

CREATIVE FUNCTIONAL AND CULTURAL ART EDUCATION: A PANACEA IN COMATOSE ECONOMY

Tina Chidi Iloekwe

Department of Fine and Applied Arts,
Federal College of Education, Okene,
Kogi State.

And

Bernadette Ifuemi Oluyole

Department of Fine and Applied Arts,
Federal College of Education, Okene,
Kogi State.

Abstract

Africans, precisely Nigeria is abundantly rich in cultural resources and heritage. All forms of creative arts thrive locally as part of cultural heritage. However, the development of this sector has, unfortunately been minimal and often not taught in many Nigerian schools. Colonist came with their culture, imposed and promoted it in Africans and demoted African culture. Whatever has been the cause, the African child needs to know his true identity, the culture, crafts and arts of his people. Cultural and Creative arts education fills this gap. Through this, the children are developed and able to fit into the society and contribute significantly to the economy especially in periods of economic recession as is currently witnessed in Nigeria. This paper presents functional creative arts education as a panacea in a comatose economy. The state of creative arts education was discussed; the values of the course to individuals and society were also discussed. It was recommended among others that the Government should provide necessary infrastructures for the teaching and learning of creative arts in schools. It was also recommended that the ministry of education should make the teaching and learning of creative arts compulsory at all levels of Nigerian education.

Keywords: Education, Culture, Creative arts, Skill, Comatose economy

<p>In traditional African communities, creative functional and cultural arts are regarded as part and parcel of daily living. Decorated items</p>	<p>such as buildings, religious icons, musical instruments and tools that have existed among Nigerian objects were executed by skills and purpose (Sieber, 1980). They</p>
---	--

were artistic objects that produce by artists. This paper reveals the values of creative functional and cultural arts education and the need for restructuring it in Nigerian educational system as panacea for comatose economy.

Review of Related Literature

The issue of functional creative arts and cultural education had been a great concern to government. Government believes that the concept forms an important part of broad and balanced curriculum that every Nigerian child and young people should be provided with, as this will engaged them in a variety of cultural experiences throughout their life time. The concept provides the children and youth with the need to know about their cultural materials and its values to people. According to Obidi (2005) the concept is more concerned with preserving and transmitting indigenous culture. He further stressed that the concept exposes the children and youth on the traditional family, modes of social and economic organization, religious life and moral education, as well as the spread of western education from the 19th Century to the present.

Culture is defined as a way of people's life which can be; the behaviors, beliefs, values and symbols that they accept generally and passed from generation to another by communication. It can also be defined as a system of knowledge shared by a relatively large group of people. According to Tamu (2003) culture is the cumulated deposit of general knowledge of life experience,

beliefs, values, attitude, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, material objects of universe and possessions acquired by group striving. This is to say that culture speaks about the identity of a person or group. It is neither cultic nor fetish, but the true identity which every African child need to know about. A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots (Garvey, 2000). Therefore, for cultural values to be held intact by the citizens of a country, the culture of the people needs to reside in their hearts. Without the teaching of practical oriented course like culture and creative arts from the basic level of Nigerian education (primary and secondary school levels), the engraving of deep knowledge of culture in the heart of Nigerian citizens will be like impartation of non-meaningful knowledge among the folks. Gandy (2016) is of opinion that a nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people.

Meanwhile, cultural education involves the spread of the knowledge across the board. Cultural education consists of capacity for reflection. Children and youngsters in cultural education learn to reflect upon their own culture, culture of others and culture generally. The capacity can be acquired through different ways like; journalism, history etc, but mostly through the functional creative arts which is one main forms of self-conscious or cultural consciousness that enable the children and youth to acquire skills and capacity. The

capacity creates room for simple knowledge which enables the teachers to develop the children or youth with the knowledge that are relevant to their culture across the border through functional and creative art. Here, the children and youth developed deep insight in the specific characteristics of culture that enable them to know the values of their own culture as well as other people's culture.

However, education is defined as the backbone for economic development. This is why education is regarded as the best legacy a parent can leave for the children and the greatest investment a country can give to her citizens (human resources development). This is to say that human capital development is the major and primary concern of education. According to Webster (1990), education is the process by which knowledge, skills, ability and mental power are humanly developed through training. Due to excessive importance of education, host of scholars defined education based on their own perspective. Mmaduewesi and Ofejebe (2006) defined education as a cornerstone of the world civilization and advancement. Tabotmidip (2004) is of opinion that education provides human skill for industrial production and self-actualization. According to Wolfen (2000), education is the key to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction. Urevbu (1991) sees education as total process of human learning by which knowledge is imparted, faculties trained and skills developed. To Omololu (1985) education is the key to knowledge,

industries and economic development. The role of education in national development is indispensable because it is the development of "the whole person" including intellectual, character and psychomotor. It is this enviable position which education occupies in the light of the development of man that earns it the unique qualification for development. Without this, all other resources; natural material and others would have been underutilized and untapped to the detriment of mankind. It is for this reasons that education occupies an important place in most plans for economic and social development. However in Nigeria, education is perceived to be the greatest force that can be used to achieve desirable changes or the development of the nation's economy, politics, and human resources (Tomori, 1979).

Cultural and Functional Creative Arts Education

Cultural and functional creative arts education describes the culture, crafts and arts of people and how they are expressed through creative art. Creative art describes the power of skill development through production. Creative art concept is referred to as visual arts created by the artists with whom he contributes his positive quota to the society (Anyasodo as cited in Adejemilua and Oyewole, 2002). According to Olajumoke (2013), the concept is described as a self-expression of man in his cultural and natural environment through the use of some materials, skills and techniques (method) to produce

numerous works of utility, beautification, aesthetics and self-satisfaction. Through this means, the cultures and arts of people are expressed within and far beyond. This is to say that the concept gives right direction for the knowledge of arts of the people through skill acquisition so that every individual could have deep understanding of his own culture and that of other people. However, skill is defined as the development of new ideas through training or experience (education). According to Agholor and Ehiezale (2009), skill is a practical know-how of doing things and it comes out well. Creative art education encompasses all aspect of literacy and most often, theater arts are inclusive. In Nigerian educational system, creative art is divided as following;

1. At Primary level, it is taught as Cultural and Creative arts.
2. At Secondary level, it's Visual Arts (Fine and Applied Arts)
3. At the Tertiary level of education, it is Visual Arts, but broadly defined where many departments are established on the discipline.

However, this paper focuses on arts in basic and post basic (primary and secondary levels). But, whichever level functional creative art is taught in Nigerian schools, it equips individual and society with the following;

1. Knowledge of material resources and indigenous advancement
2. Revival of cultural values to promote black artists and felicitates their world acceptance and outlets through the

propagation of cultural heritage (introduction of National Festival of Arts).

3. Creativity helped to reshaped, reform and re-structures the economic development of the individual and the society at large. Forum to project people's arts to the world, through selling of produced art works, crafts and designs (Commercial art/ Airport art) meant for sale to tourists visiting the country. That is to say that through this means, individuals in the society will be trained and equipped with skills for self employment as well as employment of labour thereby contributing to national development.

Thus, this shows that with the knowledge of creative arts, the country is assured of sustainable economic development. The individual with such knowledge will be sure of daily food on the table and through this means; the problem of hunger and poverty will be address.

Problems Militating Against Functional Creative Arts and Cultural Education

Education policy makers are more concern on creative art. One of the aims of National Policy on Education (1989) provides that the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. The functional creative art can offer the above mentioned goals of the educational policy, but the problem is, does it function in Nigerian schools especially in the "BASIC" levels (primary

and secondary levels)? If the knowledge of the discipline failed at this level of educational system, obviously aims of implementing it in the curriculum will not be achieved. This is why the country is today in a state of comatose economy that puts the country in a mess. It is worthy of note that since the government have being clamoring to educate the masses with skilled knowledge that cause the introduction of 6334 system, nothing have been achieved. There is excessive increase in hunger, starvation and poverty. This shows that there are problems in the teaching of practical oriented course like cultural and functional creative art from the basic level of education and this need not be ignored. Therefore, the question is; since this course is there in the curriculum, is it really been offered in Nigerian primary and secondary schools? Is it well placed in curriculum and practically taught? Is necessary infrastructures provided for the teaching? Is the environment made available and conducive? Is there qualified manpower for the teaching of the course? Are parents supportive in encouraging the children to study the course? Does the society appreciate and patronize works of art? These and many other problems are confronting the teaching of creative art at primary and secondary levels of Nigerian schools. Even the tertiary education which is the most crucial instrument for empowering young people with knowledge and skills by providing them access to productive employment through skills and innovations are not taken care of. Where the masses of a nation are

facing economic war and starvation, the souls of the citizens are likely to be taken to their early graves. To avoid this, it is good to prepare the masses with skilled knowledge like cultural and functional creative arts education which need to start from primary and secondary education in the country. Now hunger is here, the citizens of this country should wake up from comatose state and defeat the economic monster threatening them, and the earlier, the better. The citizens should seek for encouragement of cultural and creative arts at the primary and secondary levels as this will prepare the pupils and students with skill knowledge that will prepare them for job opportunity. The knowledge at this level will also prepare students for further studies in the discipline at the tertiary level.

Fixing Cultural and Creative Arts Education for Comatose Economy in Nigeria

Before the exit of former President Goodluck Jonathan on 29th May, 2015, the economy of the country was in a shamble. The majority of Nigerians were willing to try new president for the running of the affairs of the government. The opposition party used the situation as a weapon against the then President in campaign laree. They made series of promises to the masses; to fix the economy, build infrastructure, and restore hope of the nation by tackling the rampaging Boko Haram insurgents, just to mention but few. All these promises gave Nigerian citizens hope without knowing that the worst is yet to come. Presently,

Creative Functional and Cultural Art Education: A Panacea in Comatose Economy - Tina Chidi Iloekwe and Bernadette Ifuemi Oluyole

many Nigerians aren't finding life funny. Many are not happy with the economic situation that has drawn a map of hardship on the faces across the land. The honest truth is that the tough time is here. This can be seen daily on the streets and in the balance sheets of many companies. There are excessive closing down of companies, shops, salary cuts and other austere economy options. The negative situation of country in this form shows the evidence of comatose state of economy. This is to say that when economy of a country usually experience negative changes the citizens of such country are in a state of comatose economy, vise-vase, when the citizens of a country awaken from their comatose economy. According to Osagie (2016) comatose economy of a country is when there is lack in the economy of the country.

Meanwhile, comatose state can be defined as a state of being in a coma, unconscious and unable to communicate, which often last for a long period of time. It is a state of being imprisoned as well as a state of impossibility of things to function in a system. Based on history, comatose originated from Greek word known as "Koma" (meaning deep sleep). This is recorded in the year 1650.

A state of comatose, draws series of questions to people's mind, like; how will the citizens survived the situation? When will things get better? How long will this last? Practical-oriented courses like cultural and functional creative arts education answer it all. This is because it developed an individual to know deep about the environment (material

resources), the culture, crafts and arts of the people. It equips individuals and society for quick economic development. Above all, it contributed greatly to sustainable economic development because it is transferred from generation to another. Therefore, in other to salvage the ugly situation of comatose economy in Nigeria, government should not delay in fixing the economy of the country. What a hungry stomach needs is food, not platitudes or explanation (I am or not the cause of the situation). Government should invest massively in education; cultural and functional creative arts education precisely. Patriotism of the father land, the parents, children and youth should join hands together with government and promote exploration for skilled education course discipline like culture and creative arts and restructured from grass root (primary and secondary levels). This will help the citizens to have deep knowledge in skills that will help them to be self-reliance and fit in the society. This is to say that with the indigenious and technological knowledge, great achievement can be made from all sectors of life.

Conclusion

Based on the discussions so far, it is observed that art is not practically taught at primary and secondary levels. The system have been managed for a long time, that presently, it has affected the entire system in such that basic skills a child should acquire in basic and post basic levels of education which will help the child to go a long way in life is

lacking. Now, the impact is no more on art and its patronage but on the society in general. Conclusively, the ability of a large percentage of Nigerians to acquire knowledge and utilize skills effectively is the key to the growth and development that will propel her to become one of the largest economies. A modern and vibrant education system entails a blend of wide range of activities that would ensure functional and qualitative education on highest possible standards in basic, post basic and tertiary levels of education. Government, educators and policy makers need to agree on potentials that skilled cultural and functional creative arts hold for education. This discipline, if adequately integrated with modern technological advancement, would no doubt, help students develop their skills for employment opportunities. If the citizens of the country were sustainably employed, the researchers believe that hunger, poverty and comatose economy will be history. The citizens would be peaceful with the government and vice-versa.

Recommendations

For Nigeria to restructure cultural and creative art education to suit the present comatose economy state in the country,

1. Government should endeavor to provide necessary infrastructures for the nation's education especially practical oriented course like cultural and creative arts. This will help to facilitate teaching and learning process of the course.
2. Ministry of education should see that policy makers on arts should

specialize in art discipline, as this will help effective curriculum for arts. As a practical oriented course. Ministry of education should see that qualified manpower is employed in the system and encourage them with fat salary.

3. Ministry of education should see that art is made compulsory at all the levels of education in Nigeria. Attention should be paid to primary and secondary levels especially, as this will develop the pupils and students on the skills level for self-reliance and prepare them for higher education.

4. Visual arts as voluminous course with sub-headings should stand on its own in curriculum, not with the combination of performing arts, and forty-five (45) minutes period allocated to teach the course in a week should change to one hour thirty minutes (1. 30minutes) in a week, as this will give room for detailed study of the course.

5. Teachers should try and make practical teaching interesting by teaching the pupils and students and allow them to do the practical by themselves and monitor them in the process.

6. Parents should also help to encourage their children at home on the need to know the values of art and cultural identity, as this will help them to know the need to study it in school.

7. The problem of misconception is another cankerworm eating the growth of arts in Nigerian society. An average man in the society believes that art is all about drawing and painting. In this regard, the national body of art like Association of Nigerian Artists and Women Artists

should not fold hands and watch art wider in the country. They should organize workshops and seminar in the communities and strategic areas. They should also pay for jingles on radios and television. Through this, the meaning of art will be cleared to the citizens in the country.

8. Citizens of the country should try to appreciate and patronize indigenously produced works of arts and avoid rush for foreign products. This will encourage the spread of indigenous products among the folks and generation to come.

References

- Adejamilua, M. S. and Babatope, K. O. (2002). *Perspectives on creative arts education in Nigeria*. Ikere Ekiti: Clukayode Lafe (Top-Klass) Printers Nig. Ent
- Agholor, J. and Ehiezele, P. (2009). *African art concise approach*. Auchie Nigeria Seph Printers.
- Gandy, M. (2001). "Culture definition". Retrieved July 16th, 2017 from <http://www.independent.co.uk/art>
- Garvey, M. (2000). "Culture". Retrieved July 16th, 2017 from <http://www.branquote.com>
- Maduewesi, B.U. and Ofojebe, A. E. (2006). Teacher education: The concept, aims and objectives in Maduewesi, E. J. and Eya, P. E. eds. *Perspectives in teacher education* Onitsha; West and Soloman Publisher
- National Policy on Education (1989). NERDC Press, Lagos
- Obidi, U. (2005). "The Perfect past: Traditional African Art and Design in Retrospect" *Atund journal of Artfacts*. Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife Pp 16-21
- Olajumoke T. K. (2013). *Material and methods in textile practice*. Lagos: ABC Perfect Print Ventures.
- Omololu, A. A. (1985). *Education of women in Adaralegbe of philosophy of Nigeria education*. Idadan: Heinemann education Books Nigeria Ltd.
- Osagie, E. (2016). Fixing the comatose economy. Retrieved July 13th, 2017 from Sunne Wsenline.com
- Sieber, R. (1980). *African Furniture and Household Objects*, New-York: The American Foundation of Arts

- Tabotndip, J. E. (2004). Imperatives for realizing the Nigerian educational policies. An Overview. *Nigerian journal of research and production* 4(1) 20-31.
- Tamu, E. (2003). Culture Shock Challenges firms looking abroad. *A journal of culture* vol. 250 No.23. New York: McGraw Hill
- Tomori, S. (1979). *The Role of Language in Education*, University of Ibadan Inaugural Lectures 1972/73, Ibadan University Press.
- Urevbu, A. O. (1991). *Foundations and methods of education*. Lagos: Juland Educational Publishers.
- Webster, L. (1990). *The lexicon Webster's Dictionary of English*, Nicom Press Pp126.
- Wolfen, I. D. (2000). *A time for action: Placing education at the core of development*. Institute for international cooperation of the German Adult Education Association