

Exploring Entrepreneurial Success Among Creative Practitioners: The Influence of Formal Education & Self-directed Learning

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ABSTRACT: The aim of this research is to understand the underlying success factors for artist entrepreneurs, with the main focus on artpreneurship education. A large number of successful art entrepreneurs are seen to have no formal education in arts; these self-taught artists, although successful in their domain, are less studied in the context of Pakistan. Also, those who get formal education and take it as their career choice present another interesting aspect. The theory of self-determination is used as a lens to understand motivations and success drivers of these arts entrepreneurs. Six themes were identified using inductive thematic analysis (Barun and Clark) that were grouped into six categories: Factors influencing success, Barriers to success, Determination, Motivation, Art world dynamics, and Art enthusiasts and critics. The qualitative method was used in comparative research to gather the data with semi-structured interviews from 20 artpreneurs who have formal art education and artists who are autodidacts. The study is relevant for the emerging field of art entrepreneurship, in that it places the notion of success in a context of a developing economy and moves SDT into the world of creative entrepreneurship. It also has implications for art teachers, policy makers, and emerging artists alike, as it demonstrates the importance of not only embedding entrepreneurial skills into the art education landscape but also increasing access to the art ecosystem.

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship, Artpreneurs, Autodidact Painters, Formal Art Education, Qualitative Research.

Introduction

Art and entrepreneurship have increasingly come together to create a hybrid space where creative production is combined with value creation. Artists, traditionally seen as producers of some sort of aesthetic value, must now deal with the world of business in order to continue their work. In the field of art entrepreneurship, however, it is not

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just about the production of art, but also about the capacity to produce intrinsic and extrinsic values from art (Chang & Wyszomirski, 2015).

The role of education as a solution to such tension is still a matter of discussion. Formal education is viewed as a rigorous process that provides the artist with technical skills, conceptual frameworks, and professional relationships (Bille & Jensen, 2018). Self-learning, on the other hand, can be considered to have more creative, more experimental, and more independent characteristics, enabling the artists to grow their technical skills without the boundaries of institutional frameworks (Woronkowicz, 2019). This dichotomy is an important question in the context of the need for formal education to be successful in art entrepreneurship.

The field of art entrepreneurship is developing and tends to have only a limited amount of empirical research (Chang & Wyszomirski, 2015). Previous research has been conducted mostly in the Western context, with little research done in developing countries, including Pakistan. Additionally, the few studies that exist tend to focus on structural issues that artists encounter, while neglecting the role of artist learning trajectories in entrepreneurial achievement.

However, the environment is further challenging in Pakistan due to the lack of institutional support, recognition of art as a profession, and society's view of art as a secondary or recreational activity (Baqai, 2020; Sadik, 2021). The country has a rich cultural heritage and has produced internationally acclaimed artists (Fatima, 2021), but there is insufficient research and policy interest in art entrepreneurship, and an underdeveloped ecosystem for artists.

Further, scholarship over the last few years has continued to point to the continued lack of research on arts entrepreneurship. In the same vein, artpreneurs in Pakistan face limitations in having a context and framework to enrich their professional journey beyond the formal curriculum. The lack of context and framework to enrich artpreneurs' professional journey beyond the formal curriculum is similar to the issues that were discussed by Kagaba Amina (2024) about the lack of context and framework faced by young artists today. This lack of formal guidance is especially pronounced in the developing world, where the arts have not yet had the opportunity to take root in infrastructure and research is rare.

This study aims to explore the definition and attainment of entrepreneurial success in the art world, from the perspective of both formal education and self-taught artists. It aims to examine the main factors that contribute to success in an artistic career, as well as the effect of various learning routes on the acquisition of skills, opportunities and sustainability. Specifically, the study is designed to explore what success means for artists and how it is developed with regard to artists' personal motivation and persistence in the face of external conditions. It also examines the relative effectiveness of formal education and self-directed learning for entrepreneurial success and how these two learning experiences influence the artists' approach to the market and the marketing of their work. The study tries to offer a holistic understanding of the antecedents of entrepreneurial success in art and the influence of education and alternative education methods on success in entrepreneurial activities.

In order to grasp the motivational dynamics that influence success, this study adopts Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which focuses on intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that motivate human behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2020). According to SDT, there are three basic psychological needs that influence an individual's motivation and performance, namely autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

In this study, the relevance of SDT is that it can be used to describe how the artists do entrepreneurial journeys. Motivation is a core concept in art and practice (passion, the expression of self, etc) and extrinsic motives (recognition, financial rewards, etc.) (Sheldon, 2019). The research uses SDT to gain deeper insight into how these

motivational forces can impact entrepreneurial success. Previous studies have indicated that education can improve awareness, creativity, and potential for self-employment (Welsh et al., 2014), but in order to be effective, education needs to be relevant to the market.

The paper continues with an overview of the literature about art entrepreneurship, art education and motivation. This is followed by a methodology that details the qualitative approach and analytical processes. The results are subsequently synthesized in thematic analysis, and accompanied by a discussion which combines empirical findings and theoretical approaches. The paper ends with implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Literature Review

Conceptualizing Art Entrepreneurship

Art entrepreneurship is a new but developing sector of business that has been intertwined with art. Entrepreneurship is fundamentally about creating value from innovation, opportunity detection, and resource mobilization (Shuaibu, 2021). In the field of the arts, this includes not only the process of creating economic value but also the creation of aesthetic value (Chang & Wyszomirski, 2015).

Art entrepreneurship is a multi-faceted enterprise, involving components of creative production, engagement with the market, and self-employment. In contrast to traditional entrepreneurship, which focuses on economic outcomes, being successful in art entrepreneurship involves both artistic achievement and economic sustainability (Gause, 2022). The dichotomy presents a situation where artists have to deal with both creative expression and commercial viability. Hoffmann (2024) define artrepreneurship as the materialization of creative abilities into commercial products, highlighting the commercialization of artistic talents. In this definition, the dual aspects of art entrepreneurship are emphasized as both creative and entrepreneurial processes, and both creative and entrepreneurial activities, and these were mirrored throughout the study's participants' experiences.

Art entrepreneurship is gaining esteem, and it's a reflection of the wider trends in the labor market, where the employment opportunities for artists are obviously quite limited. Artists often have more than one way of earning a living, as they work within both art-related and non-art-related fields. This further supports the idea that entrepreneurial skills are needed in art careers for the longer term. Included in this category are those who see education as a means to artistic and entrepreneurial growth. Under this category are those who view education as a tool to artistic and entrepreneurial development.

In general, entrepreneurship has been seen as an important determinant of education. There are a number of empirical studies that indicate that education positively affects self-employment and entrepreneurial success (Bauman, 2021). There is a growing body of interest around the role of digital platforms in art entrepreneurship. A study conducted recently by Marian et al. (2025) investigated the use of social media such as Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube by artrepreneurs for their entrepreneurial needs. They found six themes to be social media use, artistic expression and content strategy, audience engagement, networking/collaborations, perceived benefits/challenges, and artrepreneurial outcomes.

It is not always considered a value of education in artistic professions. A degree may help hone the crafts and build artistic output, but that doesn't necessarily translate to market success. The problem arises that traditional art studies are based more on cultivating the artistic side of a person's personality rather than on ensuring the commercial side of the work (Bridgstock, 2013; Baymetov, 2021), which means that artists must develop their entrepreneurial abilities on their own. So, what does it say about formal education that it doesn't seem to equip artists for the realities of the art market?

Formal Education versus Autodidact Learning

One of the main arguments that have been raised in the field of art entrepreneurship literature is the impact of formal education versus self-directed learning. Furthermore, formal education helps artists develop networks that are of key importance in terms of opportunities and recognition (Bille, 2018). As such, education serves as a tool for skills acquisition, and it also serves as a portal to the wider artistic landscape. This view implies that education could end up creating uniformity in art, which may diminish its individuality and appeal in the art market.

On the other hand, the art of autodidact artists comes from self-learning, experimentation, and experience. It is sometimes seen as more creative and flexible (Woronkowicz, 2019). As self-taught artists, they're not tied to the conventional norms of an institution and can experiment with a wide range of expressions and be far more responsive to market needs.

But self-directed learning has a number of obstacles. Without formal mentoring, there may be a lack of technical skills and professional networks (Thom, 2016). Moreover, self-taught artists can find it difficult to gain legitimacy because they are considered less professional than formally educated artists.

This is a debate that continues to this day, as both routes have their own pros and cons. However, it is important to recognize that rather than being mutually exclusive, these aspects need to be understood in the context of other factors that influence entrepreneurial success, including, but not limited to, motivation, environment, and market dynamics.

Art Markets, Environment, and External Influences

Artpreneurs' success is not only dependent on their individual abilities, but also on external environmental factors. However, artists need to be flexible over time to keep up with the trends, audience tastes, and economics. Other factors, such as market dynamics, societal perceptions, and institutional structures, play a significant role in the viability of art as a profession. Art in many developing societies, including Pakistan, is not valued enough or considered as something other than important (Baqai, 2020; Sadik, 2021). This non-recognition deprives artists of opportunities and prevents people from taking up art as a career.

Moreover, lack of robust institutional support and policy frameworks compound these challenges. The presence of weak infrastructure, insufficient funds, and the lack of official recognition are paralysing the development of a sustainable art ecosystem (Fatima, 2021). This means that artists have to rely on significant personal effort and on informal networks in order to chart a course through their careers.

Self-Determination Theory as a Framework in which to Understand Success

The theoretical framework for this study is Self-Determination Theory (SDT) in order to gain insight into the motivational dynamics involved in the success of artists and entrepreneurs. This study draws on recent research on the application of the SDA to creative professions, which directly informs this study. In research presented by Perrier (2025), the psychological well-being of professional female musicians was examined using SDT, and it was found that psychological well-being was related to the satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Their research showed that these needs, if met, led to greater well-being and motivation for the creative worker, while if unmet, led to a negative effect on well-being. The importance of intrinsic motivation became clear, indicating that creative workers were more successful when their work was congruent with their internal values and interests.

Autonomy

Autonomy is the need for self-direction and control over one's actions (Dworkin, 1988). Autonomy is a key element of art entrepreneurship because artistic activity is always linked to freedom of expression. Artists tend to be more self-directed in what they do, and motivation and success are likely to be influenced by autonomy.

Competence

Competence involves the development of skills and the ability to effectively perform tasks (Soto, 2021; Caena, 2019). Competence among artpreneurs is closely associated with their artistic skills and entrepreneurial skills. Skills and knowledge are continuously developed, which will help the artist to create good-quality works and will help to face the challenges of the market.

Relatedness

Relatedness is a need for social connection and a sense of belonging. Networks, relationship building, and recognition are key factors in art entrepreneurship, as they offer opportunities, support, and recognition (Gao et al., 2024). Artist visibility and success are greatly affected by connections with galleries, critics, and audiences.

Integrating Motivation and Success in Art Entrepreneurship

Motivation forms a vital chain between the individual's capabilities and entrepreneurial outcomes. Intrinsic motivation is characterized by passion, self-expression, and personal fulfillment, and is a characteristic of artists (Sheldon, 2019). The importance of autonomy for entrepreneurs has been further substantiated by recent research. De Clercq and Brieger (2022) investigated the importance of autonomy in difficult situations for entrepreneurs, highlighting its role in helping to overcome constraints and balance work and life.

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations interact to influence artists' definition and approach to success. Some are concerned with art integrity and satisfaction, while others are on a market success and financial stability path. By exploring the effects of psychological needs on motivation and behavior, SDT offers a fuller understanding of these differences.

Methodology

This study was exploratory in nature and lacked the availability of comprehensive data on artpreneurs in Pakistan, thereby justifying a methodological approach that could account for the complexities in the lives of artpreneurs. As the research aimed to understand the process of defining and achieving success within the field of art and the significance of formal education in this process, an interpretivist paradigm was used. According to Interpretivism, social reality is brought to life by the meanings people give to their experiences, and there are several subjective realities (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). This philosophical stance is congruent with the aim of this study, which is to gain insights into the lived experiences of artpreneurs from their perspective. Therefore, a qualitative research design was considered to be the most suitable in order to explore a phenomenon in depth, to capture the richness and complexity of human experience, which quantitative methods do not allow. The qualitative method also enables the researcher to gain deeper insights into the artists' perceptions of the role of education, self-learning, and other factors in influencing their entrepreneurial journeys (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). To examine factors that underlie success rather than test a predetermined hypothesis, which is the goal of the study.

This study's subjects were practicing artists actively involved in art-related entrepreneurial activities. In order to make a meaningful comparison between the two groups of painters – formally educated and autodidact artists – the

focus was specifically on them. There were 20 participants in this study. These people are all residents of various cities in Pakistan such as Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Karachi, which have a relatively active art community (Choudhry et al., 2026). Participants were wide-ranging in age, experience, and education, offering a variety of perspectives for the study.

The participants were selected based on the aim of understanding art entrepreneurship as a career choice. Hence, those who were working for a living or who were interested in art as a means of livelihood were included. The participants were approached personally, with their consent for conducting the interviews and through referrals. Interviews were conducted during a 3-week period. The interviews were conducted for 25-50 minutes and depended on the depth of the responses. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed for analysis with the participants' consent.

Table 1

Demographics

Participant	Age	Educated/ Autodidact	Years as artpreneur
P/1	24	Autodidact	2
P/2	23	Autodidact	3
P/ 3	25	Autodidact	2
P/ 4	27	Autodidact	4
P/ 5	26	Autodidact	3
P/ 6	24	Educated	2
P/ 7	28	Educated	4
P/ 8	25	Educated	3
P/ 9	29	Educated	3
P/ 10	24	Educated	1
P/ 11	27	Educated	2
P/ 12	23	Educated	1
P/ 13	27	Educated	3
P/ 14	30	Educated	5
P/ 15	24	Educated	1
P/ 16	22	Autodidact	1
P/ 17	25	Autodidact	3
P/ 18	29	Autodidact	5
P/ 19	31	Autodidact	6
P/ 20	26	Autodidact	2

The demographics of participants are shown in Table No.1.

This study used a semi-structured interview method for data collection. This was selected because of the balance of structure and flexibility. There were guiding questions, but the format was such that the participants could express their thoughts freely and share their experiences in detail.

The first step of the research was to create an interview guide. Some pre-tests of the questions were completed during a few pilot interviews to analyze their clarity and relevance. These preliminary interviews were used to make minor edits in order to enhance the flow and understanding of the questions. The interviews centered on themes of art career development, definitions of success, education and training, obstacles encountered, and factors that have helped the interviewees grow. As artpreneurs are a specific and relatively small group, purposive sampling was used to ensure that the researcher was concentrating on those participants who could offer some meaningful insights. In

addition to purposive sampling, snowball sampling was also used. Initial respondents made referrals to this to reach participants.

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data for this study. This is because this is a method that is both structured and flexible. There was a set of guiding questions, but it gave participants the freedom to express their thoughts and share their experiences in detail.

Thematic analysis was used for data analysis of the interviews. Each interview was then thoroughly examined and coded by hand after transcription. The aim of coding was to uncover patterns and recurring ideas in the data. Themes were identified inductively, that is, from the data itself and not from a predetermined list (Chandra, 2019). Firstly, a lot of codes were produced from respondents' responses. These codes were then further streamlined and collapsed into sub-themes and more general themes. Through this process, six main categories were identified. These categories are the most critical factors that can contribute to art entrepreneurship success. The themes were designed in a manner that matches the research goals and provides a framework for data understanding.

The list of categories is as follows:

- 1. Factors influencing success
- 2. Knowing the correct spelling of the letters in a word.
- 3. Being able to read a word.
- 4. Determination for artists

The reasons why artists can be successful in their work.

- 1. Artpreneurs and art world significance
- 2. Art lovers and art critics to artists

Findings & Analysis

The analysis is carried out based on thematic interpretation, which includes responses classified into categories, themes, and sub-themes. The participants were then asked about their journey, their perspective on success, the importance of education, and the difficulties encountered during their journey. These questions enabled the personal experiences and perception of the art market to be captured.

A summary of the coding structure is first presented to give an overview of the organization of the data before delving into the themes in detail.

Participant/ respondent is part of our research data with a letter 'P'.

Table 2

Codification process

Category	Themes	Sub-themes	Codes
			Art education stimulates skills.
			Art education refines artists.
			Institutes provide extrinsic motivations.
		Education a need	Art institutes create opportunities.
			Importance of art education
			Art degree matters for jobs
		Showcasing Art	Art education assists in building a portfolio.
			Art education significant for Concepts
			Art education aids presentation of artwork.

Category	Themes	Sub-themes	Codes
Factors influencing success	Vitality of arts education		Art education builds team effort. Art education improves management. Art institutes provide safety nets.
		Guidance for artists	Art education provides guidance. Art education helps in decision-making.
			Significance of art professionals Art education grooms artists Importance of theory in art Art education aids concentration.
		Art knowledge significant	Curriculum helps in experimentation. Importance of acquiring art knowledge Self-taught artists succeed w/o art education.
		Individualism in art	Artists succeed when art survives on its own Art has its own identity. Art motivation is internal.
	Vitality of self-learning in Art		Autodidact artists have no boundaries. Self-learning helps artists succeed.
		Freedom in self-learning	Self-taught artists have freedom in the arts. Self-taught artists experiment more. Self-determination boosts confidence Self-taught artists have skills. Artists are born Educated artists live in a box. Demand and technique differ in art. Issues with curriculum in arts
		Creative restriction	Art institutes don't appreciate diversity. Art institutes hinder creativity. Art education hinders artistic freedom. Involuntary work demotivates artists.
	Art educations lacking		Art education not necessary to succeed Art institutes considered unprepared.
		Institutional problems of education	Art teaching causes financial failure. Art educationists lack experience.
Potential barriers to success			Art education is expensive. Art education lacks approachability. Educated artists lack business knowledge.
		Society a hindrance	Lack of support for arts profession Society a hindrance for art success Institutional politics a hindrance to control Art institutes are a label.
	Issues with self-learning in art	Inadequacy of resources	Struggle in self-taught art Self-taught artists lack knowledge.

Category	Themes	Sub-themes	Codes
Determination for artists	Factors affecting art from a success perspective	Lack direction	Autodidact artists lack resources.
			Self-taught artists lack guidance.
			Self-taught artists lack opportunities.
			Importance of focus to succeed in arts
			Competence to attain goals in arts
			Importance of effort in arts
			Instinctive deadlines help succeed
			Importance of goal setting
Determination for artists	Factors affecting art from a success perspective	Need for Competence	Significance of vision in arts
			Competence enhances creativity
			Goal clarity essential to control attainment
			Hard work aids artists.
			Focus leads to determination.
			Self-determination saves from failure.
			Importance of fear of failure
			Importance of direction in art careers
Determination for artists	Factors affecting art from a success perspective	Relatedness a factor for art	Importance of collaboration in arts
			Importance of artistic persona as motivator
			Importance of external validation
			Belonging critical to success in art
			Importance of relatedness to succeed
			Self-persuasion helps succeed in the arts.
			Art is for yourself.
			Control aids flexibility in arts.
Determination for artists	Factors affecting art from a success perspective	Autonomy for artists	Self achieves autonomy
			Importance of control in arts
			Decision-making fosters success
			Control is intrinsic
			Trauma motivates artists
			Emotions of loss motivate artists.
			Art is motivated through pain.
			Anger motivates artists
Determination for artists	Motivation through emotions	Self-liberation a motivation	Struggle fosters success in artists.
			Competitiveness an extrinsic motivator
			Importance of freedom of expression
			Meaningful art helps succeed.
			Mindful thinking aids success in arts.
			Painting is self-expression for artists.
			Art is for yourself.
			Ambition fosters success
Determination for artists	Motivation through emotions	Intrinsic motivation for success	Passion an intrinsic motivator
			Art is a need more than a want.
			Importance of concept for artists
			Art education helps build consistency.
			Internal motivation causes consistency.
			Consistency in art
			Consistency essential to self-learning

Category	Themes	Sub-themes	Codes
Motivations for successful artist	Situational and behavioral motivation in the arts		Significance of consistency Importance of process in art Importance of time invested Patience leads to success for artists.
			Importance of practice in arts Practice an intrinsic need.
	Motivation of expertise	Practicality of importance	Importance of resources for practice Art needs practice more than theory. Practice aids control Practice fosters competence Importance of idea generation
		Skills significant to art	Craft improvement critical to success Skill and learning achieved with time. Skill refinement for success Skills help artists succeed.
Art Market		Art needs Capability	Importance of experimentation in art Exploration helps succeed in the arts. Creativity salient to success Right use of resources in art aids success Importance of technique in art Importance of art community Understanding differentiation in the art world Market awareness critical to success
		Significance of art markets	Practicality essential to art market Art markets need Art market is built on change. Skills essential to the art market Art market wants perfection.
		Issues relating to the art community	Lack of art enthusiasts in online market Governmental support for art markets Unstable art markets Art use for economic gain Need for flexibility in the art market. Importance of environment in art
		Significance of Environment for artists	External environment fosters autonomy. Art edu provides a challenging environment.
Artpreneurs and art world significance		Artpreneurs potential	Surrounding imp as extrinsic motivation Importance of exposure for artists Entrepreneurial intentions save art.
			Importance of art entrepreneurs Entrepreneurship essential for art careers Self-taught artists similar to entrepreneurs Art entrepreneurs have no limitations.

Category	Themes	Sub-themes	Codes
Art enthusiasts and critics essential to artists	Entrepreneurship in arts		Money motivates commercial artists.
		Financial success a motivator	Fame and financial success as motivation Importance of sales knowledge Coping with change essential to artists Art education fosters critique.
		Critique	External critique a hindrance Internal critique a way to success External critique aids success. Appreciation an extrinsic motivator for arts
	Validation aids success	Appreciation	Appreciation essential to success Recognition essential to success in arts Art needs to be valued.
		Audience	Importance of audience study Need for audience Importance of platform in arts Art is meant to be shared.
			Importance of social media presence Art institutes provide networking.
	Networking a need	Artists need connections.	Importance of networking for artists Importance of connections in art Connections form opportunities Educated artists have better connections. Personal connections a need in art
		Communication a need for art	Socialization essential to artists Art education fosters communication. Importance of communication for sales

Category 1: Factors Influencing Success

The first category examines, in detail, the determinants of entrepreneurial success in the practice of artpreneurs from the educational and self-learning perspectives. By examining the data carefully, two main themes emerged in this category: arts and education are vital, and so is self-learning in art, both of which are important for artists who wish to be successful. More significantly, the results indicate that success is not a function of an artist's formal education, but a function of what resources, skills, and mindsets they have developed, independent of their formal education. There are pros and cons to both formal and self-education, and both have the potential to become successful entrepreneurs when used properly.

The participant P/17 was a formally educated artist who had three years of experience, and spent his time looking at the conceptual aspects of art training:

Art education is significant because it assists artists to create art, think about it, and create ideas. (P/17)

This response emphasizes the formal education's cognitive and conceptual effects. The participant is able to differentiate between art making and the deliberate and conceptually advanced process of art making. From this point of view, art education offers artists tangible ways to consider their work as it evolves through idea generation,

to understand the context of their work, and to give their works meaning beyond the visual realm. It aligns with Seitamaa-Hakkarainen's (2022) conception of art education as the learning of knowledge in the context of arts, which draws on the notion of teaching aesthetics and studio art, and with a focus on understanding studio practice as the way to learn an artist's knowledge of using skill to produce expressions visually.

Participant P/2 was an autodidact artist who had only three years of experience and questioned the need for formal education:

On the art market, I have encountered artists who have no formal training in the arts at an institution and are better artists than those who have an education. (P/2)

This response reinforces a common attitude among participants that formal education is not always the key to success, and that without formal education a person is not missing out. Given that this is a statement based on an "observed" result rather than a principle, the participant's reference to the "personal experience in the art market" is relevant. This is a statement based on an "observed" result and not a principle, and the participant's reference to the "personal experience in the art market" is relevant. This is congruent with Meyer and Norman's (2020) claims that art education develops professional skills, but so can other forms of artists who are self-taught.

Self-directed learning is a creative process with freedom and flexibility, Participant P/1 said, who is an autodidact artist with 2 years of experience.

"But in my perspective, you can create art from anything. That's the freedom you get by not having an education in arts. As for an autodidact artist, such restraints don't exist." (P/1)

This is a statement of a basic conflict between formal education and creative freedom. The participant proposes that institutional environments have an inherent nature that can restrict artistic exploration in terms of curriculum, evaluation, and pedagogical techniques. For the self-taught artist, the idea of making art out of anything is a dream come true. This finding aligns with Gross's (2019) observation that there is no more freedom than actually not having any boundaries at all, and that education, no matter how much it cultivates, ends up putting barriers of a certain set of curriculum.

The participant P/19, an autodidact artist who has six years of experience, pointed out the positive psychological effects of self-direction:

"It doesn't put pressure on you or expectations on you from anywhere; it's about you, and you're going to make it work on your own." (P/19)

In this reply, the motivation dynamics of self-directed artistic practice are uncovered. The lack of external demands takes away one source of pressure, but also means that the responsibility for the individual artist is increased. Mastery of his or her own journey implies a certain amount of independence that the self-taught develops from the beginning, which might be advantageous in an entrepreneurial environment where self-reliance is a key factor. The finding is related to the theory of self-determination, which has been emphasized in the literature that autonomy is one of the psychological needs that leads to better motivation and well-being (De Clercq & Brieger, 2022).

The results indicate that both competence and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2020) are important factors in shaping success. Only artists who had the opportunity to polish their skills and make connections would have a chance to attain sustainable success.

A potential barrier to success will be categorized as a Category 2.

Despite the positive aspects of formal education, participants recognized that there are a number of major restrictions in the art institutes that could impede or limit an artist's success. Some of these were lack of practical training, poor practical training, lack of funds, and narrow curriculum.

Participant P/2, an autodidact artist with three years of experience who had thought about taking formal classes, lambasted the poor effectiveness of institutional training:

I would love to learn the niche thing in my art field, which is tattoo art, practically, but the institutes were not well suited for me. (P/2)

This response reveals a serious disconnect between institutional offerings and artists' needs in specialized areas. The reference given by the participant as "more practical form" indicates that art education can be more theoretical than hands-on in some instances. This disparity can be especially significant for artists involved in commercial or applied art, who often have qualifications but may not be as well prepared as the art market demands. This correlates with Thom's (2016) suggestion that art requires practical experience that an artist needs to acquire after he has been in school, and research indicating that many art schools lack the skills necessary for artists to be successful entrepreneurs.

With three years' experience, Participant P/13, a formally educated artist, provided an extensive critique of the educational system:

We have no good instructors; an artist has to learn from someone who has more experience, but the instructors in Pakistan are not skilled. At the same time, you don't have freedom of expression; art institutes are very expensive and are not accessible to everybody. (P/13)

The reply points out several systemic issues: lack of instruction, limited creative expression, and financial barriers. The subject matter is the quality of the artist's teachers, which raises questions about the quality of the next generation's teachers. Formal education becomes null and void if the teacher is unskilled and inexperienced. Lastly, the cost of the financial barrier, "very expensive and not approachable to all," is a basic inequity of access to arts education that can prevent talented children with limited economic means from participating. This finding aligns with Baqai & Siddiqui's (2020) conclusion that art education is not a priority to Pakistani policymakers and is left out for elitist and rich society.

Participant P/4, an autodidact artist who has four years of experience, pointed out the shortcomings of cultural limitations of art institutes:

"Most of the educational institutes don't have a creative space, and you don't understand diversity, which means that you have less flexibility in the context to work in the market as artists." (P/4)

This answer covers the link between the educational setting and market adaptability. The participant remarks that in the art institutes, creative spaces are not promoted and diverse approaches are not valued. The result, this line of thinking goes, is that flexibility is a major drawback in what is often an unpredictable art market that requires adaptability from artists. This discovery reinforces (Hattier, 2018) that research for diversity has been called into question, and yet the curriculum is not making any real advances.

However, autodidact artists recognized that self-directed development has its own difficulties, and they also respected their sense of independence. Some of these were limited networking opportunities, resource constraints, slower skills development, and lack of institutional validation.

Participant P/8, who had 3 years of experience and is an autodidact artist, spoke more at length about the lack of resources and guidance for self-taught artists:

However, being an autodidact artist, I do feel that there are lots of things that I am missing out on - things that I don't have the right tools, the right help, or even an instructor on my own that would point out my mistakes and polish my skill. I think for me, the learning process is slower than that of an educated artist. (P/8)

This answer explains in detail the challenges of self-directed learning practised in the real world. The participant recognizes four specific gaps: opportunities, tools, assistance, and instructional feedback. It is acknowledged that "the learning process is slower," which indicates that learning by oneself is not necessarily a more efficient way of becoming skilled. This result is in line with Altonji and Zhong's (2021) suggestion that the self-taught artist tends to enter the labor market at an earlier age and thus has an ability bias, but that such artists may have a slower skill accumulation rate.

Category 3: Determination for Artists

In the interviews, participants were also asked to talk about their experiences and how they overcame them. This resulted in a high level of perseverance and commitment.

The search for autonomy, for self-determination and control in artistry, came to be seen as an important element to the success of artists. Autonomy was reported as a means of making decisions, having creative input and keeping motivation high in the long term.

According to Participant P/5, a formally-trained artist with three years of experience, patience and control were related to a successful artistic practice:

"All artistic pursuits that teach you patience can end up teaching artists control. You really need to keep working, stay on schedule to control your art and its production that ends up in artists making decisions that lead them to success." (P/5)

This response ties together aspects of patience, control, and decision-making as interrelated factors of success. The participant's focus on "stay on schedule" adds a pragmatic element to autonomy, moving beyond a lack of constraint to the ability to self-regulate and sustain productive routines. This finding is consistent with the (Keling et al., 2022) observation that a positive relationship between art entrepreneurs' autonomy and the creation of their works is evident.

Participant P/15, a formally trained artist who had one year of experience, spoke of the meaning of relatedness, an existential imperative:

"Whether you're self-taught or an educated artist, if you don't relate with your art, nobody else will. Eventually the motivation will die." (P/15)

This is a response that focuses on the artist's personal connection with his or her art. The participant proposes that if artists are not connected internally with their own art, then they cannot expect that audiences are internally connected to their art. This story recounts the cause of disconnection as the death of motivation. This finding resonates with Ryan and Deci's (2020) assertion that relatedness is important to provide autonomous motivation and that it plays a very positive role in the aspect of influencing outcomes in learning and creative work.

In the fourth category, successful artists are motivated to make art, which is the rest of the course.

Participants were asked about their motivation, asking them why they selected art, and what keeps them continuing in their work. The answers were clear, and it was evident that motivation is a key factor that influences success. Emotional experiences often come across as very influential, such as pain, trauma, and struggle, which were frequently described as powerful drivers of their artistic direction and level of commitment.

Participant P/1, an autodidact artist with two years of experience, explained that trauma is informing their artwork: "Trauma is a motivator for me – lately, I have been doing art that's all about decisions and happy impulses and... everything morphs into this satire. (P/1)

This answer shows the complicated links between negative experiences and creativity. The participant explains how he/she has tried to produce work with positive material, "feelings of choice and joyous tendencies," but that the creative process always brings him back to satirical expression, which he considers to be an expression of the underlying trauma. It is also consistent with another study by Sheldon & Corcoran (2019) that artists have a greater sense of meaning in their art and tend to enjoy it in the present moment, as opposed to the future, and that emotional experiences are extremely influential in the development of art.

Consistency was the most important thing for Participant P/10, a formally educated artist with one year of experience:

"If you're not consistent about art and experimentation, you can be excellent as an artist." (P/10)

In this reply, one can see how consistency is made a prerequisite of artistic excellence. The participant's response "if you can not be consistent" indicates that this is essential and other qualities will not suffice. Interesting to note the word "experimentation," which is paired with the word "consistency": the participant is not only promoting repetitive practice, but continuous practice with creative experimentation. This finding corresponds with the study conducted by Thom (2016), which showed that entrepreneurial skills in art development need practice and involvement for a long period.

Participant P/6 was a formally trained artist with two years of experience, who made the practical aspects of working before theory:

"You get a formal education in arts, or you don't; the key is to do the practical work." (P/6)

This response is not confined to the education/self-learning dichotomy, but implies that everyone will be successful if they practice engagement rather than education. The way the participant has expressed himself/herself indicates a pragmatic attitude: the value of education is important, but it's less important than making art. This finding is consistent with the research findings of Baymetov & Ibrahimova (2021), which indicate that the ability acquired in school education in the field of arts brings out experience, but new ventures are usually preceded by a long-term practice of techniques of venture creation and idea generation.

Skill development is linked to success in the future: Participant P/2 (autodidact, 3 years of experience):

"If you develop the skill and then really focus on a certain field and start practicing that, it really helps you to be successful." (P/2)

This response shows an understanding of how to develop skills: first the base skills; then the specialist skills; then the consistent practice within the specialist skills. The usage of "grab a specific field" implies that it isn't about spreading your skills around; it's about mastering a certain area. This is consistent with Soto et al. (2021), who have established that competence is the ability to learn and develop a set of skills to obtain a desired outcome or end.

Artpreneurs and Art World Significance

The participants were also asked about their experience of the art market and its impact on their work. They were good at expressing the fluidity of the art sphere. The art market came to play a key role in the success of the artists, with participants referring to its significance and the difficulties they faced.

Participant P/14, a formally trained artist with 5 years' experience, highlighted the validation of practice through the market:

Once artists have practiced enough and come into the field of their art, art markets have a big impact on their success. (P/14)

This was a reaction that made the art market the field of practice for success. Recent studies show that social media is a catalyst and strategic enabler for creative entrepreneurship, where artists can express themselves, engage with an audience, and network in ways that are not possible in institutional settings. This discovery provides context for participants' experiences as they talked about social media as a way of connecting with audiences and creating recognition.

One of the participants, P/10, who had one year of experience and was formally educated, spoke about the pressure imposed by the market to hold formal qualifications:

Artists appear to be forced to choose art education because it helps them to build a brand that the art market demands. And a formal art education can help an artist achieve that. (P/10)

This answer communicates a belief in a preference for credentialed artists in the market. The term 'platformized creativity' refer to the way that algorithmic governance influences artistic practices on platforms like Instagram and TikTok. They discovered that platforms prefer 'beautiful' content that is smooth and predictable over 'aesthetic' content with authenticity and imperfection. This results in conflicts for the artpreneurs between artistic integrity and platform requirements.

Entrepreneurship was highlighted by participants as a critical factor in the longevity of an artist's career, especially related to business skills, taking risks and managing finances.

Participant P/9, who said that he had a formal education in the arts and three years of experience, explained the holistic nature of the requirements of art entrepreneurship:

"Do I know how to set up and open my own entrepreneurial business, one that I can steadily maintain as well? Am I bold and bold enough to take risks and know when not to? Can I transform my artistry from desired to wanted? Entrepreneurship is what enables an artist to work with. (P/9)

The difference between "desired" and "wanted" is certainly revealing, as it indicates that entrepreneurship is a way to make passive appreciation into active market participation. These results corroborate Welsh et al. (2014) research, which showed that some amount of management skills and self-assurance is critical for a person to be an entrepreneur and thus formal education is very important.

Category 6: Art Enthusiasts and Critics Essential to Artists: Art enthusiasts and critics are essential to artists

Validation proved to be a central tool for artists, with participants reflecting on the need and the dimensions involved. Participant P/6, who is formally educated and has two years of experience as an artist, expressed the appreciation in two ways:

You don't appreciate yourself, regardless of what someone does for you; then you aren't going to be able to do anything. Internally, appreciation is important as well as outside. (P/6)

External validation is important, but so is self-validation. The way the participant has said it implies that the phrased work of an artist cannot be accepted if the artist doesn't first accept it. This is in keeping with the emphasis of SDT on intrinsic motivation being a key factor in continued engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2020), which showed that establishing relationships for artpreneurs advances critical thinking, further knowledge and prepare them for success. Participant P/13, who has a three-year practice and is formally educated, highlighted the need for supportive relationships:

Densities. "An artist should have goals. They should have people around them who appreciate them. Usage of such avenues is important. It provides you with a the right audience.

Goals, density (the focus of the attention), appreciative people, avenues (strategies) are identified as several elements of success. The reference to "right audience" indicates that the goal of validation is not only the number of recognitions but also the audience that is relevant to an artist's career path. This finding aligns with the findings by Gao et al. (2024) that has shown that supportive relationships are significantly associated with creative professionals' psychological health and career success.

Networking was identified as a practical need and participants spoke of the opportunities, learning and career progression that comes through networking

Participant P/12, who had been formally trained and had one year's experience, related communication abilities to artistic achievement:

Learning to communicate well is an important skill that will help develop connection to community, and art education really could tap into these. (P/12)

This is the answer to "Communication is a key skill area of the artist that is well served by formal education. The participant argues that artistic ability is not enough; artists need to be able to 'communicate art', engage with audiences, and behave in social situations. This finding corroborates (Bridgstock, 2013) which showed that an artist must make decisions and evaluations based on the way the industry works, and to do this, one must be able to communicate effectively in that industry.

Discussion

The aim of this research is to gain insight into the factors that can contribute to entrepreneurial success in art, focusing on formal education and autodidact learning. The results indicate that success is not the result of one particular pathway, but it is a result of ongoing interaction between the individual motivation, skill growth and external factors.

The result of this study is that the discussion on formal education and self-learning cannot be separated. Formal education offers structured learning, refinement, and network; but it does not ensure success. This is in line with previous studies that indicate that education is beneficial to competence and opportunity recognition but not to entrepreneurial outcomes (Bille & Jensen, 2018). Formal training benefits were apparent for participants, including exposure and networking with others, but these benefits were not sufficient to ensure sustainable career outcomes.

Meanwhile, the results reflect that the creative process of autodidact artists is carried out by testing and persevering to make their work become more independent. This is in line with the idea that self learning may create innovative and original work (Woronkowicz, 2019). Unlike formally educated artists, however, they have to deal with structural disadvantage, as in terms of access to networks, and issues of legitimacy. This indicates that, in the absence of institutional support, self learning does not completely offset it.

The results of this study are similar to more recent uses of Self-Determination Theory in the creative field. (Perrier, 2025) discovered that a significant theme in their findings was intrinsic motivation, which was found to be related to well-being among musicians, especially through satisfaction with psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomous motivation has been found to predict greater engagement and well-being in creative pursuits (Bonneville-Roussy & Evan, 2024). The results of this study, in which participants identified autonomy, competence and relatedness as always being critical to their motivation and success, further validate the relevance of SDT to art entrepreneurship.

The other contribution of this study is the role of motivation. It is evident from the findings that intrinsic motivation plays a pivotal role in the life of an artist to sustain his/her career. In both groups, participants used the terms "passion" and "self-expression" to describe art, highlighting the inner drive in creating artworks (Sheldon, 2019). They were also influenced by other external factors, including money and recognition, especially for maintaining their practice.

This is a very strong argument for Self Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The findings indicate that autonomy is expressed in the need for the freedom to create, the ongoing development of abilities and the relevance of networks and recognition. But these needs are not always met on an equal basis. The study also emphasizes on the significance of external factors, especially in the context of Pakistan. Beyond individual control, there are barriers related to the lack of institutional support, weak market structures, and perceptions of society (Baqai, 2020; Fatima, 2021; Sadik, 2021). All of these have an impact on both opportunities and what success looks like and how it is pursued. This indicates that an entrepreneurial approach to art cannot be fully analyzed without taking into account the wider socio-economic context.

In general, the discussion reveals that the success of art entrepreneurship is a dynamic process, which can be built through the interaction of education, motivation and environment. The study combines these elements, surpassing the dichotomy and giving a more complete picture of artistic careers.

Implications

The results of this research have significance for theory, practice and policy.

Theoretically, this study adds to the body of knowledge about art entrepreneurship by building on the work of Self Determination Theory as it is applied to entrepreneurial studies. In this regard, SDT has been used to understand motivation, but the application of this theory to the field of art entrepreneurship suggests new insights regarding the interactions between autonomy, competence and relatedness in creative careers. The study reveals that these do not work in isolation but are shaped by education and external factors. This contributes to the knowledge of motivation in entrepreneurial contexts.

The educational implications include the need for a re-thinking of the structure of art education. Technical and conceptual knowledge passed down through formal education is often missing from the entrepreneurial skills. To incorporate elements like marketing, branding, networking and financial management into the curriculum of institutions. This would assist artists to make smoother transitions from practice to sustainability. Simultaneously, the importance of recognizing and promoting alternative learning pathways needs to be emphasized, since there are also autodidact artists who play a significant role in the creative economy.

The study makes a policy recommendation to enhance institutional support for the artists. This means there should be more exhibition spaces, funding opportunities and policies should be established that see art as a profession. In countries like Pakistan, where the art scene is still relatively underdeveloped, these efforts can be pivotal in the growth of the art industry and in promoting a love for art among the population.

The results indicated that success for practicing artists is a combination of creativity and market awareness. Artists must continue to build their skill sets and know their audience and market. It's also crucial to build networks and connect with audiences, which will improve visibility and opportunities.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the factors that influence success in entrepreneurship in the art domain, specifically formal education and self-guided learning. The results reveal that success is a multifaceted and complicated process which cannot be accounted by one factor. There are two roads to going into art: formal education and self-education, and neither is a sure road to success. Formal education gives structure, knowledge and networks; self-learning gives creativity, independence and flexibility. But the success of every artist really comes down to how they blend all of the above with motivation and external opportunity.

This study demonstrates that entrepreneurial success in the field of art has several aspects and includes entrepreneurial education, self-education, motivation and external influences. Both educated and self-taught artists go in different ways, but ultimately, it's how people use what they have and how they adjust to their surroundings that determines their success. There are, however, limitations to the study. The sample size was small and might limit the generalizability of the results. Furthermore, the research was based on a particular context; this might not fully reflect the experiences of other artists in other parts of the country. The qualitative nature of the study results in depth, but also reduces the capacity to make wider statistical inferences. The results reveal that external factors play a major role in the success of businesses, including market dynamics, institutional support and societal perceptions. Artists have to be more flexible and creative in environments where these structures are fragile.

Expanding these findings can be achieved through future research, which can include larger and more varied samples, studies of other art forms, and an investigation into the impact that digital platforms have on entrepreneurial success. A comparative study in the field of art entrepreneurship in a variety of cultural and economic backgrounds would help gain a wider perspective of art entrepreneurship.

In general, this research has added to the knowledge of art entrepreneurship by providing an overall picture of the success factors that combine education, motivation and environment. It also calls for further studies in the context of developing markets, where the art entrepreneurship process might vary from more mature markets.

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Appendices

Interview Guide

Age: _____

Educated/Autodidact: _____

Years of experience: _____

1. What do you think is the importance of art education in learning artistic skills?
2. How does art education better equips one with employability in the profession?
3. In what way do you think success can be achieved as an artist being self-employed?
4. Being an autodidact artist in what way do you think education could harness your skills?
5. What is your point of view on entrepreneurship as a field of study being an artist?
6. As an educated artist do you consider yourself better equipped than autodidact artists or vice versa?
7. In what way do you think art aesthetics are skills that need formal education?
8. What are the gaps in arts education and the art market that exist?
9. What role do you think self determination plays in providing a successful route for an artist?
10. What psychological needs do you think foster motivation in artists to be successful?
11. In what way do you believe that artists are more inclined to be successful through intrinsic motivation or extrinsic motivation?
12. How do you think an academic degree in arts provides you with autonomy?
13. In comparison how do you believe autonomy as an intrinsic motivation can be achieved without an academic surrounding?
14. What do you think provides an artist with the need of competence to feel motivated?
15. What's your perspective of relatedness as a motivator being an artist?
16. What are the recommendations you would provide to become a more successful artist in the present day?
17. What suggestion would you give an artist in the perspective of opting for an education in arts or a self-learning path?