sample Verbatim Excerpts* |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Physical environment | Noise and space affected concentration | “The open space made it harder for the learners to focus.” |
| Time and pacing | Adequate time supported deeper engagement | “When the activity was not rushed, students were more expressive.” |
| Group size | Smaller groups improved observation | “It was easier to observe learners in smaller groups.” |

These contextual differences help explain the variability observed in certain quantitative items, such as support for non-verbal expression (SD = 1.31) and observation of withdrawal (SD = 1.28). Such variability reflects natural differences in learning environments rather than measurement weakness.

Integration with Quantitative Findings

Across all themes, facilitators described the workshop as a supportive and non-intrusive context that enabled them to notice behavioral and emotional cues without formal assessment. These qualitative insights closely align with the quantitative findings, which showed high implementation quality and moderately strong detection capacity.

At the system level, the findings indicate that expressive art workshops can serve as structured observation contexts embedded within preventive education processes, supporting early awareness, documentation, and referral functions.

The integration of quantitative trends and qualitative insights suggests that the workshop is feasible as a screening-supportive practice, though contextual conditions and facilitator capacity influence observation outcomes. These findings should be interpreted as practice-based insights rather than diagnostic conclusions, consistent with the study’s ethical and non-clinical framework.

Summary of Qualitative Findings

In summary, the qualitative study suggests that expressive art workshops serve as important, screening-supportive contexts where facilitators can uncover early psychological markers without imposing on learners or participating in diagnostic interpretations. By focusing on emotional safety, non-verbal expression, and ethical observation, the workshop effectively complements existing school-based support systems and promotes early identification procedures within basic education.

Discussion

This study investigated the efficacy of expressive art workshops as supplemental, screening-supportive resources for early psychological awareness in basic education using an applied mixed-methods technique. By foregrounding facilitator feedback as practice-based evidence, the study contributes to education research that explores practical, ethical, and non-intrusive approaches to learner well-being within typical classroom situations. From an education management viewpoint, the study frames expressive art workshops as structured observation contexts that enable early awareness, monitoring, and referral procedures rather than clinical diagnosis.

Interpretation of Quantitative Findings

The quantitative results demonstrated that the expressive art workshop was implemented with good quality, as shown in strong evaluations for learner engagement, emotional safety, age appropriateness, and facilitator confidence. The Workshop Implementation Index was well above the neutral midpoint, demonstrating that facilitators consistently judged the workshop as practicable and appropriate for school environments. These findings suggest the practicality of integrating expressive

¹ *Verbatim excerpts are presented in anonymized, ethics-safe form.





art activities into basic education, coinciding with research that highlights the potential of school-based arts interventions to increase emotional expression and general well-being (Léger-Goodes et al., 2024). The value of art therapy and arts-based interventions in treating children's emotional issues in school settings has also been well documented (Moula, 2020; Moula et al., 2020).

The Detection Capacity Index was likewise significantly above neutral levels, demonstrating that facilitators evaluated the session as helpful for early psychosocial monitoring. Detection-related ratings revealed greater variability than implementation scores, which is predicted in screening-supportive circumstances, as psychosocial markers inherently differ across learners and situations. This variability aligns with qualitative findings that highlighted the role of group size, environmental factors, and time allocation on observation clarity. Importantly, facilitators reported seeing significant behavioral and emotional signs without engaging in diagnostic interpretation. This coincides with the concept of art as a non-verbal medium that promotes emotional expression and communication, allowing facilitators to observe psychological states without requiring explicit verbal disclosure (Cui & Fen-ping, 2022; Лебедева, 2012).

The exploratory association between implementation quality and detection capability, although not statistically significant, was positive and modest. This shows that well-implemented workshops—characterized by emotional safety, participation, and facilitator confidence—may boost possibilities for psychosocial observation. The convergence of strong implementation scores and qualitative descriptions of calmer, more expressive learner conduct strengthens this conclusion (A). However, given the limited sample size and applied nature of the study, this association should be evaluated cautiously and examined further in future research. The need for more methodologically rigorous studies in arts-based interventions has been widely recognized (Faltová & Mojžíšová, 2023; Haring et al., 2020; Léger-Goodes et al., 2024; McDonald & Drey, 2017; Moula, 2020).

Contribution of Qualitative Findings

The qualitative findings offered explanatory depth to the quantitative data. Facilitators frequently identified expressive art as a secure route for non-verbal expression, particularly for learners who were shy, hesitant, or less comfortable with verbal communication. Art-making promotes the expression of complex emotional experiences in symbolic and sensory forms, creating a protected environment for self-exploration (Cui & Fen-ping, 2022; Snir, 2022; Westrhenen et al., 2017; Лебедева, 2012). This coincides with the high quantitative evaluations for engagement and emotional safety, underlining the relevance of non-verbal modalities in inclusive educational practice, especially for children who struggle with verbal disclosure (Moula et al., 2022; Round et al., 2017; Wei et al., 2025).

A crucial qualitative contribution is in focusing observation through engagement patterns rather than disclosure. Facilitators stated that indicators such as retreat, emotional reaction, frustration, or persistent focus became obvious throughout learners' interactions with materials and the activity structure. This supports the conception of facilitators as frontline observers within preventive education systems, where structured activities enable early awareness without diagnostic interpretation.

The theme connected to ambient and facilitating factors gave a clear explanation for the diversity found in detection-related scores. Facilitators remarked that quiet locations, ample time, and manageable group sizes boosted both involvement and observational clarity. Conversely, noisy or rushed situations hampered the efficacy of the session. Research reveals that the physical and emotional aspects of learning or therapeutic environments can greatly influence outcomes in school-based interventions (Danieli et al., 2019). Facilitator confidence and training have also been found to be critical determinants in the efficacy of arts-based group activities (Roginsky et al., 2023). These findings reinforce the relevance of context as a moderating element and accord with trauma-informed and design-oriented viewpoints that prioritize emotional safety and predictability (Annous et al., 2022).

Alignment With the Conceptual Framework

The findings give empirical support for the suggested conceptual framework. Workshop design and contextual inputs encouraged learner engagement, which in turn facilitated facilitator monitoring of psychosocial markers. The results observed—early awareness, documentation, and prospective referral—remained explicitly non-diagnostic, validating the ethical limit important to the approach.

Both quantitative indices and qualitative themes were projected consistently onto the framework's components, boosting interpretative validity. The convergence of data strands reveals how





expressive art workshops function as structured observation processes integrated within broader educational support systems. Mixed-methods integration, which blends statistical patterns with experiential insights, boosts the depth and trustworthiness of findings in complicated educational environments (Cao et al., 2020; Katz-Buonincontro et al., 2020; Shefi et al., 2022).

Implications for Educational Practice

The findings show that expressive art workshops may be included in basic education as supplemental activities that strengthen current psychological support systems. When executed with respect to emotional safety, facilitation quality, and ambient conditions, such workshops provide educators with extra observation contexts without pressing learners to share personal experiences. The documented effectiveness of arts-based interventions in schools encourages their inclusion into educational contexts (Faltová & Mojžíšová, 2023; Moula et al., 2020).

For educators and school administrators, organised facilitator feedback instruments may serve both evaluative and reflective objectives, promoting professional learning while generating evidence on implementation and outcomes. From a management standpoint, these tools may also enhance system-level monitoring by integrating classroom observations with documentation and referral processes. Importantly, expressive art workshops should complement—not replace—formal assessment and referral procedures within educational systems (Bosgraaf et al., 2020).

Implications for Research and Summary

This study contributes to the limited research on expressive art workshops as screening-supportive tools in education (Faltová & Mojžíšová, 2023; McDonald & Drey, 2017). By merging quantitative and qualitative data, the study highlights the significance of mixed-methods approaches in collecting both measurable outcomes and practitioner insights (Cao et al., 2020; Katz-Buonincontro et al., 2020; Shefi et al., 2022). Future studies may elaborate on these findings through larger samples, longitudinal designs, and cross-context comparisons.

Taken together, the findings indicate that expressive art workshops can function as ethical, non-intrusive, screening-supportive practices that increase early psychosocial awareness in basic education. Through facilitator-guided implementation, non-verbal interaction, and context-sensitive design, expressive art offers a realistic method to improve early observation procedures within school-based support systems. From an education management perspective, this method promotes structured monitoring, informed decision-making, and ethical referral practices without entering into diagnostic territory.

Knowledge Contribution

This study contributes to the growing body of research on expressive arts in education by establishing expressive art workshops as screening-supportive instruments for early psychosocial awareness in basic education. As demonstrated in the knowledge contribution framework, the study advances four interconnected areas: screening-supportive expressive art workshops, practice-based facilitator evidence, mixed-methods integration, and a conceptual framework for expressive art in education.

First, the study reframes expressive art workshops as non-intrusive, screening-supportive practices rather than therapeutic or diagnostic interventions. Second, it foregrounds facilitator evaluations and reflections as important sources of practice-based evidence, identifying educators and wellbeing staff as reflective practitioners. Third, the mixed-methods design mixes quantitative composite indexes with qualitative research, enabling a thorough insight into implementation quality and observation processes.

From an education management viewpoint, these contributions position expressive art workshops as structured observation contexts that enable monitoring, recording, and referral processes inside school-based support systems. Finally, the study presents a conceptual framework integrating workshop inputs, learner engagement, and screening-supportive results, establishing a transferable model for research and program development.



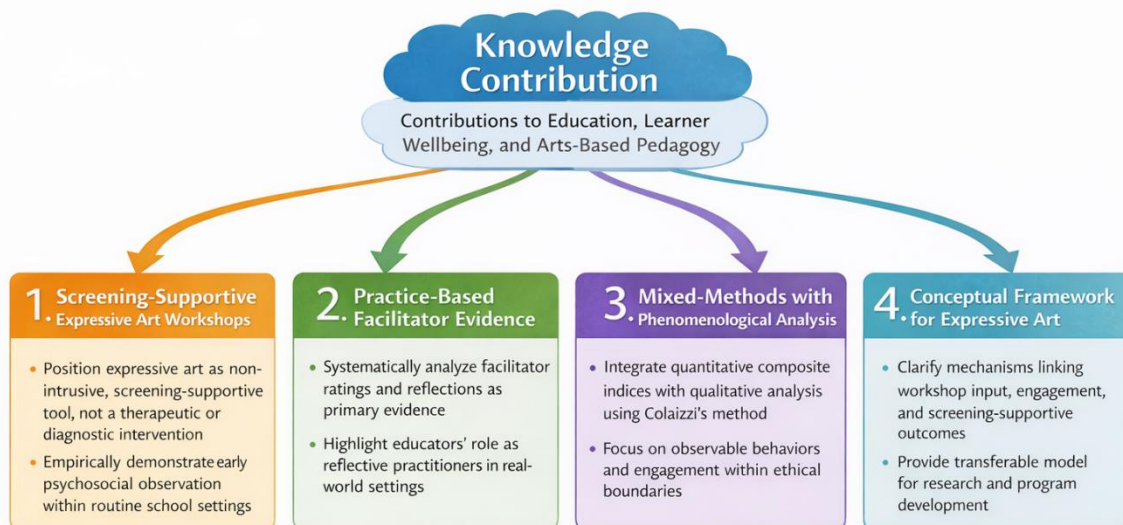


Figure 2: Map of Knowledge Contribution

Recommendation

Policy Recommendations

Schools and education systems may consider integrating expressive art workshops as supplemental, screening-supportive activities within current psychological support programs. Short, non-directive art sessions can be introduced into well-being programs, homeroom hours, or guiding activities to give learners safe, non-verbal outlets for expression. Facilitator preparation is vital; training in trauma-informed techniques, child safety, and reflective observation should be provided to ensure ethical and effective implementation. Structured facilitator feedback tools may also help with documentation and communication with school-based support teams.

From an education management perspective, expressive art workshops should be embedded into established monitoring and referral systems, complementing rather than replacing official assessment and counseling services. Clear protocols for observation, documentation, and referral are recommended to ensure coordinated and ethical support for learners.

Future Research

Future research should study expressive art workshops across bigger and more diverse populations, educational levels, and cultural contexts. A longitudinal study may explore how repeated workshop exposure affects learner well-being and early identification processes over time. Additional data sources, such as independent observations or school well-being records, could increase triangulation. Further validation of assessment methods and comparative research of diverse expressive art approaches are recommended to enable evidence-based program development.

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