

ISSUES AND EMERGING REALITIES OF EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN NIGRIAN INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING

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Abstract

This paper outlines the current trends in the development of art education and some factors that impede effective pedagogical methods and organization of art education in Nigerian institutions of learning. The paper acknowledges that, art pedagogical approaches could provide relevant basis for a functional art education programme in the schools. Thus; gives excellent results, especially for the current and emergence of new methods, creativities, inventions, innovative techniques of arts productions for the Nigerian arts. The paper discusses few related issues concerning art education programmes from the basic to higher levels of education, as relevant reading materials for educational studies. Suggestions for ensuring effective art education programmes in Nigerian institutions of learning constitute the thrust of this paper. Therefore, the following areas are covered in the paper: - Problems of Art Education Programmes, Restoring Art Education Programmes and Improving Art Education Programmes in Nigeria.

Keywords:

- Current trends in art education programme, theory and practice.
- Factors impeding effective pedagogical methods of art teaching.
- Issues on art education programmes.
- Revival of art pedagogical organizations, methods and approaches.

Introduction

Art has regularly been considered as any skillful action or reaction that permits self-expression through productions or reproductions of things that are in the society. Art cannot be defined in a single idiom, considering its functional or literal variations, individual difference and cultural backgrounds. Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary for current English (2001) defines Art as “the use of imagination to express ideas or feelings, particularly in painting, drawing or sculpture”. This includes the production of objects or things of aesthetic significance.

Art is the form of human behavior by which man purposely interprets and enhances the quality and essence of his experience through the things he created. No matter what the definition of Art is, it must derive its vitality from the internal dynamics of the society to which it belongs. This seems to reiterate the relationship among arts, culture and society. Art has been an integral part of man's culture for many centuries. According to Gombrich, (1964); and Talabi, (1979) in Muftahu and Nazri (2015), “Art has persisted as a continual universal activity from the time of the cave artists to the modern-day artists. It revolves round the cultural trait of every society and the pattern of the ever-widening human experience and advancement.”

Presentation

Art has existed in ancient traditional societies which pre-dated the entity now called Nigeria. It has existed here both in non-orthodox and informal ways for many centuries before the advent of western education. At a certain time, traditional arts and crafts were based mainly on hereditary,

guild, apprenticeship and informal training system alone. The trends and status of art pedagogy has, however, changed considerably within the Nigerian educational system.

In support of art teaching in schools in Nigeria, (the 6-3-3-4 educational system in the country), as reflected in the Federal Republic of Nigeria's, National Policy on Education (Revised, 2012) that "Art is a core subject at the basic levels of education", That is, at Nursery, Primary and Junior Secondary schools' levels. The paper, hence, observes that the emerging realities on art pedagogy in Nigerian institutions of learning are some fractions of the set intentions of the national policy on education. The situation could hardly be otherwise, considering the increase in students' enrolment, inadequacies (such as inadequate number of art teachers and scanty art materials), as well as other related problems militating against effective art pedagogy methods and organization. It is apparent that few students offer Fine Arts at the senior secondary and tertiary education levels; and not all the schools in some states are offering Fine Arts as a subject. Such a situation seems to undermine art pedagogy. How to ensure successful art education in Nigerian Institutions of Learning, Therefore, constitutes the focus of this paper.

Problems of Art Education Programme in Nigerian Institutions of Learning

Inadequacies, such as scanty art teaching materials and inadequate number of art teachers are the major problems besetting effective art teaching in Nigerian institutions of learning. With the increase in student's enrolment at this level, the seeming ratio of only one art teacher per school, and cases of an art teacher handling a class of about one hundred and twenty students (1:120). Rabi, A.B. (2021), discovered that, there are more students in the junior secondary schools (JSS) in Nigerian today than ever before but less at higher institutions of learning. This cannot ensure effective teaching of arts; because, a classroom with large number of students could be rowdy, noisy and clumsy, especially during the art practical activities; thus, rendering effective teaching unfeasible.

Basic art materials are scanty in most schools and grossly inadequate to suit the complex genres of art and the increasing population of the students. For instance, basic art materials, such as brushes, dyes, fixative, poster paints, potter's wheel, kiln and squeegee are costly, while most schools have no art rooms/studios. To this end, art teaching is often conducted in the conventional classrooms. In actual facts, some of the few art rooms available are not properly equipped, nor are of the appropriate design for effective art teaching. They lack adequate furniture, such as stools, easels, donkey chairs, display boards, shelves and cupboards for students' use. Therefore, some of the students' finished art works are displayed on the walls of the classrooms, or carelessly dumped in the waste paper baskets or littered about.

The nonchalant attitude towards art teaching by some school principals, teachers, students and parents also impedes effective art teaching. Their lukewarm attitudes include irregular or non-procurement of certain basic art materials required. Recommended textbooks on Art and resource persons and relevant instructional media, such as documentary films and slides on art history on renown artists, photographs and replica of museum objects are rarely produced and utilized for art teaching.

Rabi, A.B. (2021), noted in his dissertation that, the organization and promotion of Art Clubs, excursions, seminars, workshops, exhibitions and art competitions seem to be dormant in most schools and at the State levels. The annual students' enrolment for Art in the Junior School Certificate Examination (JSCE.) conducted by the states Ministry of Education has dwindled. This implies that the number of the JSS that offer Art in the states is minimal, whereas the Federal Republic of Nigeria's. National Policy on Education (Revised. 1981) stipulates that Art is one of the compulsory subjects at

the junior secondary level in the country. Art teaching in some JSS in the states also seems to be fraught with many hindrances, such as non-prompt replacement of art teachers when transferred or substituted for the art teachers who resigned their appointments or were granted study leave. This situation has resulted in the termination of art teaching in some schools.

Towards Restoring Art Education Programme in Nigerian Institutions of Learning

Having sketched the above trends and status as emerging problems and realities of art teaching and factors that impedes effective teaching of arts in Nigerian Institutions of Learning. Here for, four categories of imperative functions are suggested for revamping and promoting art pedagogical methods and art teaching strategies in Nigerian Institutions of Learning. The four important functions are enumerated and briefly explained as the functions of the government, art teachers, art students and parents.

Function of the Government: Government should ensure that schools across the country are adequately staffed with sufficient trained art teachers. Considering the increase in the student enrolment levels in the country, the seeming ratio of only one and teacher per a secondary school, especially in the urban area, cannot ensure effective teaching of Art. The posting of art teachers to secondary schools should be on a fair basis. Schools should not be categorized arbitrarily. Only the trained teachers should be employed to teach Art. Indeed, the Federal Republic of Nigeria's National Policy on Education (Revised, 2012) believes that no education can rise above the qualities of its teachers. It is observing that the majority of the trained art teachers in the Secondary Schools in the states are Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) holders. The NCE remains the highest certificate that can be obtained for qualification to teach in schools at the basic level of education in Nigeria. Only few of such schools, like, Federal College of Education, Katsina, Kano and Zaria offer Fine and Applied Arts.

The Federal and the State Ministries of Education should urge institutions of learning concerned to commence Art Education courses in their higher institutions of learning. Fine and Applied Arts / Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA) should be included in the curriculum of the new Federal and the State's Colleges of Education. Apart from the existing Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) in Educational Technology course, which is an art-related programme, Faculties of Education in the Universities in the country, should also revive Fine Arts and Creative Arts for the benefit of numerous NCE Fine and Applied Arts graduates (teachers) within and outside the country. Higher institutions of learning in the states should include B.A. (Ed.) Fine Arts and B.Ed. in Creative Arts in her proposed First-Degree Programme for both Regular and Sandwich students.

Wangboje, in Irivewieri, G.O. (2009), suggests that the work of the art teacher should be supplemented by employing the services or assistance of resource persons, such as local craftsmen and other experts. In this vein, women with demonstrated ability in specific craftsmen; can be employed in art teaching in order to demonstrate such crafts to the young learners. Relevant conferences, seminars and workshops on the promotion of art teaching should be organized frequently. Art competitions and exhibitions should also be organized frequently for the schools at basic levels, as well.

The continual effective supervision of art pedagogy at the basic levels, at most, is required. Evaluation devices, with adequate inspection by the Inspectorate team from the various Ministries of Education are very necessary in monitoring and enhancing the status of art pedagogy in the schools. The Ministries of Education should ensure proper computerization and documentation of the annual Junior School Certificate Examination results. Government should provide adequate financial assistance to the schools for the procurements of the basic art materials, textbooks and other related

facilities. There is the need to seek the assistance of relevant government agencies and stakeholders for Educational Project and the relevant instructional materials, such as textbooks for schools in Nigeria.

Agencies, such as the Educational Resource Centre (ERC), Council for Art and Culture and the Directorate for Employment should contribute positively and immensely to revamping art pedagogy in their states-owned institutions of learning. Similarly, professional organizations, such as the Society of Nigerian Artists (SNA) and Nigerian Society for Education through Art (NSEA) and its world council, International Society for Education through Art (INSEA), should extend their expertise and aids to such institutions of learning.

The government agencies should also provide facilities, such as films and slides on Nigerian Arts and Artists. On this point, Ogundipe's (1984) in Monash, U. (2014), suggestion on the provision of Mobile Museum to enable the museum staff to go round the various institutions of learning to meet pupils who cannot afford to transport themselves to the museum would thus be implemented.

Functions of the Art Teachers: Art education programme at basic levels is critical and formative. Art at these levels, should stimulate the students to share in the joy of creative activity and to enjoy being innovative, constructive and enterprising. Art pedagogy at the basic levels should be relevant to the age group, background and needs of the students. It should set the stage for the development of the students' talents. It should also expose the students to an experience that would lay the solid foundation of a worthwhile and functional education. A properly organized art activity by the teacher could be thrilling, invigorating and mentally challenging to the students.

Art teachers should be knowledgeable, dedicated and resourceful in the teaching profession. They should be relied upon to extend the frontier of art education in our various institutions of learning. They should also try as much as possible to make their art lessons interesting and meaningful by using variety of relevant teaching methods and instructional media. These must be judiciously used to bring about effective teaching and learning of Art. The art teacher should give maximum prominence to all the theory and practical aspects of Art, since all the aspects make a composite whole. The art teacher should desist from hurrying over the syllabus to the detriment of fundamentals. Both diagnostic and error analysis should be used to identify and remedy the student's areas of weakness. Their area of high performance should also be improved upon.

The aspects of Art syllabus should be classified into manageable units that the art teacher and students can cope with within the period allocated for teaching Art. However, the major part of art programme should be used each week for art practical. The use of curriculum guide will give the art teacher certain ideas on how to plan and develop each unit of the lesson. Art teachers should try to organize and attend seminars and workshops on Art. Resource persons, such as local craftsmen and other specialists from higher institutions should be invited to keep them informed on the recent discoveries in relevant art techniques, media and teaching methods. The Training Manual (2008), on the U.B.E. 9-Year Basic Education. Universal Basic Education U.B.E. Commission. Abuja-Nigeria, presented that:

Teacher should motivate the students to join Art Club, and to participate in a competitions and exhibitions. It would be worthwhile to provide enough time and space for effective teaching of Art, apart from that of the Art-room environment. The teacher and students should visit Educational Resource Centre, craft workshop, art galleries and museums frequently for educational purposes. (p15)

The remedy to the incessant problems of high cost and scarce materials for Art and Crafts is to use relevant local materials available, when the original one is scanty or unavoidably out of reach when engaged in Art. To be able to improvise meaningfully and effectively, the art teacher and his/her students need to be resourceful. They should have the power of insight and ingenuity. They also have to be open and receptive. These creative qualities could facilitate and enhance the ability to improvise basic art materials. The school principals and other staff should give maximum encouragement to art and art teaching. They should cultivate the conscious spirit for an appreciation and promotion of Creative Arts.

Function of the Art Students: The student should study art with the desire to share in the joy of aesthetic and creative activity and to enjoy being innovative, constructive and enterprising. The student should also show keen interest in Art as a subject at the junior secondary level, and above. The arrangements whereby art is treated with levity on some schools' time table, or taken as a period for mere relaxation only should be rectified. The periods allotted to Art should not be used for teaching other subjects.

Function of the Parents: Parents should give positive support to all subjects taught in the school. Mutual-cooperation, financial and moral supports of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) would enhance effective teaching of Art in schools. Parents can contribute positively by showing interest in what their children do in art, and by providing the students with relevant art materials and encouragements. These could enhance the student's artistic growth and development. Philanthropic institutions and individuals should also donate relevant textbooks and basic art materials to the Junior Secondary Schools in the states. Iriwieri, G.O. (2009), Justified that:

Almost all human endeavors demand and enjoy artistic ingenuity. Therefore, the place of Art (art teaching) in this age of technology needs to be enhanced and nurtured for the best interest of the individual and society. Nigeria is currently experiencing a rising wave of unemployment. More avenues of employment must be explored and created to cope with the increasing demands for employment. Art could provide self-employment for creative people. (p.10)

The revitalized and effective art teaching at the Junior Secondary Schools in the states and other States of the Federation could provide the required basis for fostering and sustaining the drive towards self-reliance and self-employment. In a pluralistic culture with scanty job opportunities like Nigeria, we need Art which is an integral part of functional education for self-reliance. Indeed, the Federal Republic of Nigeria's, National Policy on Education (Revised, 2012) recommends functional education for self-reliance.

Improving Art Education Programme in Nigerian Institutions of Learning

Though, there are challenges in the implementation of the new art education programme under the current Universal Basic Education Scheme. The solution to the challenges lies with both the government and the people. Being a people-oriented programme, the people should be properly educated about the scheme by emphasizing educational guidance for the parents. In particular, the parents need to be educated on the need to give their children the basic education for a life-long education. The government should popularize this section of the UBE Act through the nation's media, especially the radio. The enjoyment of government services by parents such as medical services should be made contingent upon the production of a certificate that they have their children in school.

The issue of funding should be looked into properly. The situation whereby every government claim to be spending a lion share of its budget, whereas the reverse is the case should be addressed. Whatever allocation is given to education the overhead cost i.e., salaries and allowances should not be added to the allocation. Salaries should be treated as a separate component. It is only when this is done that the actual amount allocated to education shall be meaningful.

Allocated funds and government expenditure should be closely monitored to prevent embezzlement by the people charged with responsibility of managing the scheme. With adequate funding, the provision of more schools (primary and secondary) should be of concern to the government. The National Policy on education recommends that the teacher-pupil ratio shall be 1:40 at the secondary school level, while that of primary school shall be 1:35 (Section 19g). This ratio has not been met in the urban areas. The government at the state and local levels should put up more schools to achieve the stipulated ratio in order to avoid overcrowding, which is inimical to effective teaching and learning.

The junior secondary schools should be planned as neighbor schools as stated in the National Policy on Education to relieve students from trekking long distance before getting to school. Since the provision of more schools automatically translates to provision of more quality teachers, the government should make provision and prepare for training of qualified art teachers in Nigeria. In this regard, the Colleges of Education as well as Faculties of Education in the Universities should wake up to their responsibilities in giving adequate and qualitative training to the prospective teachers. As much as there is need to train a lot of teachers to fill the classrooms, quality must be the watchword. Hence, there is also the need to retrain the existing teachers to reshape their orientation towards qualitative education in Nigeria. Teachers should also be positively motivated to ensure dedication from them. That is, the conditions of service for teachers should be improved to keep them on the job.

The state and the Federal Ministries of Education, as the evaluation body for the UBE Scheme, cannot afford to go to sleep because the evaluation and monitoring of the programme lie mainly on them. Therefore, the Ministries in collaboration with the State Universal Basic Education Boards must be empowered to carry out their responsibilities. Schools should be visited regularly, not to witch hunt, but to ensure that the teachers are performing as expected of them. The visits should not be sporadic so as to put the teachers and the principals on the alert. The students' records, too, should be evaluated by the Ministry. The Ministry's unit on adult and non-formal education must ensure that the various programmes on adult and non-formal education are properly structured and monitored. These programmes should be taken as a very important aspect of the scheme. The Universal Basic Education Commission's impact must be felt at the State and local government levels. The State Universal Basic Education Boards at the State level must also visit schools to ascertain that the resources sent to schools are properly handled.

Finally, the Federal Government should endeavor to conduct a national census that will be devoid of political undertones. Proper and accurate data shall enable proper and accurate projection, which will help the education planners and government plan ahead. This will not bring embarrassment such as not having enough teachers, resources for both teachers and students. To get accurate population data, the government should start to think about emphasizing vital registration system by strengthening the present ad hoc vital registration scheme.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This paper, briefly, examined the current and emerging realities of new pedagogical methods and organization of art education programme in Nigerian institutions of learning. Some of the emerging issues are the challenges affecting creativities, inventions and innovative techniques of art

programmes, mentioned in this paper, for the Nigeria's Arts. Such challenges are inadequate funding, poor planning due to incomplete data, the inability of the scheme to reduce the rate of drop outs; inadequate facilities in form of physical structures, instructional materials and even quality teachers and corruption; such challenges were found to be militating against the objectives of the art education programme in Nigerian institutions of learning. In view of these challenges, the study has suggested certain measures that the country can put in place to help achieve the desired goals of the scheme.

The study therefore, suggests intensive campaign among parents to enlighten them about the values of education; to put into effect the relevant Policy Statements and arrangements to ensure that assessable means are provided on the basis of needs and not what the government can afford as it is presently the case and adequate training of teachers to man the schools under the UBE programme. In conclusion, the paper discussed some relevant issues concerning art education programmes and art practice as reading materials for the area of this study. The content of the paper, therefore, has relevance to all reading materials that can be used for successful implementation of art education programme as emerging realities on art pedagogical methods and organizations, theories and practice in Nigerian Institutions of Learning.

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