ABSTRACT
This paper is an attempt to explore if and how art therapy has been used as a means of healing to treat patients in Pakistan. It is a qualitative exploratory study that aims to describe the process of art therapy as used around the world, its perceived effectiveness and success, and the limitations and constraints local practitioners may commonly face. Apart from that this study also seeks to explore how art may have been used as therapy or as a ‘healer’ by unqualified practitioners. Information from this study will be useful to local mental health professionals, including school counselors, who may wish to incorporate art therapy or the use of art as therapy into their practice. The methods of data collection in this study comprised of semi-structured interviews and analyses of relevant literature. The interviews revealed that art therapy as a profession and using art as therapy has been perceived to be an effective tool to treat patients. Minor constraints faced by the practitioners in practice involve the lack of awareness about art therapy in Pakistan leading to people being misled, thinking they are doing art therapy when in reality they may just be using art as a healer. Art therapy is a very young field in Pakistan. Steps need to be taken to advance this form of therapy and raise public awareness about the benefits of this type of therapy. This paper concludes with some recommendations for future research, so as to create more literature about art therapy, especially with respect to its practice in Pakistan.