



International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: www.ijrpr.com ISSN 2582-7421

Refocusing Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) for Socio-Economic Emancipation of Nigerian Youths through Fine and Applied Arts.

Jimoh Abdulrahman Umar

Fine And Applied Arts Department Federal College Of Education, Okene

ABSTRACT

Art has been viewed by many scholars as self expression, but in the real sense, it has a deeper meaning than just self expression as it is 'Art for life sake' which connotes source of livelihood. Its importance can be seen in the area of creating employment opportunities as an entrepreneur and adequately funded by the government and private enterprises. The development of any nation is usually linked to the degree and extent of the socio-cultural, socio-economic and socio-political improvement and emancipation that are brought to bear through vocational education in the school system and during the training periods. This paper examines the role of fine and applied art as an integral and a focal part of vocational education in solving the problems of unemployment among the Nigerian youths. The challenges include poor funding, poor infrastructure, shortage of manpower and many more. There is the need for government at all levels, private sectors and philanthropists to take responsibility to salvage these lingering issues by providing adequate funds, remunerate staff properly, provide materials etc for Fine and Applied arts in the reduction of unemployment rate among the Nigerian youths.

Keywords: Fine and Applied Arts, Vocational Education, Entrepreneur, unemployment.

Introduction

Every society, whether simple or complex, has its own system of training and educating its youths and for the good life that has been the concern of men through history. However, the goal of education and the method of approach may differ from place to place, nation and people to people. The Greek idea of an educated man was somebody who was mentally and physically well balanced.

The Greek on the other hand places emphasis on theoretical and military training. During the middle age in England, the knight, the Lord and the Priest were considered classical example of a well-educated elites in the society, while in France, the scholar was the hall mark of excellence, in Germany, it was the Patriots. In African society, the purpose of education was clear functionalism which was a guiding principle. African society regarded education as a means to an end not as an end in itself. Education is generally for an immediate induction in to the children society and a preparation for children future. African educational system emphasized social responsibility, job creation and political participation, spiritual and moral values.

Education is essentially the acquisition of the appropriate level of literacy, numeracy, manipulative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for having a solid foundation to life-long learning activities for the future career of an individual citizen (Obanya, 2005). Education is the engine that drives development and transformation of all human endeavours. That is the reason why the educated populations are the propeller of a nation to its destination. The type of educational system a nation operates determines her competitiveness in the emerging global economy. Ene (2013) explained that some of the biggest problems facing developing countries revolve around the type of educational systems they operate.

The philosophy of vocational and technical education in Nigeria is a reflection of the national objective which the country aims at achieving using education as a tool. This is linked to the national educational aim and objectives of Nigeria as contained in the National Policy on Education which emphasizes the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical development aimed at equipping the individual to live and contribute to the development of the society (NPE2014).

Vocational education is therefore, built on the philosophy of providing education to meet the needs of all and sundry. So that, children can now have equal opportunity to develop in accordance with their capacity, interest, norms, value as well as choose a career in vocation. Entrepreneurship is the skill, spirit and knowledge of job creation and a major tool for poverty reduction (Haper, 2003). It is the main mechanism that creates wealth and individual's ability to turn ideas into action. Osuagwu (2002) entrepreneurial development in Nigeria should be perceived as a catalyst to increase the rate of economic growth, create job opportunities, reduce importation and decrease the trade deficits that resulted from such imports. Matanmi and Awodun (2005) stated that if Nigeria desires to move out high level of unemployment and poverty, attention should be given to entrepreneurship growth and development. Ogundele (2007) observed that the promotion of entrepreneurship skill will help the growth of Nigeria economically. Obanya (2009) insisted that, for

Nigeria to respond to the changing needs of the world of work, formal and non formal education in the country should be geared towards inculcating in the learners the generic skills and knowledge to meet the world best practices.

Vocational education is therefore broad as to cater for individual differences in attitude, mental ability and capability. It is a relevant education and catalyst for economic development and job creation in any society. The role of Art in the pace of vocational education cannot be over emphasized as it involves manipulative skills that can help the individual to be able to translate value into treasure; it requires expression of inner most idea outwardly. Art has a deeper meaning than just mere expression (Ojo, 2025). Ene (2019) it is aimed at empowering the learners with the knowledge and skills that will enable them established a viable source of income

Literature Review

In Nigeria, vocational and technical education is a catalyst for economic development and job creation in any society for the mentally retarded, physically handicapped and socially maladjusted (Ajileye in Olaitan, 2018).

Vocational education on the other hand is a highly resourceful education which offers the trainee, interest and knowledge to function socially and economically in order to enhance goods that are more profiting not only to the trainee but to the society in general (Ajileye, 2018).

It may be understood that for a democratic nation like Nigeria to be stable in government and economy, the citizens must be gainfully employed by the government, industries, private or individual enterprises for the country's well being (Yusuf, 2002). The acquisition of vocational education will help to overcome the over-dependency on the government for gain because the individual could provide for himself services the immediate society needs.

Generally, vocational education is the process of providing individuals with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities and the insight, self-esteem, knowledge and skills to act on them (Njoku, 2008). It includes instruction in opportunity recognition, commercializing a concept, marshalling resources in the face of risk, and initiating a business venture. It also include instruction in traditional business disciplines such as management, marketing, information system and finance. Ojo (2017) opined that, most industrial nations today lay emphasis on vocational education therefore, vocational education is the right curriculum that equip people with the required and needed knowledge, skill and competences which make the individual functional and contribute to the goals of wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction, that can be effectively pursued, attained and sustained only through an efficient, relevant and functional vocational education systems.

Oke (2004) describes the unemployed as liabilities to the society, thus a source of the social treat, there by being susceptible to vices. Therefore, Fine and Applied Arts becomes an option for employment generation. Ibrahim (2008) stated that more than 70% of Nigerians live in abject poverty (a direct consequence of unemployment) since then, the situation had only gotten worse with youths mostly affected; The National Bureau of Statistics reported that 60% of youth in Nigeria were unemployed in 2012.

Enhancing Entrepreneurship Skills through Fine and Applied Arts

Unemployment is one of the greatest problems in Nigeria, which affects about more than 60% of Nigeria youths. Poverty is a socio-economic problem that affects the growth and development of any nation. The government in Nigeria has designed and embarked on several measures to reduce the degree of poverty and improve the social well-being of the people. This has precipitated the socio-economic challenges which Nigeria is currently confronted with such as social menaces of different magnitude which includes banditry, kidnapping, high class robberies, hired assassins, ritual killings amongst others. All these have created negative investment climate.

There are several courses in Fine and Applied Arts that an individual can undertake to be gainfully employed. This includes: Textile and fashion designing, ceramics, sculpture, drawing, metal works, graphics designing, bead making, glass decoration, welding and fabrication, POP decoration, painting, hall decoration, hide and skin decoration, furniture making, carving, tie-dye, weaving, shoe making, photography, carpentry, building decoration, land scaping, costuming, modeling, fashion parade, and many more.

Fine and Applied Arts is one of the engines of vocational education which provides the learner with the opportunity to interpret constructive idea that can be translated into fortune. That is the reason why art is the attainment of self-reliance, self-sufficient and self-sustainability in propelling an individual or nation a desired destination. The type of educational system a country operates determines her competitiveness in the global economy (Ene, 2013). The fulcrum of most of the policies of the Nigeria government, which are dictated by the prevailing economic situation particularly wide spread unemployment of the able-bodied individuals who have graduated from schools, is to empower the people with requisite skill and knowledge that would enable them to be self-employed and at the same time become employers of labour (Ibraimah and Jimah, 2019).

Nigeria as a country is currently faced with lot of problems; the consequence of this is that, Nigeria has continued to be over-dependent on foreign goods and services which is crippling the pace of socio-economic development of the nation. The real essence of entrepreneurship education is to ensure the improvement of educational quality by equipping the young ones with basic skills that will make them functional and productive in the society (Enu, 2012).

Entrepreneurship training has been seen as an effective means enhancing economic growth and development. This is achieved through the creation of employment opportunities, development of local technologies and conservation of foreign exchange. The high rate of unemployment and the low standard of living have resulted to renewed interest in entrepreneurship programmes for learners (Braimah and Braimah, 2019).

Entrepreneurship as a key driver of the economy; creates individuals, many of whom go on to create big businesses for a vital development, this is highly necessary in this era of technological advancement when the country is in high need of entrepreneurs with innovative ideas and manipulative skills to embark on small and medium scale ventures. In any developing nation where the economy is not buoyant, it is imperative to improve the entrepreneurial skill in Fine and Applied Arts because it is an inevitable vehicle for the much needed socio-economic and industrial development.

Characteristics of an Entrepreneur in Fine and Applied Arts

A successful entrepreneurship programme in vocational education is key and must be guided with some of these characteristics, which includes;

Leadership; an entrepreneur motivates, directs and guides people to accomplish goals. These functions can only be effectively carried out by demonstrating quality leadership skills. Seeking, exploiting and selecting investment opportunities, initiating projects, finance and human resources must be put in place.

Risk Taking; an entrepreneur must calculate the risks involved in any business before venturing into it. The entrepreneur takes reasonable risks, which provides reasonable and challenging chance of success and the outcome.

Creativity; the entrepreneur is innovative and thinks differently from others. Such a fellow looks for opportunity to create wealth from ideas and services that generate funds or profit. He expresses potential skills capable of meeting the needs of his costumers.

Self confidence; this is one of the greatest assets that an entrepreneur must possess in achieving his set objectives. He must maintain high level of emotional stability in the face of difficulties and not be afraid of making decision and accept responsibilities as the case may be.

Feedback; an entrepreneur must have feedback mechanism to be able to know what is happening with his product at all times. This implies that he would create an avenue for constructive criticism that will help to grow his business in the area of strength and weakness. This will help in the area of data collection.

Task Orientation; the entrepreneur must set a target and goals for himself which must be achievable in record time. There must be avenue and procedure for how the sets of objectives of the business will be achieved with a road map that the entrepreneur will have to navigate.

The Roles of Entrepreneurship in Fine and Applied Arts

- Identify the world of work; make choices in consonance with potentials and interest.
- Create necessary awareness and motivation.
- Job satisfaction.
- Identify business opportunities.
- Manage human and capital resources.
- Take risks
- To the business community or society in general;

Increase productivity.

Reduce unemployment.

Encourage healthy competition among entrepreneurs.

Produce varieties of product and services.

Reduce some social vices in the area.

Factors Militating Against Fine and Applied Arts in Entrepreneurship Education

In as much as Fine and Applied Arts is an option for the development of entrepreneurial skills and a tool for employment generation, there are several factors that militate against its effectiveness.

- **Poor funding;** most of the vocational courses in the school system lack the required funds to be able to attain the set objectives. The government is paying apt attention as it is suppose to be making the programme almost dead on arrival.
- **Poor Infrastructure;** this is another very important aspects of the vocational component that must be in place for any vocational training to become a reality. The materials and buildings must be of standard in terms of quality and in quantity for the training.
- **Shortage of Teaching and Technical support Personnel;** the working condition and service are not favourable to be able to attract these sets of persons, most of the time they prefer to open up their own business as they see white collar jobs as a waste of time owing to the merger remunerations that come from the government and not even at the right time. Some even prefer to seek better offer abroad, where the services will be appreciated and well remunerated.

- **Low Public Awareness;** Fine and Applied Arts should be given wide coverage of awareness, scholarship should be given to students, materials should be provided, books and free internet facilities would also go a long way in attracting students to study art at various level. Students should be allowed to make their choices in the courses they intend to study as some parents would always prefer to choose a course for their children without looking at their, gifts, talents and potentials.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship education in Fine and Applied Arts is very important in the programme of service delivery in the economic vision of the 21st century. It has a formidable strength to equip the Nigerian youths with the appropriate knowledge, abilities, skills, competence to be gainfully employed. It is a discipline that develops the psychomotor, affective and cognitive parts of an individual. It helps an individual to develop all inert skills to function in any given society, these values will help the individual to chart a course that would transport them away from the zone of unemployment and make them employers of labour.

The skills acquired in Fine and Applied Arts are enough for an individual to be self-reliant and self-sufficient leading to development in providing valuable and quality services to the society. Artists are independent individuals, who enjoy unlimited time and this enables them to improve on their creativity and engage in any meaningful economic development.

Conclusively, Fine and Applied Arts is a course that requires the attention of the government at all levels, private sectors and philanthropists for proper funding. Young talents should be encouraged in the area of scholarship, materials and equipment should be provided, teachers and technical personnel should be well remunerated, and training and retraining of staff should be encouraged, up-to-date seminar and workshops to meet up with the world best practices should be encouraged.

References

- Ajileye, J. A. (2018) *Basic Rudiments of Vocational and Technical Education*. Myfays Educational Consult Adebayo Printing Nigeria Ltd, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State.
- Akolo, J. B. (2013) *The Teaching of Creative Arts in Primary Schools: The State of the Art*. Keynote address at National Art Gallery workshop, held at Federal College of Education, Okene, Kogi State.
- Braimah, Q. A & Braimah, J. Y (2019) Business Education Programme; A Gate way for Effective and Functional Entrepreneurial Education for Development in Nigerial. *African Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies (THE QUEST)* 1, (2) 126-138
- Braimah, Q. A & Jimah, K. Q. (2019) Actualization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) Through Entrepreneurial Skill Development in Business Education. *African Journal of multidisciplinary Studies. (THE QUEST)* 1, (2), 1-12.
- Ene, I.O. (2013) Implementing Policy Statements on Entrepreneurship Education in Nigerian Schools: *Education For All: Progress and Challenges*, Proceedings of the 28th Congress of the Nigerian Academy of Education. Eds T. A. Bolarin, and G. C. Unachukwu, Lagos: Toptune Educational Publishers
- Enu, D. B. (2012) Enhancing the Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria: *American Journal of Social Issues and Humanities* 2, (4) 232-239
- FGN (2014) *National Policy on Education, Abuja: Government Press*
- Harper, D. A. (2003) *Foundations of Entrepreneurship and Economic Development*, London : Routledge
- Ibrahim, B. (2000) *Visual Arts Made Easy for Schools and Colleges*. Movic Publishing com. Ltd, Lagos.
- Ibrahim, S. (2008) *Business Education as a Tool for Poverty Eradication in Nigeria*. Paper Presented at the First National Conference of the Faculty of Education and Arts. Ibrahim Badamosi Babagida University, Lapai 25th-28th February.
- Ibrahim, S. (2015) Business Apprenticeship Training Centre and Establishment of Small and Medium Scale Industries in Kaduna State, Nigeria, *ATBU. Journal of Science Technology and Education, J OSTE Vol. 24*.
- Innocent-Ene, E.O. (2019) Repositioning Entrepreneurship Education in the Nigerian Colleges of Education for Improve Service Delivery. *African Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies (THE QUEST)* 2 (1) 63- 74.
- Obanya, P. (2009) *Dreaming, Leaving and Doing Education*. Ibadan: Education Research and Study Group
- Obanya, P. (2005) *The Dialectics of Education and Development: How does the UBE fit in?* Keynote Address at the 4th National Conference of Educationists for Development. FCE, Okene, Kogi State.
- Ogundele, O. J. K. (2007) *Introduction to Entrepreneurship Development, Corporate Governance and Small Business Management*, Lagos: Molofin Nominees
- Ojo, E. H. (2017) *Education and the Change Mantra: Deconstructing the Issues, Challenges and Prospects through Entrepreneurship Education*. Paper Presented at the 4th International Conference on Education, FCE, Okene, Kogi State 8th-12th July.

- Ojo, E. H. (2025) Evaluation of Forms and Function of Egungun Iyamoye Unpublished M.A Thesis Ladoke Akintola University, Ogbomoso, Oyo State.
- Oke, A. O. (2004) Inequality, Poverty and Unemployment: Connections and Public Consideration for Nigeria Polycom. *Journal of the Facilities of Business and Communication Studies and Financial Studies*, The Polytechnic Ibadan.
- Osuagwu, L. (2002) Entrepreneurship in a Developing Economy; Empirical Evidence from Nigeria Business Organizations; *International Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 6, 19-32.
- Matanmi, S. & Awodun, M. (2005) An Assessment of Competitive Strategies and Growth Patterns of New Enterprises in Nigeria Using the Developing Economy Model, Lagos *Organization Review*, 1, (1), 26-32
- Njoku, C. U. (2008) Business Education and Value Orientation for National Development. *Business Education Journal*, 6 (1), 102-108
- Yusuff, P. O. U. (2002) *The Art and Design in General Education: The Right Step Towards Effective Education in Nigeria*. Paper Presented at the National Conference Organized by Nigerian Society for Education through Art, Kaduna State Chapter, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 9th-13th April.