

CREATIVITY AS AN IMPETUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NIGERIAN CHILD

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Abstract

What qualifies development is the result of growth derived from sequences of activities that project the individual through several stages of accomplishment. To attain development, certain motivations come to play of which the intention is to achieve results and evolve to better status. Many values are brought to play achieving such development, they include education, work, and practice. This study seeks to investigate how creativity through education, work, or practice can project the Nigerian child to attain development towards self actualisation. Aspects of creativity causes children to express themselves verbally and non-verbally, through acting, interactions, art practice, and other approaches; they manipulate materials and tools, try new ways of doing things, and experiment on limitless bounds of acts that foster cognitive and social development. Such activities help them reach high intellectual and social/emotional potential from an early stage. It prepares one for critical thinking skills and creative problem-solving abilities which in turn boosts their confidence. As times go on, such practices progress to give the child; grown to adulthood the capacities needed for self-sustaining accomplishments and actualisation. This study admonishes that creativity if well propagated can act as an impetus and propellant through childhood to attain the basics for self-development. The study adopts exploration of theories, and documentations to present the development and self actualisation analogy for the Nigerian child.

Key Words: Development, Creativity, Nigerian Child, Self-actualisation, Impetus/ Propellant

Introduction

Creativity is a needed skill for proper grooming and child development, Bright Horizons, (2017), an online educational blog, recommends that, great learning is possible when children participate in creative plays with various materials. Such manipulations train their muscles and hands, help them better coordinate their eyes and other senses, and develop their brains in furtherance of learning processes. The preoccupation of academic curricula include excellence in cognitive, emotional, and social developments, such creative exercises help equip children in these. It aids to raise children to reach their highest intellectual and social/emotional potentials. In early childhood education, critical thinking skills and creative problem-solving abilities are goals for a child's development, such activities train children to grow and mature with proper knowledge needed for a balanced life as regards attitudes and responsibility. Creativity is also skill that children will need when they join the workforce in the future, be it paid or self-employments.

Creativity provides open-ended reviews and thought-provoking imaginations for the child. It provides effective ways to enable children express feelings and ideas, and form visions, it enables them acknowledge the importance of ideas and imagination. It allows them decipher the meanings and result of actions, the difference between variables, and the alternatives to values. Creativity limits screen time occupation of children; television, computer, video games, and phone addiction can be checked with creativity/ creative acts as positive substitute. Nurturing imagination and parenting in the digital age can be challenging, thereby, creativity comes in to encourage children to create something new and different, engaging children in a kinesthetic manner, using their entire bodies and their five senses which often opens the mind for exploration and experimentations.

Early childhood is the peak time to nurture children's creativity; it provides the foundation for the learning that launches the child to adulthood. The skills learned transcend the period they learn them, it enriches their minds and wades off the limitations of egocentricity and biases. If a child is fortified with all these factors enumerated, such a child is well prepared to take up the challenges of life, be them in academic pursuits or diverse endeavours. In the strife to succeed and become self actualised children are properly developed with cognate training to foster positive attitudes and inner psychological strengths to relate with fellow humans, this propels the child to be useful to himself, his immediate community, and embraces the tenets of responsible citizenship. Therefore, is the self-actualization that creativity nurtures.

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Creativity

Creativity is recognised as a process and medium of establishing something new into being. The evolution of the process of unseen perception into reality. Amabile & Pillemer (2012), provide a highly current creativity literature which discusses creativity as a personality trait, a cognitive, and a social process, unlike as previously admonished by many that creativity is intrinsic. The fact that society's perception of creativity has changed through history suggests that creativity can be metamorphic, evolutionary, and is a skill that can be learned. When first studied, creativity was measured through the use of writing or drawing tasks that were difficult to interpret as a concept that in itself is difficult to define, creativity was likely to be biased, based on the conception and the feelings of the person who was judging it.

The freedom of exploration is one of the unique values in creativity, Ferlic, (2007), asserts that, when it comes to a creative endeavor one must be free to explore the options in the mind even when he may not be able to implement all, but that there should be that exploration. One should be able to freely play with the situation one faces to find those creative solutions that go to the depth of the situation and address the crux of the challenges at hand. This cannot be achieved if there are limits of thoughts and explorations that are influenced by external forces. Creativity is that ability to exert an inner value of imagination, composition, and ideation in a form that can be viewed by an audience. Creativity can be motivated from a projection of need; problem solving, leisure, or an experience of talent exertion, creativity requires passion and commitment. Creativity can be paid for, or achieved free. However, the intent of this study is to present creativity in the light of using it as a means to an end, as an impetus in the development of the child, and as a means of self-sustainability of the Nigerian child.

At the early stage, creativity can be a strong source of aid to buoy child development through the stages of life. Creative activities can help children in all areas of development; physical, social, cognitive, emotional, imaginative, and experimental. Creativity can aid child development in these various ways;

Creativity and Physical Development: Some creative activities as sculpture, carpentry, and clay works support the child's large and small muscle development, it strains their eye-hand coordination, which helps in balancing their sense of technical judgment; the brain, eye, and hand competence is the basics for technical acumen for problem solving, it is a major basis for psychomotor development in children. Using crayons, markers, and paintbrushes help children practice nerve and muscle development and control which help them in the development of writing styles and pattern later in life.

Creativity and Cognitive Development: Young children learn to communicate through drawing, especially at the tender age. They tell stories, express ideas and opinions, and exchange views with each other through forms of caricaturised representations. They learn the names of colors, patterns, and shapes through creative activities. They find out what happens when they mix colors, explore on forms and patterns, and other multiple expressive art oriented process and practices. This is an important stage in a child's development. As they progress, based on the previous experiences, they develop a natural sense of curiosity; they are often to be seen carefully examining a tree, feeling the bark, and studying the shape and color of the leaves. Asking them to draw or paint such experiences help to develop their observational skills which propel them to develop interests in the studies of the sciences and nature.

Creativity and Social Development: Some creative exercises are executed through groups and clusters, children particularly enjoy working together, regardless of the purposes, they learn a culture of give and take, sharing, responsibility to each other, and interaction with others. They learn to be responsible for stowing away used materials, and cleaning up. These are positive and important changes for social learning, it teaches them values of team spirit and tolerance. It kills the biases of race, creed and class, as they see themselves as a single band of communicants more than as individuals.

Creativity and Emotional Development; Through creative activities, children may be able to represent experiences that they cannot verbalize. Tijani, (2017), observes that through the creative stages of development of the child, that at the pre- schematic stage, the child makes efforts to communicate using pictorial expressions, they may draw pictures out of proportion, exaggerating things that are important to them. They use this avenue to make effort to translate their inner cravings to others. When their creativity is valued, they are made to feel valued as people, they feel a sense of accomplishment of the ability to integrate with their creative strengths, and this raises their self-esteem.

Creativity as a boost to imagination and experimentation: when children are taught creative experiences, their active imaginations develop through curiosity, they try their new found knowledge on several activities, they use the tools and materials given to them to explore their boundless imaginations, these take forms through implied representation of symbols, inordinate manipulation of tools and materials, and excessive explorations of thoughts, visions and experiences. These build their imaginative capacity and critical thoughts; basis for creative balance. Through active experimentation, they can invent new experiences which may lead to novel skills and valuable accomplishments. At a later stage in life, this leads to development of technical skills and applications to problem solving, equating the grown child to mental technical stability.

Child development

Child development according to Wikipedia entails the biological, psychological and emotional changes that occur from birth through adolescence in all human beings. It relates to the individual transcending stages from dependence to independence. It is a continuous process, a sequence that the child evolves through influences both natural and acquired. The child's development stages differ in rates and pace, and each stage is affected by previous experiences of the spent stage. The stages are strongly influenced by genetic factors and events, and personal experiences as the child grows from age to age, (Burleson, 2005). Though child development has various factors that modify the processes, the preoccupation of this study's concept will dwell on the factors of creative activity which is chiefly environmental and learning, but may involve an interaction between the two.

In the context of this study, child development refers to the process of positive accomplishments of the child through a sequence of nurturing from birth to full self-actualisation at adulthood. This portends to the growth of an individual, and his ability to satisfy important needs that make meaning to him in life. The understanding of child development here is linked to the understanding and processes of self-actualisation. Self actualisation here is concerned with reality, not idealism, the context of personal growth and contentment, a brochure for directions for the attainment of the desires of those statuses a person measures for himself at full capacity and potential. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines self-actualisation as the process of fully developing and using one's abilities to attain full needs, while the dictionary.com defines self-actualisation as the achievement of one's full potential through creativity, independence, spontaneity, and a grasp of the real world. The basic understanding of child development here is in the self actualisation concept, as the development or attainment of one's full potentials.

The idea behind child development as self-actualisation revolves round the principles of human existence and the sating of his needs in the aspects of material, emotional, and spiritual desires, and an ultimate fulfillment of his potential. This portends to using creativity as a tool through which a child attains development for self actualisation. Here creativity is understood as a motivator to

development and actualisation. Olson, (2013), views self actualisation within the perception, and concept of the humanist psychological theory created by Abraham Maslow, specifically, from the theory of Maslow's needs hierarchy. Both (Olson, 2013), and Ali, (2016), assert Maslow as placing the human existence in concept of having certain basic needs and fulfilling these needs to ensure an appropriate operation of man in his existence. That Maslow categorised the needs in five specific levels. One has to attain the fulfilment at one stage before ascending to the next.

By Maslow's theory, the first stage of need refers to the physiological needs like food, water, air, and sleep. These are also known as the basic necessities of life.

The second level needs are concerned with the desire to ensure safety and security, to his family and responsibilities relating to forestalling against social insecurity and uncertainty and/or political instability.

The third stage of man's need relates to the need to love and be loved, the sense of emotional satisfaction and belonging, and the feeling of connectedness.

The fourth stage refers to the need for knowledge that ensures self-confidence, respect, and a stability of positive self-esteem, and feelings derived from admiration.

The fifth stage is the need for self-actualization. The height of human wants, man's pinnacle of success and attainment of self-mastery, needs concerning creative self-growth, engendered from fulfillment of potential and meaning in life, which reflects our true potential and makes us optimally functional. In relation to all the mentioned, if a child adopts the tenets of creativity and is developed to attain adulthood, if he amasses a livelihood through creativity, this gives him purchasing power and from there, he is competent to provide for, or acquire the mentioned needs.

Creativity and child development

This study views creativity as encompassing skills and dexterity; it is a psycho motive discipline and reflects an approach to instruction that combines the knowledge of materials, tools, equipment, and material (media), facilities, and environment, as well as imaginative capacities. These procedures execute the dictates of creativity as a process. If creativity possesses abilities to create objects of utilitarian and aesthetic values that can provide self-reliance through patronage and employment generation, then it has provided the development of the child to attain self actualisation. Creativity goes beyond the provision for needs of aesthetics and utility, to integrate academic, vocational and workplace skills. The development of applied and integrated curriculum is necessary in general education, creativity through the arts help provide this.

Every action taken in rationality has basic motivations behind them. The anticipated successes of such actions serve as major motivations for the actions to be taken for results. In this context, this study analyses the context of creativity as a motivation towards self actualisation, and creativity as an impetus to the development of the Nigerian child. Selvi, (2009), admonishes that life is a process for seeking development and achievement of an individual, this propels individuals to work hard in whatever endeavour they find themselves so as to earn the expectations of their desires. Individuals may not satisfy, or achieve most of their continuous needs, but they must continue in the strife to succeed.

The need for creativity in child development is important because of the unending evolution of needs and purposes. Creativity provides opportunities for discovery and knowledge, it inspires children to think, question, explore, make suggestions, and develop alert and active minds. Even verbal creativity has its role in child development, (Bright Horizons, 2017). Verbal interactive activities inspire compositions and nurture speech strengths, it builds vocabulary and teaches children speech mannerisms. It forms decent and competent modes of verbal acumen and nurture oratory prowess. Creative art expressions nurture strong imaginative abilities, through painting, sculpture, collage, clay works, drawing or any other medium, art teaches children to absorb stress, it functions as therapy even unknowingly, it teaches them decision making and provides limitless avenues of self-expression and ideas. Manipulating materials provides a double advantage, freedom of operation which breeds confidence, and encourages focus and concentration which breeds

mental alertness. It helps children develop psycho motor skills and brain- hand- eye coordination which is necessary in technological aptitude. Creative art activities build confidence in children as it exhibits mastery through manipulation of materials, resulting from routine, repetition and creation of new ideas.

Creativity is an activity which develops personal intuition, perceptions, intentions, and their presentation to achieve specific goals. It concerns the manipulation of knowledge and skills in order to extract the problem solving qualities expected from there for implementation. Joseph (2016), also asserts that lifelong processes as creativity becomes a learning approach modifier, contributes to, and changes personality traits continuously. This is so because on a daily basis, man in his activities and quest for survival establishes processes to construct meanings, depending on personal perspectives and relevance to experiences at specific times. Every aspect where a man constructs a sequence to make meaning or solve a problem for himself is a creative process, this is the main instrument which carries out and delivers all the changes in the life process. It can be described as one of human experiences related to survival instincts, learning ability, satisfaction, and self-development that leads to self actualisation. The creative process is the combination of old and new experiences, the accumulative process where an individual ensures the openings of new directions for his life, as he permanently searches the perfect environment and conveniences of life to live. It is one of the most powerful tools for the individual to develop, accomplish and create new life conditions for himself. If the individual is aware of this powerful tool, he will improve his life conditions by means of applying the creative experience on the life learning and development process.

The creative process is influenced by different factors such as biological, sociological, cultural, emotional, spiritual, and moral developments. These factors have positive or negative influences on the creative prowess and learning abilities of man, this is because they provide avenues that man employs the thought process to establish problem solving tenets. The creative acumen provides the will to search for the meaning of life and the force that prompts development of individual's capability, the creative process involves those processes which an individual employ through experiences and will to pursue, and the motivation from the experience and inspiration of the conceiver, this is in an attempt to fulfill a desire. For instance, the student reads so as to pass examination and become successful at graduation, that capacity to read comes from a process that he learnt over a period of time. An artist creates to make a sale, or satisfy his inner cravings and expressions, that ability to create comes from a process learned over a period of time. From the above, the creative experiences are better motivators in working with; these are all parts of the process of development learned over time. Other efforts at creativity are to help them to become what they already are, more perfectly and to realize what their potentials can be.

Motivation is a personal drive to accomplish, and the process of instigating and sustaining goal-directed behavior, (Schunk, 2008). Self-development is a major motivation that propels one to work hard; it can assume the orientation as both a trait and a state. For self-development to be acquired, some motivations to drive at must be present, this study views creativity as a factor towards the attainment of self-development.

Creativity as an impetus in child development

Creativity as livelihood and its role in development: The main yardstick to measure and adjudge one as self-developed or actualised is the ability to take care of basic needs; food, shelter, clothing, water, etc. These are the most basic, and the cheapest to procure. But these are not easily assessed without availability of funds which means man needs a source of livelihood to attain and sustain this. The creative industry; art and craft, film, music, and fashion designing, have been thriving over the years as a massive employer of labour. The creative industry has been of major importance to the economic well-being of some Nigerians, especially in this downward turn of the national economy. Artists and creative workers are predominantly self-reliant. They don't depend on others for fulfilling their responsibilities, and they have the capacity to create and produce out of

the cheapest of materials for sustainability. In developed countries, the creative industries are an important avenue where governments draw their revenue generation base and employment opportunities. This in turn ensures robust economic contributions to the nation. This further ensures the relevance and possibility of self actualisation. Without such opportunities, most of those termed developed or actualised would not have been.

Creativity, Development, and Responsibility: Creativity embodies a wide range of activities in its clove; oratory and imaginative competence, critical thought and analysis, problem solving and technological acumens, and psychological and emotional consciousness. The developed, contented, and self actualised man is a desire of nations, this is a yardstick of measuring a nation's success in the responsibility to the citizens, such classes of people most times are responsible and are rational in their operations and tend to contribute that the nation may function positively through various nation building traits. This is achievable through the teachers teaching, the learners learning, government developing and delivering expectations, continental and international integration, sense of well-being and stable nationalities. Tijani (2017), admonishes that, while students in art classes learn creativity specific to the arts, such as how to draw, how to mix paint, or how to center a pot, they are also taught a remarkable array of mental habits not emphasised elsewhere in schools, these habits include observing, envisioning, innovation, and reflection. She also states that, though far more difficult to quantify in a test than reading comprehension or mathematics computation, each has a high value as a learning tool, both in school and generally in life. This aids the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical as an equipment for the individual's survival both socially and economically in, and contribution to the development of his society. Buhari (2011), admonished that Nigerian artists have made Nigeria a significant country in the world culture map as a major contributor to the development of world civilisation through their arts. He adds that the contributions of artists to national development include, ownership of private art galleries, rise in collector's population, auctions, competitions, improvement in the quality of living of the middle class Nigerian. He stresses that creative arts graduates have found employments in different areas of the Nigerian economy, apart from the most important one; self-employment, others include set designing for television, theater, and ITC media, branding and public relations consultancy, fashion, tourism, architecture and allied sculptures, and teaching, to mention a few. These are great testimonies in child development and actualisation through creative activities, it comprises relevancies that span across the 5 facets of self actualisation as enacted by Maslow; the artist having acquired self-reliance or employment through creativity can pay his bills, he can afford food, shelter, and clothing. Can ensure safety by paying guards, and has already attained employment security as a practicing artist, arts teacher, or a tourist practitioner or consultant, and contributing in his civic responsibility to maintain a stable polity. He is responsible enough to afford marriage, a stable home, and to love and be loved. An arts teacher or a successful artist is respected in the society. As Buhari, (2011), notes, what respect surpasses to be mentioned in the actualisation of the globalisation process and civilization?

Conclusion

The stages of development commence from childhood and span through the entire life of a human being. The ceaseless processes through life in an effort to provide and live up to expectations drive man to indulge in a variety of endeavours. However, to achieve the needed development, man must prepare himself from childhood through different programmes of activities be them trade, and education or such sundry activities. Creativity as it relates to these spheres can relate in education and trade, this prepares one to acquire the basics to sustain himself through practices that earn him a living. It is through this that he will acquire needed responsible competence to satisfy his needs. This is what sums to the understanding of what constitutes the concept of development. The study presented through this analogy, the essence of creativity in providing development for the Nigerian child towards preparing him to become self actualised and contributing his expected quota to the society.

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