LEAD PAPER
CREATIVITY IN PROFESSIONALISM IN A DEVELOPING ENVIRONMENT

PROF. BEST OCHIGBO
Department of Fine and Industrial Arts
Faculty of Environmental Studies
University of Uyo, Uyo

UDUAK PETER
Department of Fine and Industrial Arts
Faculty of Environmental Studies
University of Uyo, Uyo

Abstract
The variability of human needs is what accounts for any meaningful development in any given space. No wonder then why professionals attempt to recreate their environment and in turn mould their personalities. However, a cursory look at our environments suggests a lack of the quest for entrepreneurial knowledge and desire to learn practical skills because the environment does not reward creativity. It is therefore the aim of this paper to showcase how creativity and professionalism can be made to thrive in a developing environment. Hence attempt is made to inculcate a conscious attitude in professionals, a meaningful and focused creativity as a way of encouraging potentialities, and to rekindle professionalism in our environment. The discursive methodology is hereby employed to situate the essence of creativity and professionalism as core to environmental advancement. Its findings reveal that creativity and professionalism can thrive only when the right environment is created, that some environments are more conducive to the creative process, and that a task oriented vision has a strong connection with creativity and innovativeness. The study concludes that the creative professional is not a luddite, but one with innovative construct vision. It is recommended that creative professionals that are immersed in diverse practice can have a large zone of proximal development in a developing environment.

Keywords: Creativity, Professionalism, Environment, Development, View

Introduction

The environment is the aggregation of all the physical and aerial atmosphere features within delineated natural or man-made surroundings, with a direct or indirect impact on life at all levels of human strata. It is the variability of human needs that is the drivers to any meaningful development in any given space, based on need, aesthetics and safety.

Far from being impartial observers, professionals in any given environment do all possible to recreate their environment and mould their personalities. This aspiration is evident everywhere; in the quest of entrepreneurial knowledge, desire to learn the theory and practice of their skills. This has led to the drive for new progressive methods of work in various fields; in the persevering scientific quests for solutions to the urgent problems involved in the building of the material and technical foundations of advanced creativity in the era of professionalism and technological revolution. Creative professionals, above all, must be prepared to evolve new ways to meet the high demands of our epoch. Hence, in order to drive professionalism in the various fields of endeavour, practitioners' main task is to make the most favourable conditions provided by society, to systematically enhance their creative consciousness, raise their educational prowess, and develop their physical and mental powers in such a way that every potential professional becomes a harmonious personality. At a time when a developing society like ours is being

built, stakeholders are inculcating in its professionals a conscientious attitude towards meaningful and focused creativity as a way of encouraging their potentialities in all spheres of life as a way of rekindling creativity in professionalism.

There is very little to say in introducing this lofty theme, except to point out most vigorously that it is the vision for the creativity that must be aimed at – a complete freedom to rekindle creativity in all facets of professionalism, to choose your medium and to express just those things which you have seen and in which you believe. This is key to being professionally creative. Just go ahead and try hard and try often, and chance your challenges in different approaches.

This treatise is based on the theory by the psychologist, Abraham Maslow (1954), in which the needs of man is divided into four categories of physiological (food, water and sex), safety (security, order and stability), love and belongingness and esteem (self-respect and a feeling of success) and self-actualization (creating and making the most of one's abilities). It therefore shows that people create for a variety of reasons depending upon their particular needs at the moment. In the case of the artist, the main premise of creativity appears to be the central tendency of man to try to become his potentialities and express his being. This is core to our discourse. Creativity depends on the kinds or types of stimuli in an environment. It all follows that if their environment stimulates and rewards their creativity, they will be creative.

Creativity in professionalism facilitates the harmonious development of the personality and creation of humane conditions for the professional to give the fruits of his labour to society and is he enriched in the process of his creative work. For the purpose of this discourse we would take a cursory look at creativity and professionalism for a better understanding of the discourse, in order to savour its essence.

Creativity

Creativity is the source of all arts, science, and technology. We can succinctly put it that creativity is imagination, or creative thinking. Albert Einstein declared that "imagination is more important than knowledge". Creativity can be defined as the sense of creating something new, something which can be seen or heard by others, more so, it is the ability to see from the subconscious (inner mind) and to respond externally by producing concrete images in the consciousness of the mind (external).

Creativity comes when one is inspired by an idea or faced with a problem. Creative processes share common characteristics such as the preparation, incubation, illumination and verification; these are core stages of visionary creativity.

Preparation: This involves meditation and framing or formulating the question(s) as the most important step through which information is generated and open-minded exploration takes place.

Incubation: This is the stage where intuitive insight is contemplated.

Illumination: This is the eureka (aha) state when a sudden hunch or insight leads to valuable final outcome.

Verification: The stage where the practical output is tested, and the product is critiqued for acceptability (adjudged a success) or rejected (denying the outcome). The steps may be reviewed again for a fresh start where the outcome is not satisfactory (Ochigbo, 2015).

Creativity that is developed through professional experience enhances creative problem solving and communication ideas. Thus, creativity is of extreme importance as it helps develop our abilities to integrate experiences of the outside world with those of our inner selves. Creativity can only thrive when we are not afraid to gamble, experiment, and try the difficult and unknown.

Professionals create because they seem to have the urge to expand, develop and mature – to become all that they are capable of becoming. That is the essence of creativity. The main premise of creativity appears, as in the case of professionals, to be the central tendency of man to try to become his potentialities and express his being.

According to Haddad (2012) creativity is the key to innovation. Artistic creativity is key to all aspects of creativity, this is supported by Runco and Pagnani (2011) who assert that creativity is associated with the artist's endeavours. Accordingly, Ochigbo (2015) avers that creativity depends on the kinds or types of stimuli in an environment. It all follows that if their environment stimulates and rewards their creativity, they will be creative.

No doubt there are obstacles to becoming more creative. The obstacles which one may face include habit, limited availability of time and energy, one's environment, need for immediate solutions, criticism by others, fear or failure, difficulty in recognizing problems, poor attitudes, complacency and difficulty in doing direct mental work.

However, the fact that talents abounds and desire is on the increase, creativity is rare, suggests that we need to be more exploratory as professionals. In this modern time, art and creativity have transcended beyond the bounds of human imagination. The creative prowess of innovators has heightened recently with persistent exploration of new methods, techniques, media and materials.

Creativity is a paradoxical construct, one reason is it paradoxical is because its definitions tend to be elusive for many people, yet everyone knows creativity when they see it. In defining what the concept of creativity covers, one is tempted to paraphrase what Augustine of Hippo wrote about time in his confessions; "if no one asks me, I know what it is, if I wish to explain it to him who asks, I do not know". Creativity is one of those polysemous words that are by their very nature controversial. There is good reason for this. Life itself, is a myopic process, indolent, but inquisitive, conservative but opportunistic,

apparently aimless and so defying human understanding, is creativity, from the start, even though for some, life has not itself been created.

Ochigbo (2015) states that, creativity is the ability to see from the subconscious (inner mind) and to respond externally by producing concrete images in the consciousness of the mind (external). Foster (2016) contends that creativity is not just a means of expression; it is a means of escape and diversion from the everyday world – the humdrum, the regimens, and the realities of life. Several authors have diverged dramatically in their precise definitions beyond their general commonalities; hundreds of different analyses can be found in several literature.

Torrance (2017) describes creativity as a process of becoming sensitive to problems, deficiencies, gap in knowledge, missing elements, disharmonies, identifying the difficulties, searching for solutions, making guesses, or formulating hypotheses about the deficiencies; testing and retesting these hypotheses and possibly modifying and retesting theme, and finally communicating the results.

Deducing from the above scholarly definitions, creativity is any act, ideas, or production that changes an existing domain, or that transforms an existing domain into a new one, what counts is whether the novelty he or she produces is acceptable for inclusion in the domain. It requires curiosity, flexibility, persistence, independence with a tremendous spirit of adventure and a love of play.

Creative Professionalism

Being an artist has taught me a great deal about creativity. To begin with, I am a 'Painter', and this is one of the most challenging creative endeavour I have ventured into. Something I have come to realize and understand is that being a creative professional has less to do with the things that others do that are classified as non-creative. For instance, incredibly technical and precise process and products cannot really be said to be all that creative. Creative professionals are not simple to define in terms based on a person's job or role. This does not necessarily identify them as creative professionals. There are traits that are common. No matter what job or role that person is endowed, these traits are shared by artists, architects, builders, estate managers, composers, film directors, medical practitioners, lawyers, engineers, administrators, marketers, media practitioners (journalists), bricklayers, play-writers, and the list goes on and on.

You may ask 'what is the big deal about creative professionalism and why is it important?' It is imperative to note that in today's world, most employers are looking for employees who are more than tool-pushers and rule followers. These roles still exist, but more and more the emphasis on independence (autonomy) is increasing. The successful ones are those who not only have skills, attitude and knowledge for the work, but the cleverness and creativity to deal with a rapidly changing work environment (Brierlay, 2014).

We might consider these traits that can be attributed to professionalism and creativity. These traits include, but not limited to:

(i)   Creative professionals are inherently creative as they have an urgency to create, engage, and produce. Non-professionals lack this tendency, whereas professionals capitalize on the slightest opportunity to create.

(ii)   Creative professionals thrive on options and variety. They hardly would turn down any challenge. They accept the challenge before they begin the search for solutions to the problem.

(iii)   Creative professionals are independent-minded as they know how to balance independence with interdependence and know what to do to ensure success. They are the outstanding members in any team with assigned responsibilities.

(iv)   Creative professionals know how to leverage chaos (brainstorming) and process (editing) at key points in the project circle, because they believe strongly that nothing can be accomplished reliably without a process.

(v)   Creative professionals appear to be cruel when they strike an idea. They disregard everything else and focus on what they believe would yield success. They do not worry about how team members feel. This is how they see ideas.

(vi)   The most successful creative professionals are full of ego, confidence, courage and fearless. However, a lasting success comes with a balance between ego and humility. It is advisable that the creative professional should never be over-confident and lazed in whatever they do.

(vii)   Creative professionals know when to be patient and when to act. This is vital to experience and variety in creativity.

(viii) Creative professionals are endowed with an air of inspired concentration and intent creative aura that reigns in their mind. This is the primary environment for creativity.

(ix)   If creative minds work as a team, it is easier to harness each other's core competencies.

(x)   Fast and consistent reliability is core to changing the playing field to suit individual competency.

Environmental Impact on Creativity in Professionalism

Creativity in professionalism thrives only when the right environment is created. There is no gainsaying the fact that creativity, invention, and innovation are driven by a series of little illuminations (ahas). When thoughts are illuminated and put together, they lead to innovative products. Creativity is built on a tapestry of ideas and when the illumination strikes, this is what forms the basis for continuous and radical innovation.

Although creativity may emerge in a variety of settings and situations, some environments are more conducive to the creative process. Having a vision that is task-oriented has a strong connection with creativity and innovations. We would therefore present the environmental factors that aid and encourage the creative process in individuals, departments and organizations in this order:

- If a group has shared mission, it will lead to group cohesion and further contributing to problem solving. Hence the need for a shared mission that is focused on a single goal.
- An atmosphere that facilitates one-on-one collaboration should be created to provide focus and insight in order to effectively foster the illumination (aha) and individual creativity. It is like a reciprocal tutoring that can only be achieved through discussion and dialogue for better understanding of any particular problem.
- Risk-taking should be encouraged even when the risks are daunting, as the road less travelled may be the right path of the learning-by-doing it approach should form the idea of learning through mistakes. The path to success is often fraught with disappointments.

Experimentation invariably may involve some level of failure, I have been through this path, but it leads to understanding and having insight into what works. Investing in a number of projects diversifies risk and provides opportunity for the future. Thus, making the right investment decision on the right projects and the right products is a combination of having the right information, intuition, and luck by learning-by-doing.

Other benefits of creativity in professionalism to the developing environments include the fact that there are some creative people who have a special place to go when they want to solve a problem. Quiet time and solitude help individuals think inside the box. The first thing solitude does is to help us focus on the problem. Through this, the mind works in the background even when we are not focused, to reorganize knowledge and ideas to help solve a problem. Half of the battle of being creative is convincing yourself and others that anyone can be creative.

The creative process can be exciting, joyous and fulfilling. These challenges may have to do with taking risks, confronting fears, navigating our world, but they can be overshadowed, and surmounted. The bottom line is to allow the creative spirit to prevail. Allowing ourselves to make mistakes is the beginning of confronting the challenges that comes with creativity and the art. Encouraging creativity requires careful planning so that pupils, students and educators alike are helped to respond to creative challenges within a given context. This notion is supported by Seltzer and Bentley's (1999) assertion that the central challenge for the education system is, therefore, to find ways of embedding learning in a range of meaningful contexts where innovators can use their knowledge and skills creatively to make an impact in the world around them.

Conclusion

Anyone can be creative. The creative professional is not a luddite, but one with innovative construct vision. The creative professional is one who, when sufficiently motivated in the right environment, produces novel ideas, combines old ideas in a novel way, or applies knowledge of one field to another by satisfying the particular needs aroused by professional norms. This is done in order to satisfy the basic needs of professionalism. We would therefore submit that creativity is a conversation – a tension – between individuals working on peculiar problems within the professional communities to which they belong.

It should be noted that a professional is anyone who does work that cannot be standardized easily and who continuously welcomes challenges at the cutting edge of his or her expertise. Therefore, creative professionals that are immersed in diverse practice or constantly pushing their informal learning opportunities can have a large zone (sphere) of proximal development in a developing environment. In an ideal world management would be largely responsible for creating an enabling environment that is conducive to individual creativity. In reality, it is the individual that is responsible for creating such an environment by creating time that will bring about the desired level of creativity. To attain the height of creativity as discussed, quality is essential to heighten a progressive satisfaction of hierarchy of needs, which may be lower or higher as Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs envisioned.

I would like to conclude by saying; life can be seen from many perspectives. Some are comfortable with the utilitarian view, where everything has its purpose: Food is to be eaten, a house is to live in, a clock is to tell time, and so on. For most of us, this is the only view we accept. There is the poet's view, in which life is a series of ideas, concepts, images, forming themselves into works that have rhythm and sequence, similar to an artist's composition, especially the painter who views the world as a series of shapes, colours, lines, forms, related into ever-changing visual patterns. There is the engineer's view, architects view, medical doctors view and so forth, but those who desire to be creative professionals have to acquire the habit to applying all of the following strategies: Have a mission and focus on a single goal; Need to be involved in one-on-one collaboration; Take risk and permit failure where necessary; Need to have quiet time and solitude; Need to produce prototype and experiment quite often; and to work hard. Creativity cannot be programmed, but it is imperative that we should recognize its potential consequences and exploit them; this is where innovation comes it. Creativity is recalcitrant to over-rigid structures, makes light of inertia and is opposed to conservatism. It does not consist of perfecting knowledge and technology, but in making them obsolete by creating new knowledge. Providing choice, ensuring autonomy, encouraging teamwork, allowing experimentation and encouraging perseverance are key components of fostering creativity within professions.

Creativity depends on the kinds or types of stimuli in an environment. It all follows that if an environment stimulates and rewards creativity, professionals are encouraged to create. Perhaps, genuinely creative adaptation seems to represent the only possible way that professionals can keep abreast of the kaleidoscopic changes in the world.

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