# Symbolic Interactions with Art Works in Health-Care Spaces In Lagos State, Nigeria

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**Abstract**

Arts in healthcare have become a significant therapeutic intervention and a rising subject of global discourse. The aim of this study is to examine the impact of Visual Arts on patients and staff. Therefore, the research adopts symbolic interaction model to determine the forms of object (art works) available in the health care environment that patients interacted with, seeks to access the categories of individuals interacting and the consequent responses. Qualitative research design is used in this study and four hospitals in Lagos State were selected for the purpose of this research. Questionnaires were used to collect data from forty six (46) respondents including staff and patients in the hospitals. The findings of the study show that staff and patients have profound but differing predilections for Visual Arts as displayed in their care spaces. Members of staff appreciate the therapeutic value as element for psychologically dousing their stress, burnout and tension in their workplace, patients appreciate it for the healing effect, elimination and reduction of uneasy feeling, hopelessness, anxiety, pain and trepidation.

**Key words: stakeholders, arts in health, interventions, therapeutic, healthcare spaces**

**Introduction**

Symbolic interaction is one of many theories in social sciences. This theory claims that facts are based on and directed by symbols. Symbolic interaction examines the meanings emerging from the reciprocal interaction of individuals in social environment with other individuals and focuses on the question of "which symbols and meanings emerge from the interaction between people?"

According to Nilgun, Buket, Mufit and Sumeyra (2009), people live both in the natural and the symbolic environment. Symbolic interaction is a process that is enlivened the reciprocal meaning and values by aid of the symbols in the mind. Objects don't have meaning on their own. But objects get their meanings from the social actors. Consequently symbolic interaction is a process of "interpretation of the action"

Symbolic interaction is based on three basic propositions (a) Humans develop their attitudes towards things according to the meanings that things propose to them. (b) These meanings are inferred from the "interaction of one of them from its addressees". (c) These meanings change within an interpretive process. Objects, humans, conditions and events don't feature an intrinsic meaning. Meaning is attributed to these elements by means of human interaction. (Poloma, 1999: 224-225; Tye & Tye, 1992: 36);

Art is meant to stimulate thought and conversations between its viewers, by reflecting on a piece of art, one delve into his own experiences and nostalgia, therefore a piece of art means something different to different person that comes across it. This thoughtful conversation which is the basis of art appreciation is ensued when passers-by interact with works of art through seeing, watching, looking, touching or playing with.

Poloma, (1999) expatiates that viewers attributed meanings to these elements (textual, pictorial, or colours) by means of human interaction. The meanings attributed to these elements subsequently directs their actions (Shaughnessy 1992). The symbolic interaction theory has been widely explored in Africa and other parts of the world, where people have made and used objects to facilitate healing, good health, and well-being. ( Sidney and Eskenazi 2023). Therefore, the usage of

arts for healing is rather an age-long practice in Africa, humans have consistently created art for the purpose of magic, to protect themselves from evil and harm, to express and control powerful emotions such as fear and anxiety, bring about both physical and psychological relief and to prepare themselves for coming events such as hunting. Art knows no boundaries and is an intercultural and inter-generational communication tool (Ndikumasabo 2021). The affirmation of Ndikumasabo presupposes that the usage of arts for the purposes of aesthetics, functionality and recreational was an an attempt to confine or set boundary for arts. The closet practice of creative arts in health care space in Nigeria, is psychiatric homes where occupational therapy is offered as treatment to help patients with physical, sensory, or cognitive disability so that they can be independent as possible in all areas of their lives after being discharged from the hospital. This form of therapy has had a lot of positive impacts on the participants during and post engagements, however, a lot of reservations and limitations exist in the operations and the outcomes. Creative arts was never considered a complementary possibilities in orthodox medicine, however by the middle of 20th century, there was a growing belief that the creative process of art making could encourage rehabilitation, change, and growth. This has propelled a few individuals and corporate bodies to use diverse forms of artistic symbols and expressions to facilitate healing and hope for patients and their caregivers in health care centers and hospitals.

The Stuckey and Nobel (2010), defines holistic health as:

> "viewing man in his totality within a wide ecological spectrum, and … emphasizing the view that ill health or disease is brought about by an imbalance, or disequilibrium, of man in his total ecological system and not only by the causative agent and pathogenic evolution"

The discipline of Arts in Health as seen today is divide into two: actively creating art works and passively viewing arts. Creating art works involves a very wide range of activities that the arts (drawing, painting, modelling, craft, dance, creative writing, digital arts, music etc) make available to health professionals when tackling a specific pathology: whether as interventions in a therapeutic plan or in its prevention and health

promotion activities of a population. The second part is viewing or looking at the works of arts on the display in the galleries, homes, hospitals or watching the screen of televisions and social media. The use of visual art to beautify hospital space and improve patients' outcome is relatively new in Nigeria as compared to western countries. Individuals often consider going to the hospital to seek medical care as their last resort. The situation at the hospitals prior to the introduction of visual art evoked undeniable feelings of boredom owing to the white colour that surrounds the walls of the wards and other spaces. There were no arts, signs or aesthetics elements to engage patient's thoughts psychologically, and were also no parameters to substantiate the mood of patients. The question of the impact of the white and seemingly empty spaces, the smell of drugs, the movement of healthcare staff with medical equipment, the movement of sick patients from one ward to the other can best be answered by reflecting on the mood leave behind in the minds of every visitor. Reflectively too, people are hardly seen smiling within such environment and many have come to conclude that the hospital, like the police station is not a place of good news. **However, the introduction of Arts in health** (also sometimes referred to as arts in medicine or arts in healthcare) **a**s a diverse, multidisciplinary field dedicated to transforming health and the healthcare experience through the arts is novel and experiential. Through this efforts clients, patients or participants have interactions with materials (objects) to create art (object) or they interact with a ready-made art (object) through viewing.

Through this efforts clients have conscious and unconscious interactions with materials to create art or interact with a ready-made art objects through viewing. This field according to National organization for Arts in Health (NOAH, 2017), integrates literary, performing, and visual arts and design, and other forms of creative expression into a variety of healthcare and community settings to enhance health and well-being in diverse institutional and community contexts. It also aims to promote art engagements to alleviate the pains of individuals and improve overall health outcomes of patients, families and caregivers.

**Statement of the Problem**

The uneasy feeling, the discomfort and the phobia people feel in the hospitals have been responsible for people avoiding care in the hospitals even when they believe they could get solutions from these care centers. Although arts have been integrated into health spaces in few hospitals in Lagos State, Nigeria, what kind of art works are mounted in these spaces? has this integration of Visual Arts doused the uneasy feeling, among patients? has it positively impacted the patients psychology? Do patients interact with the artworks in the hospital? What form of responses do the painting elicit from the clients (patients). This study therefore will attempt to interrogate the impacts of the existing Visual Artworks in these different healthcare spaces have on patients.

This research specifically seeks to: determine the form of Visual Arts used in the hospital space, access the category of patients that the themes of the artworks meant for, and the profound impacts these creative works have on them. determine the possible responses, perceptions and feelings of patients and staff about the art works mounted on the ward spaces as oppose to hospital spaces without art embellishment.

This study is limited to selected hospitals spaces where art works were used as embellishments within Lagos State. The research is delimited to some patients and staff who would be available during the course of the research. The following research questions will be used to guide the study:

i. What are the kinds of Visual Art works used in the hospitals?
ii. Do patients interact with the artworks in the hospital spaces notwithstanding the themes?
iii. What profound impacts do the interaction with these art works have on the viewers (patients and caregivers)?
iv. What are the possible responses, perceptions and feelings of patients and staff about the visual art on the ward spaces as oppose to hospital spaces without art embellishment.

**Methodology**

Drawing on phenomenological theories of social interaction, spatial interaction, qualitative research design is used in this study employs symbolic interaction

theory, this theory examines the meanings emerging from the reciprocal interaction of individuals in social environment with other individuals and focuses on the question of "which symbols and meanings emerge from the interaction between people?"As Blumer points out that"the meaning of things directs action" (O'Shaughnessy, 1992). In this context interaction between individual patient or staff and art works standing as symbols.

This involves the scrutiny of the kind of Visual Arts that the respondents were familiar with and the understanding of specific area as it relates to each person's feeling. Phenomenology is the study of subjective experience, feelings and behaviour of people. This study is a qualitative design which involve the use of questionnaires surveys and interviews to collect data. The research was carried out at different healthcare centres in Lagos State including the General hospital Gbagada, Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), The National Sickle Cell Centre, Idiaraba and Jolad Hospital, Bariga. The National Sickle Cell Centre, a centre where people living with Sickle Cell are taken care of. The entire period of the research across the hospitals lasted for 9 weeks. The population of this study comprises of special (Sickle Cell) patients, especially teenage children as well as young adults who were present during the research at the Sickle Cell centre Idi Aba, the medical staff who work at the pediatric section of the Lagos University Teaching Hospital where the Visual Arts are predominantly mounted. 46 artworks were selected, 20 respondents interacted with the art works across the healthcare centers. The responses collected through questionnaires and interviews were analyzed resting on Professor **Semir Zeki's finding that** all forms of art, from painting to dancing to music,have personal and emotional experiences -- both for the artists and the viewers. He further says "**More often than not, romantic love is triggered by a visual input" in the same vain** it is a common experience to fall in love with a certain artwork (**Zeki,** 1999).

**Hospital design and hospital arts**

According to Verderber and Fine, (2000), six main periods can be identified in the evolution of hospital design. These evolutionary periods cut across the ancient, the mediaeval, the renaissance, the period of Nightingale, the era of the mega Minimalist healthcare institution and the dispensation of the Virtual Medical Scope. However, the culture of incorporating Visual Arts in hospitals began as far

back as the period in history when hospitals were borne out of the religious hostel buildings. Such hostels were owned by churches but meant for pilgrimage and travelers, while also functioning as infirmaries used by the elders and patients. The underlying fact is the sub-conscious and conscious symbolic interaction that go on between the art works and the viewers.



Plate 1:
Title: Isenheim Altarpiece
Artist: Hans Memling - [1] [2], Public Domain,

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Isenheim_Altarpiece



Plate: 2
Title: Mandona and Child with Saint James and
Artist: Hans Memling - [1] [2], Public Domain Saint Dominic
Source:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid

In the same vein is the global recognition of the symbol of a snake coiled over a staff to show the sign of healing/health in orthodox medicine. This takes its root from the biblical account of the Israelite.

> And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived" (Holy Bible Num. 21:6,9).

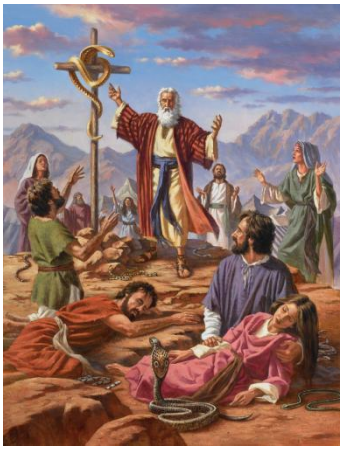


Figure 3. a graphic representation of Brazen serpent
https://seedsoffaith.cph.org/2015/11/24/

Looking at a brass sculptural piece of a snake as instructed by God provided healing for individuals bitten by life snakes seems to conform with Pablo Picasso in referring to art as therapy said "Art washes from the soul the dust of everyday life" (every one has the dust of daily tasks blinding our souls), art might be a good feather duster to help to clean them (Canalside View, 2012). It is instructive that gazing on the brazen snake elicited the needed expectation.

In the same vein, South of the Sahara of Africa, figurative sculptures have also been used to represent gods that were believed to foster good health, protection and healing. Uli symbols of the Igbo in South –East, Nigeria has been used as shrine decorations, the traditional healers and medicine men took care of patients with diverse illnesses. Also the Akuaba dolls of the Ashanti were to be looked upon by expectant mothers with the belief that their children will be beautiful (Aziato and Omenyo, 2018). Conclusively, Fancourt (2017) reveals that the rise of psychiatry precipitated novel opportunities for incorporating arts in healthcare, this corroborates the need for the provision of a musician to play for the mentally derailed king Saul. The Ashanti's expectant mothers' attitude of looking at Akuaba dolls to get beautiful child is synonymous to the account of the biblical Jacob in the house of Laban.

> Gen. 30: 37-39 And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chesnut tree; and pilled white strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods. And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering troughs when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink. And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstraked, speckled, and spotted.

From the above symbolic interaction accounts, there are three activities and engagements involved to solve the prevailing challenges. Carving of wood and soaking it into water for conception of the flocks to create special design on the heifer calf and bull calf, looking or viewing an art work (snake) and listening to music. All these confirm the claim of Lankston et al (2010) that the benefits of art in healthcare is not a new discovery.

**Visual Arts in Lagos hospitals**

In the wake of 2019, the Lagos State government in Nigeria inaugurated the Art4life committee to oversee the deployment of art as therapy in hospitals across the state. Quoting the state commissioner of health in Onyenucheya, (2019) "We need to pay great attention beyond the physical with a view to reducing mental trauma, emotional difficulties as well as depression, family or relationship issues through art therapy".Since the inauguration, most Lagos State general hospitals have joined the use of artistic drawings and painting in the enhancing the hospitals spaces. It is worthy of note that before government's efforts in 2019, there was initiation of mural project in a few hospitals in Lagos state dated back to some decades. For instance mosaic painting in figure 6 was done many decades ago as a commissioned work, however, the Tender Arts Nigeria led by Kunle Adewale also had a couple of projects executed in the wards and walls of some healthcare facilities in order to make the wall child-friendly and interactive.



Figure 4: Mosaic piece on the wall of General Hospital Gbagada, Lagos State.
Source: the author

Therefore, a study of some selected hospitals in Lagos is carried out to determine the type of Visual Arts used in the hospital space and their benefits to all the stakeholders who interacted with the works through viewing them. Nouwen (1987), opines that gazing at visual icons of religion while meditating is a vehicle that drives spirituality. Safe havens evoke elating minds and emotions when art is displayed in it. Just as museums and galleries are a place of awe and a melting pot for intrinsic reflection; works that evoke awe, hope, calmness can be strategically mounted within the hospital space to ease the melancholic feelings, the trepidation and the stress of patients and staff of the hospitals. According to Adenle and Oyeoku (2016) and Adenle (2015), Ricci (1999), Russell (1990) and Zeki (1999a), Zeki (1999b) the therapeutic benefits of viewing art may include the enrichment and edification of an individual experience and knowledge of human development, spirituality, psychology as well as multicultural creative tradition. The therapeutic benefits of art is predicated on the assumption that healing can occur in the individual through the use of imagination. However, the question of whether art should be beautiful for it to possess healing power and other benefits may be rather subjective. Cela Conde, Marty, Maestus, Oritz, Munar, Fernandez, Roca, Rossello and Quesney (2004); and De Tommaso, Sardaro, and Livrea (2008), Zeki (1993) and Reber, Schwarz, Winkielman (2004) all arrived at unifying outcomes that art viewing has profound far-reaching impacts on the viewers. Patient's response and outcome in hospitals can be improved by a wide range of

factors. A number of these factors are not realized within the convention of medical science. There is need to consider wider determinant factors of health outcome and patients experience. Improved patients mood and emotion can be crucial in the fight against depression and other psychological illnesses. Visual Art acknowledges these factors that can be explored to improve patients' mood, develop psychological strength during illness, increase patients' comfort and raise positive engagement of the minds. Art helps people to express experiences that are too difficult to put into words, it can be a refuge from the intense emotions associated with illness (Chatterjee, 2004) and (Stuckey and Nobel, 2010), With all the associated benefits art could offer to patients yet, most hospitals have not maximized Visual Art to the benefit of patients.

As suggested by the proposition of Bandura's (1986) model, individual do not just view works of arts and be influenced by them automatically. There is usually a thought process which happens through transfixed viewing of the characteristics of the subject or behaviour (stimulus) and the subconscious response or influence. These are captured in behavioural model (which studies the observable) and the Cognitive Model (which studies the internal impact scientifically).

*Figure 1* Behavioural Model Chart 1

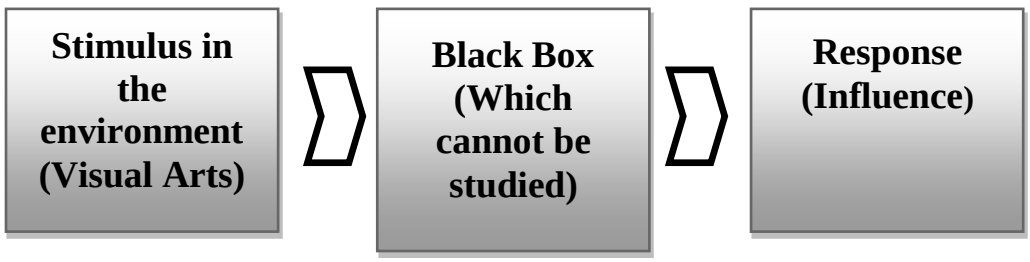
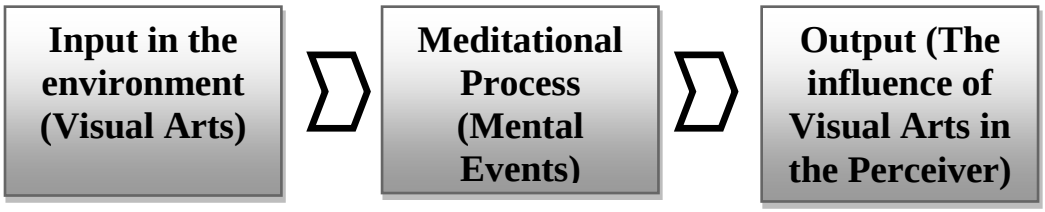



*Figure 2* Cognitive Model




*Social Cognitive Learning Theory by Albert Bandura (1986)*

The discussions are presented in the order of the research questions for a better understanding.

*What kinds of Visual Arts on displayed in the healthcare spaces*

The works of Visual Arts seen across the hospitals included Murals, Mosaic, Graphics, Painting, paper crafts and sculpture. The suitability of these varieties of Arts is based on the aesthetics value and the message they convey. Each type of visual art piece was strategically placed or made on the walls to attract attention and sustain the attention of the viewer in a way that it distracts the thoughts of uneasy feelings and trepidation about the outcome of the patients illness, worries and pains of symptoms, and the anxiety, fear and discomfort of going under the knife, receiving a depot injection, getting pierced during the checking of vital signs from blood sample, enduring the swallowing of hard tablets, capsule and bitter medicines and going through spells of convalescence among others.



Plate 5: Picture of children cartoon Hero, Superman as painted on the Pediatric Section of General Hospital Gbagada. Source: the author

The painting of children cartoon hero "Superman" in figure 7 is strategically situated at the pediatric ward of the General Hospital Gbagada to attract attention, retain the feeling of confidence amid a challenging situation the character exudes; reproduce in the viewer the attributes and quality of resilience and strength that "superman" is known for and trigger motivation to go through the difficult spell associated with illness. Reflectively the painting was produced by the art in medicine fellows in commemoration of a child who endured the end-of-life challenges of a terminal disease.

At the LUTH, the predominant art works were floral paintings accentuated with floral paper craft mounted on the walls leading to the pediatric wards as seen below.



Figure 6a: Arts in Medicine fellows working on Mural in the Hospital Source: the author



Figure 6b: 3-D Floral art and craft. Source: the author



Figure 6c: Floral mural on walls of the Pediatric section of Lagos University Teaching Hospital. Source: the author

In the interviews with one of the medical doctors, Dr. Nike showed that the works generally made the staff happy as their work environment no longer feels like a prison yard of uncertainty. The medical practitioner noted that the Visual Arts in the environment serve both aesthetic and psychological purposes.

At the National Sickle Cell Centre (NSCC), the paintings can be categorized into two groups, the works produced by the sickle cell patients themselves, and the artworks by professional artists who worked with Mr. Kunle Adewale.



Figure 7: Group painting by sickle cell patients at the top lintel of the reception area, NSCC. Photo by the author



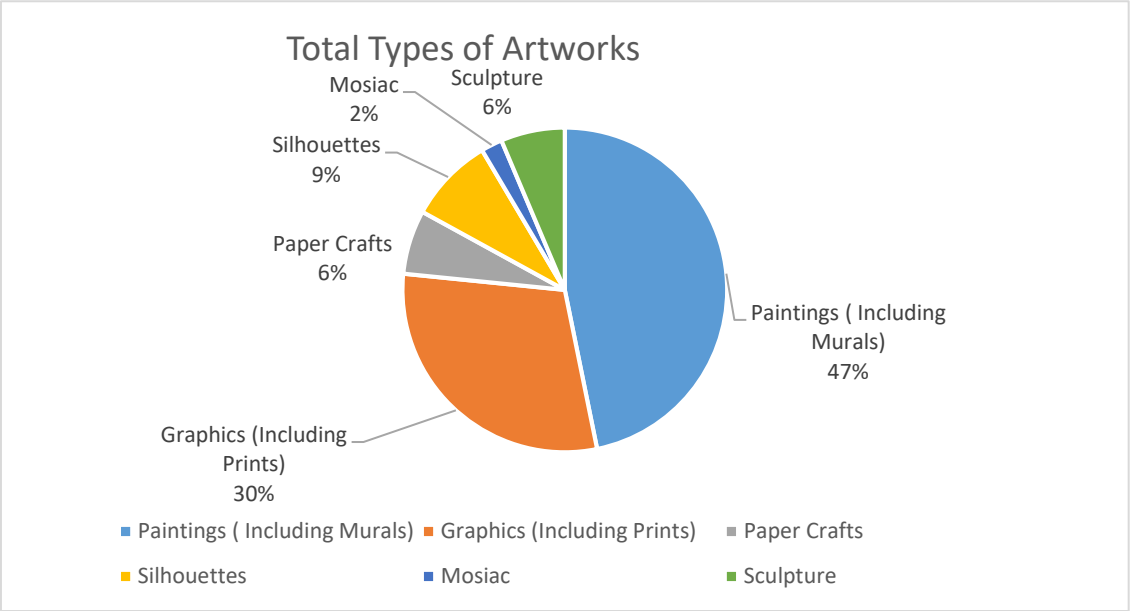
Figure 8: Abstract paintings produced by sickle cell patience mounted at the heart of the front desk office, NSCC. Source: the author

The painting were mainly abstracts arts executed on paper. The themes of the abstract paintings ranges from love, hope, togetherness, care to happiness and so on. The suitability of these works stems from the fact that the makers feel proud and fulfilled with their creative pieces. On the other side patients, caregivers and visitors continue to interact with the these collage paintings on daily basis. For instance during the interview, the patients all pointed to the individual works works they considered the most inspiring. The the staff who were interviewed, all submitted that the artworks collectively make their environment appealing and interactive. They also noted that anxious parents who walk in with their severally sick children become calm as the gaze at the artworks whilst waiting to see the medical practitioners. This is in line with Reber R., Schwarz N., Winkielman P. (2004) article titled "Processing fluency and aesthetic pleasure", he proposed that beauty is grounded in the processing experiences of the perceiver. A particular mother who was worried initially when her child was admitted, after sometimes she was seen taking snapshots with the landscape passage while leaning to the wall. This shows that the presence of the mural help to make the woman feel safe, socialize and maintain a connection even in her anxiety.

Table 1

| **Types Artworks** | **General Hospital Gbagada** | **LUTH** | **NSCC** | **Jolad Hospital** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Paintings (Including Murals) | 4 | 7 | 1 | | 22 |
| Graphics (Including Prints) | 2 | 7 | 5 | | 14 |
| Paper Crafts | - | 3 | - | - | 3 |
| Silhouettes | 4 | - | - | - | 4 |
| Mosaic | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| Sculpture | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 3 |
| Animation Film (.i.e. TV set) | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 9 |

Chart 2




**Research Question Two**

*What category of patients were the themes of the artworks meant for or relevant to?*

The assumption that every decorative piece of Art can be appealing to every individual is true. Like cartoon characters and films, which are meant for children, adults also enjoy watching the characters. Cartoons, like paintings and other forms of Art can be used to pass a message across to the viewer. Although perception and interpretations may differ, aesthetic appeal transcends all categories of people across age, gender, status, level education and culture.

Table 2

| Age | Sex M | F | Status | Health Centre | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 -12 | 1 | 2 | Patient | NSCC | 3 |
| 13 -19 | 3 | 2 | Patient/Student | NSCC | 5 |
| 20 -29 | 2 | 1 | Patient/Student | NSCC | 3 |
| 30 -45 | 2 | 7 | Staff | NSCC | 9 |

The table indicates that the works of Art on display were meant for all categories of patients, although certain themes may appeals more to specific age category.
Research Question Three

*How do patients and staff appreciate and interpreted the concepts and mood of the artworks?*

Patients and staff were asked to comment on their preference for the art pieces and what in other opinion the works were about. Children were more inclined to familiar cartoon characters they usually see on television animated characters



Figure 9: Early years children waiting room: Source: the author

Responding on the concepts to include messages of love, care, hope and togetherness. More mature respondents (especially staff) did not pick any particular pieces as their most preferred but based their judgment of the aesthetic value on how colourful the entire works made their hospital space beautiful. Patients and staff also prefer to take snapshots around the walls with murals as shown below.



Figure 10: Mural on the fence of LUTH Source: the author

Bandura (1986) proposed four processes of meditation which are applicable in patient perception of the visual arts in the hospital space.

1. Attention: The Visual Arts within the hospital space arrest attention of the stakeholders in the hospital in a way that it distracts their minds from the worries and uneasy feelings of trepidation and sinister in the hospital.
2. Retention: The piece of art holds attention to retain the memories of the model and objects in the pictures. This retention goes through a neuro-scientific pro and it's often reinforced as patients see the picture over and over again.
3. Reproduction: This is the observable outcome of the influence the works of art have on the patients and staff in the healthcare setting. Staff at LUTH affirmed that they are motivated by the aesthetic appeal of the Visual Art on the walls.
4. Motivation: The themes of the visual Art in the hospital setting serve not only aesthetic purpose, but also motivates the patients and staff to function in happy moods. The pains and agony of patients are doused, also psychological trauma is minimized by the visual appeal or through the consumption of the art works.

Research Question Four

*What are the patients and staff members perception about the hospital space with Visual Arts in comparison to such space without arts?*

All patients and staff declared their predilection for the spaces with arts as against hospital environment without artworks. This was the outcome when patients were asked to compare some other hospitals they had been to that has no decorative works of Visual Arts. Both staff and patients affirmed they preferred the beautified environment to blank spaces. The sample at General Hospital Gbagada consisted of 13 respondents (four staff members and nine patients). The patients included six children and three adults. The mean age of the respondents and the mean age of the adults varied. However, some children did not quite tie their feelings about the visual art to their health and the staff did not relate the art to themselves. The research outcome indicates that visual art stimulates calmness and safety while fostering the connection with the world beyond the confines of hospital space (Nielsen, 2017 and Helmut, Benno, Andries, Dorothee (2004).

Table 4

| | No of response | Most Preferred | Like | Indifferent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Landscape Murals | 20 | 14 | 6 | - |
| Figure Painting | 20 | 9 | 7 | 4 |
| Abstract Paintings | 20 | 10 | 9 | 1 |
| Graphic Prints and Cartoons` | 20 | 9 | 9 | 2 |
| Floral Painting | 20 | 11 | 8 | 1 |
| Three – Dimensional Craft and installation | 20 | 12 | 8 | - |
| Portraits in frame | 20 | 8 | 7 | 4 |

Interview- Analysis Based on Classification of The Arts In The Healthcare Space.
Thematic Analysis of Data

A few themes emerged as the respondents were encouraged to express themselves regardless of their levels of Visual Arts appreciation. Fragments of the interview were compared during the analytical procedure at Gbagada. Five out of the six

people in the paediatric section admitted that they like the way drawings were made on the walls. All the adults that participated submitted that the walls were better with the pictures on them.

*The Theme on nature*

The finding also shows that the majority of the respondents preferred landscape murals or painting which reproduces feelings of calmness as the patients retain their cognitive impacts in tandem with the postulation of Bandura's framework (1986).





Figure 11 & 13: A passage wall with nature painting that creates some sort of calm mood in the Sickle cell wards, NSCC hospital space. Source: the author

The rationale for the preference, however, may not be unconnected with impact of cool colours such as blue and green, which dominated the landscape painting. Besides, the landscape painting were also often rendered in large imposing size with elements that tell simple nature stories that everyone interacting with the painting can easily relate or make meaning out from.

The research outcome indicates that visual art stimulates calmness and safety whilst fostering the connection with the world beyond the confines of hospital

space. Patients were able to identify the cartoon characters that were familiar to them, having watched them on videos and the internet. In line with Badura's (1986) Social Cognition Theory, the artworks were able to arrest attention, distract from anxiety and uneasy feeling and even motivate the viewers (Jacobsen T., Buchta K., Kohler M., Schroger E. 2004 and Chatterjee, Widick, Sternschein, Smith 2010). The painting of the popular animation character, 'Superman' was executed against a landscape background with the sky predominantly rendered above the horizon of skyscrapers and tall buildings. The use of Visual Arts on the walls creates a kind of engagement with children and others in that it helps douse the tension and phobia associated with thoughts of taking injections, swallow hard and bitter drugs as essential practice in healthcare. This feat has solve the worries of walls and space being flat without Visual Arts (Langston et al 2010). Apart from the walls, the television set in the children's ward always played children animation films. Animation is a subset of Visual Arts and these films complemented what they see on the walls, thereby keeping the images of these works of art always in the minds of the children and other stakeholders. This tally with (Nanda, U., Chanaud, C., Nelson, M., Zhu, X., Bajema, R., & Jansen, B. H. 2012) on the impact of visual art on patient behavior in the emergency department waiting room. Significantly, the silhouette appealed more to the adults as compared to the children. The appeal is not so much about the rendition but about the inherent message deduced by looking at and interpreting the paintings.

Although, studies on the impacts of Visual Arts in healthcare are well researched globally with robust evidence all attesting to the therapeutic and psychological benefits of arts. It has not been taken as serious for lack of understanding of it, much more applying it the healthcare space in Nigeria. This study therefore has filled the gap by effectively showing that art has profound benefits to patients and staff in Lagos hospitals. The contribution of visual art within the hospital space and the improved outcome on patients are evidence that a realization of health is characterized and influenced by sundry interrelated factors that may not all be within the components of conventional medicine. Artists and healthcare professionals have accepted that art holds potential merits in healthcare. There are broader factors influence health outcomes and usually, art acknowledges these factors where science cannot. It is not new to visual artists that the consumption of arts can have a plethora of psychological and emotional benefits. This

corroborates the research of Georges (2022), Jacobsen, Schubotz, Hofel, and Cramon (2005) on how he preached the message of hope and resilience via the Ugaritic alphabet, art works on display have profound benefits that positively impact the health of patients. Besides, the introduction of art in hospitals in Lagos are mainly efforts of well meaning individual artists in Nigeria, who were not sponsored by government. Evidence from the execution of artworks at the Sickle Cells Centre, for instance, attests to the fact that the artworks there are products of individual and group efforts. It is recommended that other states in Nigeria should borrow a leaf from Lagos State in deploying Visual Arts for its therapeutic benefits to the patients in Nigeria. It is also recommended that private hospitals should also key into the concept of using art to decorate their environment. It is also suggested that other art forms such as framed paintings be used in addition to the murals and prints to allow for the flexibility of moving and changing the position of an art piece at intervals as opposed to the murals. It is recommended that the painting be changed annually to increase the interest of daily staff members that keep engaging patients and visitors with the renewed and redesigned hospital space.

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