

**TEACHING OF FINE/APPLIED ART EDUCATION IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS:  
PROSPECTS, PROBLEMS/REMEDIES FOR THE REALIZATION OF VISION 20:2020**

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**Abstract**

Fine/Applied Arts course is a profession that has uplifted and facilitate the development of man and the nation, socially, practically, economically, culturally and educationally. The paper also discussed the unquantifiable developments the country has recorded through art practices and the impact of art has on education, in engineering technology, manufacturing industries, museum development, vis-à-vis Art and its branches. The paper also highlighted the problems affecting the teaching of art in Nigerian Primary and Secondary school ranging from shortage of qualified art teachers, poor incentives/salaries, the misconception of the people about art subject as an aside course and the uncompromising role of the Government towards making it compulsory in Primary and Secondary Schools. It also suggested possible remedies for the actualization of the set objective of the paper so that the country could develop in line with the effort of the government Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the year 20: 2020

**Keywords:** Teaching, Fine Art, Applied Art, Education, Prospect

Art is as old as man putting into account the pre-historic period of man on earth. Man started pursuing his development on earth with the ideas gained from his artistic experience which paved way for his comfortable living of providing the essential amenities needed for his sustenance on this harsh and dangerous condition being experienced by man on earth. The pre-historic man and the dangerous creatures such as the Buffalo, Tigers, Mammoths, Rhinoceros etc. Wolly and Bison revealed the astonishing facts that the modern man had been an artist from the earliest phase of his existence on earth; when the only tools he possessed were made from stones.

Their paintings then were no simple scratching but superb decoration in colours which expressed the noble dignity of the great beast which roam the valleys of south western Europe chattered from the arctic winds of the last ice age. The environment was hostile, obviously because of the presence of the dangerous animals, yet man tried to express himself by decorating deep cave sanctuary with images of animals on carvings, engraving and paintings or rock surfaces and roof of their cave. The earliest artistic period on earth beginning from the pre-historic period is divided into three phases namely:

- (i) Palaeolithic period
- (ii) Mesolithic period
- (iii) Neolithic period

The prehistoric man developed his artistic craftsmanship under these three phases. In the Palaeolithic period, man developed his artistic hunting animals for their sustenance. Man also built huts half dug into the ground. The pre-historic lived in isolated tribes and always more in contact with animal life.

The Mesolithic and the Neolithic phases was a new era in the life of the pre-historic artists. Artist tended towards civilization and development, a frame work of organized society with agriculture, domestication of animals, trades and collective responsibilities of permanent settlement on land and around rivers and lakes became common features. These happenings brought to an end the magic art of man which he exploited in the pre-historic period for his survival. This, however, did not affect the development of art but rather increased artistic impulse in the life of the pre-historic man.

This is a clear testimony that art is the first achievement of the pre-historic man on earth. Narrowing it down to Nigerian setting, the Igbo Ukwu, Nok, Ife, Benin Esie Tseode art culture has exposed the rich artistic cultural heritage of Nigeria as well as some of the great creative exponents of Nigerian art all over the world. The European expenditure of 1897 by the Portuguese tagged the Bini massacre as a testimony that Nigerians are rich and highly creative craftsmen in artistic production; this was also exemplified when Nigeria hosted the largest art cultural festival tag (Fiesta) the second world black and African Festival of Arts and Culture called FESTAC "77". Nigeria will no doubt continue to exhibit and expose her rich artistic culture if only art is given its priority position in the scheme of things.

#### **What is Art**

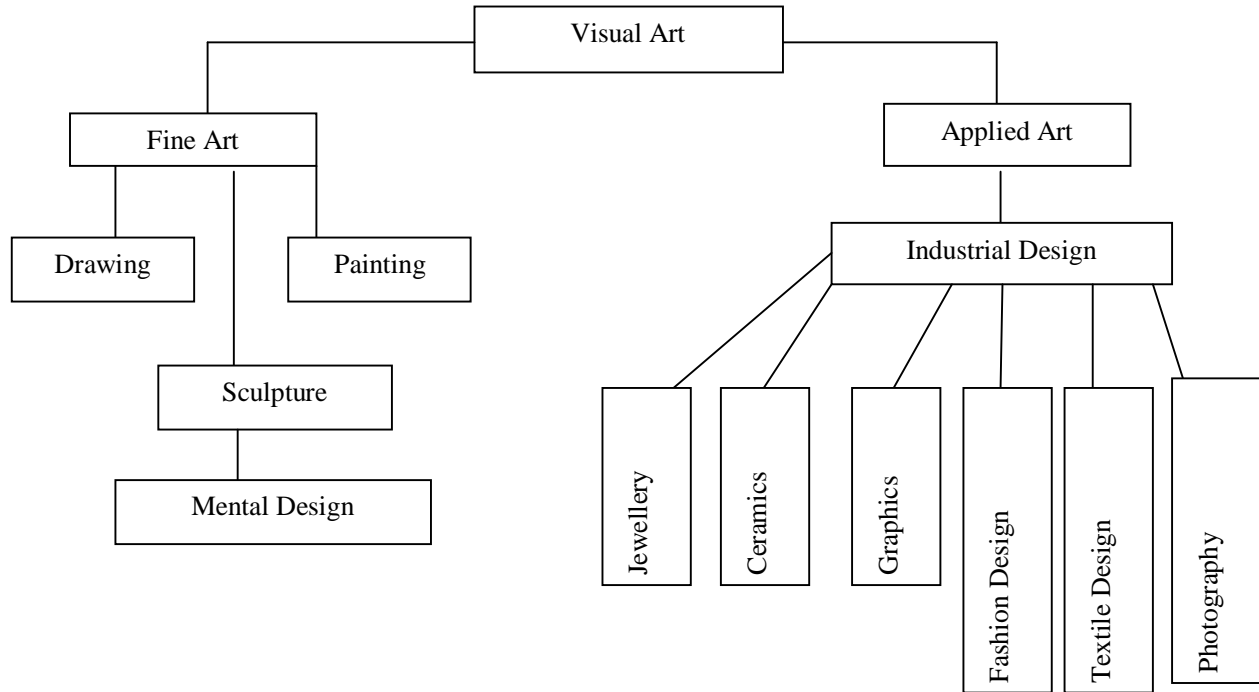
Egonwa (1988) defined Art as the result of the manipulative skills applied by man, usually a gifted person to express an idea in a chosen medium, which divorced from any uses to which it may be put, that has the sole purpose of giving a rewarding emotional experience.

#### **Scope of Arts**

Art in general is a wide area of study covering the following areas namely; the performing arts, liberal and the visual art which are divided into fine and applied arts which is the main concern of this paper. Fine arts according to Agbotor (2004) has to do with the appreciation of beauty. We use it to describe the branch of art that appeals to man's sense of beauty and higher emotions. Drawing, painting and sculpture belong to this branch of arts. While the applied arts according to Mukoro (2005) are those arts which are concerned with the making of objects to serve a particular purpose or perform a certain function.

The major aim is to make something useful and of commercial values often such objects design are beautiful as well e.g. textile design ceramics, fashion design, graphics etc.

### Branches of Arts



**Fine Art:** According to Agbotor (2004), Art has to do with the appreciation of beauty. We use it to describe the branch of art that appeal to man’s sense of beauty and higher emotions drawing, painting and sculpture, belong to this branch of art.

**Applied Art:** Mukoro (2005) noted that they are those arts which are concerned with the making of objects to serve a particular purpose or perform a certain function. The major aim is to make something useful and of commercial values. Often such objects are beautiful as well. The following are under this branch of art; textile design, ceramics, fashion design, graphic design, photography and jewellery design.

**Art Education:** Emokpa (2001) opined that it is the study of art in schools. Various methods teaching art, the socio-economic and political importance of art to the society. There could be diverse definitions as they are many writers on art education. Okpalaoka (1999) sees art education as learning and teaching in the visual art. Professionally, art education embraces the training or the education of professional painters, sculptors, industrial designers or craftsmen as well as institution of children in general education.

A Nigerian art educator Fatuyi (1990:17) cited Herbert Read who defined art education as a “Revolutionary Policy” and that all faculties of thought logic, memory, sensibility and intellect are involved in such process of art and that no aspect of education is excluded in the process of art.

In this paper, Art and Art Education will generally be addressed under the following hypothetical question.

1. What do we mean by Art Education?
2. What are the values/roles of Art Education to humanity?>
3. What are the problems facing the studying of Art Education?
4. What are the probable remedies?

### **Creative Arts and Design**

Taking a look at the above diagram, you will discover that the applied aspect of arts has more branches than the fine arts. As a result of this, one can see that art touches our lives every day because one make use of objects or things made by the artists every day. The tea cups, sanders, breakable plates referred to as ceramics products, are used by us daily. Our books, posters, newspapers, packages, Nido milk packages are graphical products used by us in our homes. Our house hold appliances like refrigerators industrially designed are all objects of art and as such, we are consumers of art products made by the artists Agbotor (2004).

The house we live in and its interior decoration, the clothes we put on are made by textile and fashion designers, so we cannot live a decent and comfortable life without the products of the artists.

### **Designers**

According to Ogundujile (2008) many individuals have attempted to define “design”, but have not been able to drive home their points. Emeje (2003) opined that it is full of incongruities with many manifestations which lack clear boundaries.

Kumar (2003) noted that design is all pervasive and reflect in what we wear, use, manufacture, build, and how we promote products. Albeit, for the purpose of this paper design is a detailed graphic representation plan of product to be manufactured.

### **Role of Arts in Nation Building**

The educational impact of art to nation building cannot be over emphasized. It is a well known fact that many people both educated and less informed still take art to mean drawing, painting and sculpture. Such people should be well informed that visual art is a broad subject that serves two educational purposes.

There is art in general education where it is studied to broaden the intellectual outlook of the students through cultural history aesthetic and criticism. There is also art as a vocational subject where emphasis is placed on acquisition of technical skills which enable the production of utilitarian articles through craft, graphics, textiles, ceramics, metal, wood works etc.

The acquisition of artistic skills has led to good governance of the country from the foregoing observation it is evident that art and technology are inseparable, art represents the creative force in human culture. Apart from the fact that artistic skill makes life more pleasant to experience, the principles of order, unity, harmony, balance of order and beauty which are cultivated in art, will be found relevant to our leaders. In the quest of nation building as all the structural edifices in the country, sculptural figures in conspicuous functions in cities have all the artistic principles above. This has positively affected every facet of government and beautification of the country for the comfort of man.

Impact of art in chemistry and mathematics as it relates to nation building. According to Uzoagba (2000) chemistry is the science of the composition characteristics and changes of matters. This consist of its properties, characteristics and changes it undergoes. The artist/craftsman like the chemist make their contribution by taking substances or raw materials apart and putting them together in different desirable combination, so the knowledge acquired through the study of chemistry of clay

by the ceramist is sort of transferred to the manufacturing of drugs by the chemist or pharmacists which in turn has aided nation building.

Uzoagba (2000) postulated that art and Mathematics are related in several ways and there is hardly any educational endeavour that anybody would venture into where art and Mathematics are not practised. There is art in Mathematics and Mathematics in art, hence Leonard De-Vinci one of the greatest artists solving the problem of perspective on a flat surface, which is today called the law of perspective both in art and mathematics. Buttressing this further, some Nigerian universities like Ahmadu Bello University Zaria and Federal University of Technology Owerri have recognized applied art courses such as graphics, ceramics and glass, textiles design as science courses to be studied under the faculty of engineering technology (referred to jamb guidance for admission to University 1996/1997 and 1997/1998 sessions page 168).

The impact of art in nation building through education services is enormous. According to Agbotor (2004) a good art programme in a formal set up will no doubt encourage child development and build in the child the power of observation and imagination. Art has educational, cultural and practical values. The knowledge of art in the life of the child or student will make them develop their skills in the use and handling of materials art media through which they express themselves in visual form.

The ability to draw and illustrate diagrams accurately in a given educational task will no doubt explain the direction and comprehend the course contents better than verbal discussion. Research has shown that in the University, Polytechnic, and Colleges of education, students studying architecture biological sciences and engineering have found art to be very useful in tackling or solving some of their educational problems, in technical, biological and architectural drawings.

#### **Art in Technology/Engineering**

Agbotor (2004) postulated that science deals with facts and all nature fall within the scope of science. Science observes and records events in the world and tries to explain them in logical and orderly manner. Art in turn deals with the production which is the art of pottery making which came into existence because of the need for pot and earthen wares by man. In the light of the above assertion, science knows and art is doing. Art evolves and science involves.

#### **Impact of Art on Nation Building**

Agholor (2008), sees teaching as the dissemination of desirable instructions to learners in a formal environment to bring about changes in behaviours. Research has shown that the teacher with the knowledge of art education teaches or performs better than those without the knowledge of art. This is because teachers with the knowledge of art make sketches and good illustrative drawings as teaching aids on the chalk board to enhance their instructional procedures making the lesson lively and receptive to the learners. There is no gain saying that most successful teachers are those that read art, irrespective of their areas of study. This is because they have used art as a base for the pursuit of their educational goal, no wonder the saying that a good foundation maketh a good building.

#### **Values of Art Education to Humanity**

Retrospecting the values of art education culturally, socially and economically under the traditional system of education in Nigeria, cannot be over emphasized as children learn from their parents the skills in weaving, fishing, farming, blacksmithing, carving and pottery making. All these trades are informally learnt through participatory education (Fafuwa, 1975).

According to Lovenfield and Britain (1971) in Okpaloaka (1990) under the formal education system sees art education as what stimulates creative perceptive, emotional and aesthetic growth in children. They opined that education is more effective when it is based on children's interest and

when it uses these interests in a purposeful serious ways e.g. providing activities that give children opportunities to practise things that they enjoy doing as in the visual art. Okorodudu (2002) is of the same opinion that the more a child tries to express what he observes and enjoy, the more he or she learns about it.

Okpaloaka (1999) postulated that at the secondary school level, the National Policy on Education (2004) emphasized as follows:

- (i) The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around.
- (ii) The acquisition of appropriate skills abilities and competence both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society.
- (iii) Equip students to live effectively in our modern age of science and technology.
- (iv) Develop and project Nigeria Cultural Art and Languages as well as the World's Cultural Heritage.

At the 6-3-3-4 System Junior Secondary Art is suppose to be a core subject that gives the child in Nigeria opportunity to acquire academic and creative skills in the areas of vocational subjects such as Wood Work, Metal work, Electronics, Mechanic, Local Craft, Home Economics and Business Studies.

At the higher level, Colleges of Education, Polytechnic, and University produce various level of man power ranging from NCE, ND, HND, BA, BA(ED) MA, MFA and PhD Studio and Art History respectively.

**Cultural Values:** Cultural, art features in the life of the people as seen from their kingship relations, ornamentation, dressing, eating habits, marriages, traditional etiquette, customs and language. Wangboje (1989), in Okpaloka (1991), the history of some societies has been written based on the evidence found by examining their works of art. The Nok Art, Bini, Cult art, Ife, Esie and Igbo Ukwu were examples of such societies.

**Social and Economics Values:** Abounds in poster, bill boards, signs electronic and print media as messages are dispatched to the public through visual arts to increase public awareness.

**Problems Facing Effective Teaching of Fine and Applied Art Education in Edo State**

- (i) Shortage of High and Qualified Manpower in the training programme.
- (ii) The population of students is inadequate to the ratio of the lecturers in the various art departments.
- (iii) Lack of infrastructure such as: chairs, stools, tables, easels, donkeys etc.
- (iv) Massive shortage of art teachers in schools for the teaching of art in the primary and secondary schools.
- (v) Lack of continuity in the teaching of art in the junior secondary school to the senior secondary school level.
- (vi) Most parents see art education as an aside course i.e. the course for the never-do-well in the society. This is a very wrong misconception about art. They want their children to study Law, Medicine, Engineering Computer Science etc. They refuse to provide their children with art materials and text books, they fail to understand that creative and aesthetic awareness are the very essential ingredients in every human undertaking especially in science and technology courses.
- (vii) The de-emphasizing of fine art education by the government.
- (viii) The emphasis on science education over fine art in admission, teaching and learning in the tertiary institutions.
- (ix) Government refusal to make art compulsory in primary and secondary school levels is the most nagging factor.

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- (x) School Principals/Administrators feels that art is not important for the development of the students or child. They prefer the teaching of English Language and Mathematics to a subject like Art. They, on their own refuse to include art in their school examination time table and do not request for art teachers from the Board during recruitment exercise.
- (xi) Poor salary and incentives to teachers in the primary and secondary school system.

**Possible Remedies**

In this era of democratic flunking and governance in Nigeria the following probable solutions are suggested to help accelerate rapid development that is in line with the Federal Government Agenda of Education for all in the year 20,20,20.

- (i) The government should make art education compulsory in both the primary and secondary school levels.
- (ii) Recruit well trained and qualified teachers for the programmes.
- (iii) Government should provide enabling environment for the teaching of art subject and providing all necessary infrastructure like chairs, donkeys, easels, tables, good painting and drawing studios etc.
- (iv) The society of Nigeria Artists (SNA) Nigerian society of Education through Art (NSEA) and other professional bodies should rise from their slumber to sensitize the public on the values of art education to kill the erroneous impression about art as an aside course.
- (v) Art Council, Ministry of Education Federal, State and Local Government Levels should encourage and organize yearly art and cultural competitions Exhibitions among schools and Colleges to encourage them.
- (vi) The government should print an electronic media message that will also assist in disseminating the revival of art education in the State.

**Conclusion**

There is no field of studies in education that does not involve art. Art on its own touches every facet of life and has made tremendous impact for the sustainability, comfort, national development and beautification of man's environment.

In the light of the above, sustainable national and technological growth would be a mirage if art education is not given its priority in the primary and secondary level in Nigeria. This will foster the spirit of continuity of further studies to the tertiary levels.

**Recommendation**

In view of all that have be side, the paper also recommends adequate funding of various institutions and free import duties on art material to encourage importation of sophisticated art materials. It also calls for the restructuring of the art curriculum to meet the needs and aspirations of the society. The government should recruit qualified art teachers to teach the subject and also make art education compulsory in both primary and secondary in Nigeria school system while the Nigerian rich cultural background provides the springboard for the actualization.

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