Arts, Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development in Nigeria: Visual Arts in Focus

By

Nwombu, Ugochukwu Kingsley PhD
Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Faculty of Humanities,
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt
Email: ugokingsleyn@gmail.com

Abstract

Visual art venture which is an aspect of entrepreneurship, potents to take the nation to rapid developmental lane. This could be very possible especially where there is a collaboration with science and technology. Many of the physical structures to which a nation is identified with are the contributions of the arts. However, this study sought to examine the arts entrepreneurship and sustainable development in relation to societal perception and the effect it exerts in career upbringing of youths in the society. The aim of this paper was to briefly discuss the rejuvenation of arts and science and technology in nation building and sustainable development. It addressed how art serves entrepreneurial scheme in the society, rational for visual art study in schools, visual arts and sustainable develop. In achieving this discourse, an observational method of inquiry was carefully applied through its analytical and critical evaluation. The paper concluded that the society should raise professional consciousness and stimulate progressive mutuality between Arts, Science and Technology to promote nation building and sustainable development. It is recommended that training in art should emphasize to trainees on the entrepreneurial nature of art which they must venture into at the end of their training.

Keywords: Visual Arts, Entrepreneurship, Sustainability, Focus

Introduction

Creation of the world was the art of God. It gives insight to the genesis of creative arts vis-a-vis visual arts; the expression of human creative talent in visual form, as in painting, graphics, textiles, sculpture inter alia. Designs of art from origin have impacted very much on human civilization especially in technology and science. A case at hand was the inventions of the early creative artists who fashioned various implements for agriculture, hunting clubs and other art products from vegetable materials for protective covering and other utilitarian values Oloidi, (2011:p.63). Artistic designs serve for technological advancement and scientific experimentations. Art also serves entrepreneurial scheme in the society because of its self-reliant goal (Ogboji & Ezeugwu, 2014: p.31). However, so many forces have risen against visual arts. For instance, some persons limit visual arts to just drawing and painting, others speculate that it cannot put food on the table, still others have argued that it has paved way for science and technology. All these and many others have led the society to query about the contributions of art to nation building. The oversight of arts has made the society to project the science and technology over the arts in nation building. Therefore, this study is a contribution to the sensitization of political leaders, decision makers, donors and promoters of development projects and the rest members of the society emphasizing that art, science and technology must be understood as compatible and mutually reinforcing each other in nation building and sustainable development. Art, science and technology should work in synergy without interference from the society to build a stronger economy and promote sustainable development.

The Crux of the Matter

The Arts/Humanities are subjects of study concerned with human culture. The arts subjects place greater emphasis on imaginative and creative ability than technical and practical skills needed in science. One of the subjects of Arts which this study considers is "Visual Arts". The expression of human

creatie talent especially in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, Hornby (2005; p.69). Art exists in various cultures with diverse functions according to differing social and philosophical needs Walker, (2002; p.107). Visual arts designate those works of arts addressed primarily to the sense of sight and are visually tangible. Worthy of note are graphics, textile design, print making, ceramics, sculpture painting and the likes. Studies in these areas develop skills and knowledge, thereby holding greater prospect to the learner hence it guarantees job security to learners and serves entrepreneurial scheme in the society. The art contributes positively to socio-economic gains and sustainable development (development that meet the need of the present without compromising that of the future generation).

No modern society can develop industrially or meaningfully without "Arts" stated Nnamdi Azikiwe in 1961 in a goodwill message to Mr. Akinola Lasekan in Art Department of University of Nigeria, Nsuka. ZIK as popularly called, as a person who loves art, instructed students and staff of art department in the institution to "make this touch of creativity (art) which Aina Onabolu gave to us, at the dawn of this century brighter and more enlightening to Africa" (Oloidi 2004; p.12). And aspirations of Nigeria rested on Arts and rightly so. In prehistoric period early craftmen, the early creative artists (designers) were able to fashion protective coverings from vegetable materials and early sculptors chipped stones and produced hunting clubs and protective including other utilitarian instruments. This was how art marked the beginning of industrial revolution and modern technology Oloidi, (2011; p.63).

Technology is a word derived from two Greek words "techne" which denotes art or craft and "logos" that mean word or speech. The two words put together mean a serious discourse or deliberation Encyclopedia, (1979; p.357). Technology is design and design is art, that means, that art is the foundation of technology. Despite this giant strides made by art which culminated at the birth of technology and by extension science, art has not been appreciably recognized and regarded by the society. Art was, is and

will ever remain the sure foundation of every reasonable development in the society. It is on record that Leonardo da Vinci graphically designed from imagination a flying machine which took science four hundred years to catch up with this idea. Talabi (2000, Geonagana 2014; p.22). Lending credence to the statement above, Ogum (2018; p.4) states that the artistic presentation of human beings in flight by Leonardo da Vinci motivated the Wright brothers to design and fly an aeroplane hundreds of years later. Even where evidences abound, that art gave birth to technology, by extension science, some scientifically cultivated, creatively crafted and very locally bred technologists/scientists including the general uninformed members of the society according to Oloidi (2011; p.2) had not seen the various contributions of art to the development of the society. They have down trodden (marginalized) art and upheld the science and technology as the agents of development in the society. This erroneous perception and attitude of the uninformed individuals about art have also been reflected globally by various governments, funding agencies and multinational corporation who then develop bellicose attitude to art, poor and complete absence of research findings, and constant struggle for financial supports, poor public prestige, lack of political influence and lack of policy implementation of research findings in art. The exceptional emphasis on science and technology over the arts has led parents and students manifest apathy to visual art study which the evidence is seen in the lack of zeal for admission in visual arts.

Rationale for Visual Arts Study in Schools

Like every other discipline, visual arts study develops in individual a responsive member of the society who does not only contribute to the development of the society alone but also articulate ideas for the leadership of the same society in uplifting of both immediate and future generations. The rationale for visual art was unconnected with the limitations of the memory or intellectual incapacity of the learner as was insinuated in some quarters. This is farfetched, apparently not true. There was no reason to

develop complex for their chosen career or to feel inferior to other students particularly, when like other students they were admitted on the strength of their distinctive school certificate results Oloidi, (2011; p.55). The preference placed by candidates, the desire informed over a chosen career such as visual arts cannot be subjected to weakness in science or technology. It is the natural love that someone placed over something that shapes that persons' interest on it.

Knowledge is not static, it is dynamic. It diversifies and widens. It creates room for choices amongst individuals in the society. It is clear that human existence would have been boring if all humans were to think the same way in same condition at all times; make same choice and produce same effect Ogum (2018; p.3-4). Since the reverse is the case, the need to have preference in career choice remains valid.

Visual art is the basic and foundation of knowledge. Every other knowledge metamorphosed from art and on it other knowledge is built. The visual arts as one would rightly identify are works of human creative ideas, emotions and thoughts expressed in visual form which must be tangible and aesthetically functioned in the society. Works of painting, sculpture, graphics, ceramics and so on are aesthetically formed and functionally accepted in the society as exhibits of visual arts. In visual arts study, talent describes the gifted child but skill to create works of art are potential innate in every individual. This can be harnessed through practicing works of art especially in art studio. Studio is the heart of art practice. Studio art experience is the heart of art education and the foundation of every meaningful development.

Visual Arts as Entrepreneurial Study

No society has ever toyed with the transformational power associated with visual arts. Visual arts afford individuals with critical thinking and creative skills the ingenuity in becoming whatever you want to be). Man expresses himself visually with his ideas, feelings, emotion and thoughts which he derives from the impactful training in various activities. The society

realizes the importance of arts to mankind and adopts it to reconstruct the minds of the juvenile delinquents, the embittered restive youths and that of the children in their formative education years. Visual arts are recommended for the physically challenged and for treatment of patients in hospitals, since it is therapeutic. The entrepreneurial study of visual arts goes beyond the above descriptive roles it plays in the society. Entrepreneurial function of visual arts emanates from the understanding of entrepreneurship. The concept of entrepreneurship as a derivative of the word entrepreneur is better understood as a person who is successful in setting up business or enterprise. According to Ottih (2016; p.11), an entrepreneur is one who creates, organizes and takes the risk of a business or an enterprise. He is usually found undertaking profit making activity. In the case of lost in his enterprise he bears the risk solely. Therefore an entrepreneur is a risk bearer.

Entrepreneurship refers to the activities and processes of new venture creation and the management of the new venture to a stable state. It emphasizes the personality, the process and the enterprise (Ottih, 2016; p.13). Similarly, the activity of art venture is like that of the entrepreneurship. Artistic training either as a student in academic environment or an apprentice in the Master's art studio prepares the individual to be self-reliant at the end of the training. Self-reliant person is one who do not depend on another person's assistance but provides for himself. The training ground otherwise "the studio" imparts the necessary but sufficient requisite skills and adequate knowledge of art to engage him or her at the end of the training in the entrepreneurial world. The art initiates him or her into the venture of setting up an art studio where he/she practice his/her profession with utmost goal of success in his new venture. Artistic training opens up different entrepreneurial opportunities to the trainee. Most individuals who benefitted from organizing their experiences in art have their investment in private art studios, art galleries, art shops, printing studios/press etc. This is where career in visual arts play pivotal role to individual trainee. Art is a lucrative industry where even the non-

artist-initiate plays the entrepreneurial role to a successful or fruitful end. Therefore, "entrepreneurship started by individual who possess qualities of initiative, good judgment and foresight to generate winning ideas, the drive, an ambition to push ahead and take the risk by investing in the ideas and the motivation and energy to create the enterprise and propel it to success and fruition, (Ottih (2016; p.11).

Conversely, this incredible benefits attributed to visual arts study which can transform the present state of the nation's economy is yet to be appreciated, encouraged or even supported by students, parents, governments and the grant funding agencies for research in this field of study both locally and internationally. This is evidenced in the lack of zeal for admission by students, supported by their parents, as a result of emphasis placed on science over the arts. The nonchalant attitude on the part of government to implement policies that affect education in arts, budgetary cuts to advance knowledge in visual arts and lack of political will to sustain the system. These and many more have resulted to the artists' struggling daily in practicing the career in unconducive environments for sustenance of their most cherished profession in anticipation for a bright future.

Visual Arts and Sustainable Development

Products of visual arts serve for entertainment mostly to the viewers, education to the onlookers and preservation of other cultural values in the society not just to the present generation but also the future or generation yet unborn. Art serves sustainable development in the society.

According to Brudtland Commission Report (2008), sustainable development is development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The notion of sustainable development refers to the judicious and planned use of available resources (natural) to equitable development to meet the needs of the present generation without jeopardizing that of the future generation. The National Policy on Environment (NPE) adopted this

motion. This implies that sustainable development is the ability to maintain an optimal level of development given known or predictable factor constrain into indefinite future. It is said to have a futuristic element and dimension Emelie (2017; p. 7) states that the term sustainable development is very much complex, that it unifies conservation of nature resources and development. This is where visual arts and artists stand prominent in the society. This must have evoked this statement. In the past, artists could be deployed as functionaries quite unrelated to the seemingly rootless and casual participants of today, each pursuing individual journey, which contributes much to the texture of the society Brown (1995). He identified artists as the major contributor and builder of the society.

Most of the objects that constitute developments we refer to, are products of visual arts.

For instance, the "Pleasure Parks" build by Rivers State Government under the leadership of the Governor of the state in 2017, Chief Barr. Ezenwo Nyesom Wike. Some are monumental sculptures, architectural structures artifacts etc. Designs of visual arts are also adopted where there is a diversionary sustainable development in the science and technology. It would not be out of place if it is realized that artistic training embedded in its objective a futuristic goal. The experience developed from training right from initiation through the prolonged career training is also a sustained development of the artist and that of the society where he operates after his training. Most works of art are not for immediate consumption but are preserved for future utility in the society. For this reason art and sustainable development do not part ways rather they are complementary to each other and good partners in progress.

Conclusion

Arts/Humanities are subjects of study concerned with human culture. The study emphasizes imaginative and creative ability other than technical and practical skills required in the science. Art or Visual Arts as the focus of this study is the expression of human creative talent in a visual form like

painting or sculpture, works of art are found in various cultures serving different needs in the society. The activity of art venture is comparative to entrepreneurship. The reason is that the skills and knowledge acquire from art training engages one at the end of the training into the entrepreneurial world. The art initiates him/her into the venture of setting up an art studio where he or she practices his or her profession.

Civilization and development started with art particularly with the stone-age or prehistoric period by the early men. Various agricultural tools were fashioned by the artists.

Leonardo da Vinci, an artist of uncommon equal was referenced to have designed graphically from imagination a flying machine which took science about four hundred years to realize. The designs and creativity of arts gave rise to technology and science in the society. Although, technology and science have made live easier in the society, arts as the foundation of development is still vibrant and relevant to bring greater development and sustainability in the society. They should be allowed to work in synergy to bring development to equilibrium which should be sustainable. Not science, not even arts nor technology should be left out in building the society. All the three need each other and should be allowed to play the complementary role for sustainable development in the society.

Recommendation

It is the recommendation of this study that

(1) Training in art should emphasize to trainees on the entrepreneurial nature of art which they must venture into at the end of their training.

(2) Every support should be given to trainers of art from all the stakeholders who see entrepreneurship education as the hope of a developing nation like Nigeria.

(3) The society should allow arts, science and technology to play the complementary role as to move the nation forward in terms of development and sustainability.

References

BCR (2008) Brudtland Commission Report. Committee on Sustainable Development. "*International Law on sustainable Development*" Rio de Jenerio conferences International Law Association.

Emelie C. I. C. (2017) Poverty Eradication: Environmental conservation and Sustainable Development in Nigeria. *IAUE Journal of Social Sciences vol. 14,* A publication of the Faculty of Science. Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni Port Harcourt.

Encyclopedia, (1979) American, Vol.10 International Edition, Dunbury.

Hornby A. S. (2005) *Oxford advance Learner's Dictionary 7th Edition*. Oxford University Press. London.

Nwombu, U. K. (2016) *The Challenges of Creativity in Art Practice in Port Harcourt Metropolis*, Nigeria. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis. Department of Fine and Applied Arts, UNN, University of Nigeria. Nsukka.

Ogum, D. N. (2018) Humanity in the Externalised Synergy of Sign, Space and Style: Advance and Thoughts, 9th Inaugural Lecture. Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Port Harcourt.

Oloidi, O. (2004) Nnamdi, Azikiwe in the History and Development of Modern Nigerian Art, Modern Nigeria Art in Historical Perspective (Abuja: Art Historical Association of Nigeria).

Oloidi, O. (2004) The Rejected Stone: Visual Arts in and Artistically Uninformed Nigerian Society. 58th Inaugural Lecture of the UNN Published by Sente Ceremonials Committee.

Otti, L. O. (2016) Entrepreneurship Personality, Process and Enterprise. Pearl Publishers International Ltd. 12-14 Njemanze Street, Port Harcourt. Fourth Edition.

Talabi, G. O. (2000) Art teaching in Africa School, Heinemam Educational Books, (Nigeria) Limited in Ganamagana S. E. (2014; P. 4) Basics of Visual Arts Binatuatova Publishers Limited. 24 Milford Okilo Road, Elegue, Yenegua, Balyelsa State Nigeria.

Walker, R. (2002) "Draw out" A Humanist Approach to Drawing: Journal of Arts and Design Education Vol. 21, No. 2 @ NSEAD 2002.