

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN ARTS, HUMANITIES AND CULTURE EDUCATION

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Abstract

The threat of economic crisis globally has driven attention to measuring academic research performance and productivity, as well as assessing its contributions, values, impacts and benefits. Traditionally, research output and impact was measured by peer publications and citations but increased emphasis on a “market-driven approach”, which tends to favour the natural sciences, has helped reinforce a disciplinary hierarchy in which arts, humanities and cultural research have struggled for attention. However, creation of new devices or processes resulting from research, cut across disciplines. Art-based research is the systematic use of the artistic processes, the actual making of artistic expressions in all of the different forms of the arts, as a primary way of understanding and examining experiences by both researchers and the people that they involve in their studies. Research and innovation in *humanities* often look at creation of new methods that are primarily critical, or speculative, and have a significant historical element as distinguished from empirical approaches of the natural sciences to study human culture. Therefore, this paper is set to ascertain research and innovation in arts, humanities and culture education. It covers, scope and contributions of research and innovation in arts, humanities and culture education.

Keywords: Research, Innovation, Arts, Culture, Humanities

In today's modern societies,
economic growth and prosperity are
increasingly based on the capacity and

ability to produce and use new
knowledge or use existing knowledge in
novel ways. These capacities and abilities

are channelled through research which is an attempt to find out in a systematic and scientific way aimed at advancing stock of knowledge and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2007). According to Odiya and Omofonmwan (2013), many research centres have been established with the view of evolving needed initiatives/ strategies that will help mitigate development challenges as well as maximize environmental potentials. Although, significant landmarks have been seen in a number of nations in this regard, many others are still lagging behind due to global economic crisis (Odiya & Omofonmwan 2013; Hazelkorn 2013). Consequently, economic crisis globally has driven attention to measuring academic research performance and productivity, as well as assessing its contributions, values, impacts and benefits. According to Hazelkorn (2013), research output and impact was measured by peer publications and citations but increased emphasis on a “market-driven approach”, which tends to favour the natural sciences, has helped reinforce a disciplinary hierarchy in which arts, humanities and cultural research has struggled for attention.

However, as research is conducted and innovative ideas evolve, creativity grows and new ideas are brought to fruition and these ideas when implemented produce new value. Innovation breaks new ground as it provides novel outputs from less or different inputs (Martino 2009). The

impact of innovation results in huge leaps in value creation that includes far more effective outputs. According to Nicolaides (2014), innovation assumes a number of forms and includes processes, products, services, or in fact anything that assists companies and nations to perform in an improved fashion. As such, any innovative person who possesses a frame of mind capable of exploring existing boundaries can create innovation. When we speak of radical innovations, these consist of totally new products which are often carried out by new entrants with a diversified knowledge base. Where there are simply minor improvements in existing products and processes, this is termed incremental innovation. Such innovation is usually positioned within companies with specific knowledge bases (Nicolaides 2014). Research and innovation is thus critical to bolster a nation’s competitive advantage at the global level. It is on this premise that this paper is set to discuss the scope and contributions of research and innovations in arts, humanities and culture education.

Conceptual Clarifications

For better understanding of the subject matter it becomes necessary to clarify some key concepts like research, innovation, arts education, humanities education, culture education and education.

Research

The quest for empirical knowledge that could affect development and problem solving has given rise to a

systematic method of enquiry which is being referred to as research. It is systematic because it follows the laid down process and procedures before arriving at a particular conclusion. Bako (2005) defines research as a systematic search and investigation for increasing the sum of knowledge. It is in this light that Oyesola (2010) in Chukwu, Ebue, Obikeguna Arionu, Agbawodikeizu and Agwu (2016), views research as the application of the scientific method to attain or prove new and exciting theories. Chukwu et al (2016) further explained that research is search, invention, discovery and establishment of new knowledge, facts, principles, theories and methods. Research is also acknowledged as a systematic and objective search for knowledge, to establish theories and prove the truth of ideas, hypotheses and assumptions (Obikeze 1990; Oyesola 2010). It is a search which requires care and diligence for new facts. It is experimentation to find knowledge, to take existing knowledge and explore ways of applying it to the many problems of life. The fore definition puts into context the essence and ends of research across diverse fields of study and enquiry. According to Obasi (2007) research is a systematic enquiry to discover phenomena, the laws governing them and the diverse means of the application of the knowledge to practical situations. He further stated that the essence of research is to proffer solutions to problems which justify the need for a systematic enquiry. To this end, it becomes obvious that research is a problem solving venture and

as well an informative instrument that instigates varying developments at different levels.

Innovation

Innovation is adoption of old ideas or materials for new uses, which may invariably lead to positive changes. According to Denga (1993) quoted in Damkor-Ikpa (2015), innovations are new ideas, new methods or interventions aimed at improving a programme or venture. Therefore, innovation is the transformation of ideas into marketable products and process. This means that innovation comes with new changes that enhance the state and standard of the products or processes. Agogo (2009) affirmed that innovation involves creation, evolution, exchange and use of new ideas in decision making, providing feedback, negotiation, self-esteem and risk management. Innovative practices therefore involve bringing changes in the practical management of an establishment or organization (Damkor-Ikpa 2015). Innovation implies the process of translating an idea or invention into goods and services that create value for people concerned.

Generally, innovation is understood as a novel rearrangement of existing ideas, techniques, and materials. Rarely, it is an entirely new idea or substance the key to success. Even so-called scientific revolutions often consist solely of a new look at old problems that has been initiated by a different reading of, and then fusion of, ideas which were there for all to see in the already published

literature. This means that innovation, understood as a rearrangement of existing ideas, has great potential in scientific fields that may not be traditionally involved in innovative discourses.

Arts Education

According to Jensen, (2001), quoted in Nwankwo (2014), art education is the process of learning about different types of artistic expression, including different media and formats for artwork and different movements and styles throughout art history. Art is an important aspect of culture, social, economic, political and other and other aspects of society. To succeed in the workplace and in our changing society, people must develop higher level of skills, including creativity, problem-solving, the ability to communicate in different ways, self discipline, tolerance and critical thinking. Arts education can help students develop these critical higher levels. Arts education covers visual and performing arts as part of the core curriculum (Garrett, 2009). According to Nwankwo (2014), the term arts education implies an instruction and programming in all arts disciplines which include but not limited to dance, music, visual art, theater, creative writing, media arts, history, criticism, and aesthetics. An investment in arts education is an investment in learning. The arts are a powerful tool that teachers can use to convey and explore other subjects and disciplines

Humanities Education

According to Maduekwe (2015), the term 'humanities' comes from the Latin word *humanus*, which means 'human, cultured and refined'. Humanities is not a group of scientific or technical subjects. The humanities are the stories, the ideas and the words that help us make sense of our lives and our world. Humanities education helps to introduce us to thoughts about life and what to do to make life better. By connecting us to other people, they point the way to answers about what is right and wrong or what is true to our heritage and history. The humanities help to address the challenges we face together in our families and our communities as a nation. As a field of study, humanities education emphasizes the analysis and exchange of ideas rather than the creative expression of the arts or the quantitative explanation of the sciences. The compendium of disciplines of the humanities according to Maduekwe (2015) and Cunningham (2004) includes:

1. History, Anthropology and Archaeology – the study of human, social, political, and cultural development;
2. Literature, Languages and Linguistics explore how we communicate with each other and how our ideas and thoughts on human experience are expressed and interpreted;
3. Philosophy, Ethics and Comparative Religion consider ideas about the meaning of life and the reasons for our thoughts and actions;
4. Jurisprudence examines the values and principles which inform our laws;

5. Historical, Critical, and Theoretical Approaches to the Arts reflect upon and analyze the creative process;
6. History, Theory and Criticism of the Arts;
7. Aspects of the Social Sciences which use historical or philosophical approach;
8. Humanities – general and interdisciplinary

These academic disciplines or subjects deal with human values, perceptions, feelings and attitudes. Humanities education, therefore, is the instrument for assisting students builds lasting societal and personal values, knowledge and skills needed to become productive and responsible members of the society (Maduekwe 2015). Consequently, humanities education, therefore, enables development of the total person, which is the focus of contemporary education.

Culture Education

UNESCO (1982) describes culture as the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or social group including modes of life, value systems, religious and other beliefs and traditions. Concept of cultural education is based on the assumption that there are areas of interaction at the interfaces of everyday culture. It focuses on why people acquire and transmit the material and non material cultural contents that characterizes a society or social group. Material culture refers to the physical objects, resources, and spaces that people use to define their culture. These include homes, neighborhoods,

cities, schools, churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, offices, factories and plants, tools, means of production, goods and products, stores, and so forth. All of these physical aspects of a culture help to define its members' behaviors and perceptions. For example, technology is a vital aspect of material culture. Non-material culture refers to the nonphysical ideas that people have about their culture, including beliefs, values, rules, norms, morals, language, organizations, and institutions. For instance, the non-material cultural concept of religion consists of a set of ideas and beliefs about God, worship, morals, and ethics. These beliefs, then, determine how the culture responds to its religious topics, issues, and events. According to, Kashim (2013), culture could also be understood within the material aspect in the social context of artefacts used within a particular environment. Artefacts are man-made objects which form material medium through which cultural values can be communicated. It includes objects, processes, services and their systems. Today, design artefacts have become an inseparable component of human society, a totem of cultural identity and an important source of reference for modern society. These artefacts are instrumental to aesthetic expression and socio-cultural interaction within a local context (Kashim 2013).

Nevertheless, culture education contributes to people's socialisation and strengthens ability to participate actively in the life of society at various levels and in a variety of ways. According to Putz-

Plecko (2008), culture education is the promotion of cultural knowledge, creativity and intercultural understanding through education. Cultural education will encourage development of cultural competences which is considered one of the key competences of the 21st century. Cultural competence develops and expands in the course of longterm learning processes if these are allowed to proceed at individual speeds. It evolves to the best advantage in a lifelong and life-accompanying educational process. According to Putz-Plecko (2008), cultural education is education in the arts and education through the arts. This means the use of art-based forms of teaching as a pedagogic tool in all kinds of school subjects.

Education

According to Amaele, Wosu and Ejire (2011) the word education is derived from two Latin words “educare” and “educere”. “Educare”, means to train, to form or to mould. In other words, it means that the society trains, forms or moulds the individual to achieve the social needs and aspirations. “Educere”, on the other hand means to build, to lead, or to develop. According to Afigbo (2004), education is the aggregate of ideas, methods, institutions, facilities and personnel designed and deployed by society to teach its members how to get through life by doing or by nursing and realizing set goals. According to Orji & Maekae (2013) this is mostly favoured by the humanists who argue that the function of education is to develop the natural potentialities in the

child to enable him function in the society according to his abilities, interests and needs. This is child-centered orientation. Education goes beyond mere literacy because it provides opportunity for the beneficiary to realize his/her potentials, goals and ambitions in life. Udokang (2006) describes education as the acquisition of functional skills, moral identity and ambition to live a fulfilled life. Fafunwa (1974) defines education as transmission of positive behaviours to younger generation in order to enable them develop attitudes, abilities, skills and other behaviours which will add positive values to the society in which they live. According to, Amaele et al (2011) quoted in Orji & Maekae (2013), education is seen as the total development of the individual child through acceptable methods and techniques according to his abilities and interests to meet up the needs of the society and for the individual to take his rightful place and contribute equally to the enhancement of the society.

However, to enable us appreciate this paper better let us refresh our memories with the traditional educational system(s) upon which research and innovation have made significant contributions especially in Africa.

Arts, Humanities and Culture Education in Africa before the Advent of the Missionaries

Long before Africans had contact with western civilization, their arts, humanities and cultural education were orally transmitted. Then, there was no formal institution set aside for

transmission of knowledge to others. However, the family and other informal groups perform this responsibility. This nonetheless does not mean that traditional education was not taken seriously. It was so serious that traditional education in all its ramifications in the African society starts from infancy. Traditionally, basic education at that time takes place in the indigenous language. It goes on all the time and takes place everywhere: in the home, on the play ground, on the farm on the way to the stream, in the market place, while at play etc. senior members of the family, elders, peer groups and even strangers equally serve as teachers in the traditional setting. Africans generally believe that no one in particular owns a child therefore the society at large becomes the child's teacher (Nwadike, 2012).

Folklore is a major medium of teaching through which they gain a lot of linguistic expression, common knowledge, honesty, courage, endurance, devotion to duty, respect, truthfulness, common dos and don'ts and established etiquette of the African society and the entirety of good morals. In addition to folklore, the literature, history, geography and civics of the communities are learnt through songs dances, myths, legends and contact with the environment generally. Arithmetic is taught through counting, addition, subtraction and division of objects like yam seeds, cobs of maize, nuts etc.

Ajayi (1969) affirmed that guidance and counseling in traditional education is sine qua non. Each family unit had a system of advising its youth on how best to make it

in life. On the whole, the choice of career such as blacksmithing, carving, fishing, weaving, trading, traditional medicine, pottery etc has been under taken by youths on the advice of the elders. According to Ajayi (1969), the African traditional education prior to westernization is so complete that the formal educational system introduced by the white man was only a supplement of the former. He asserted thus:

they (the Igbo and other peoples of Africa) imparted moral and religious education with clear precepts reinforced by taboos. They gave training in the etiquette and conventions of the society; they trained in the minds of the children as they taught them to count yams and ears of corn or give answers to conundrums, or to repeat in their own words the fables of their family history. In the moonlight, the children played games and told stories and learnt alliterative verses. As they grew older, they were apprenticed to jobs or initiated into the further mysteries of life. There was little system but the parents looked on it as education. What they expected from the European was not a substitute but a supplement, a system of apprenticeship by which the children acquired additional arts and skills, the art of reading and writing, gauging palm oil and manufacturing gun powder or sugar or building boats.

Scope of Research and Innovation in Arts Humanities and Culture Education

Art education covers learning, instruction and programming based upon the visual and tangible arts. Art education

includes performing arts like dance, music, theater, and visual arts like drawing, painting, sculpture, and design works. Design works include design in jewelry, pottery, weaving and fabrics. The curriculum can include commercial graphics and home furnishings also. Latest trends also include photography, video, film, design and computer. In art education, instruction is through standards-based, sequential approach by a qualified instructor as part of the core curriculum.

The humanities education can be described as the study of how people process and document the human experience. It covers such areas as philosophy, literature, religion, art, music, history and language to understand and record our world. These modes of expression have become some of the subjects that traditionally fall under the humanities umbrella. Knowledge of these records of human experience gives us the opportunity to feel a sense of connection to those who have come before us, as well as to our contemporaries. What distinguishes the humanities from other modes of inquiry is its particular attention to the human experience including the study of issues, objects, values, and questions of enduring interest for our lives as human beings.

Culture education covers the promotion of cultural knowledge, creativity and intercultural understanding through education (Putz-Plecko 2008). Culture education grows out of learning processes that take the inner differentiations and complexities of

culture into account. It lets us experience the learning process with the senses and allows us to internally comprehend how people, under different conditions, have understood the world, interpreted it, acted in it and changed it in different ways and continue to do so. However, culture education also covers but not limited to industrial design education. According to Kashim (2013), in Nigeria industrial design education focuses on culture as a major instrument for the design and exploration of materials in various areas like ceramics, textiles and graphical communication in order to express in handcrafted product prototypes both concept and simple design solutions. Industrial design enhances cultural significance in design formations with reference to local material explorations, ingenious material expressions and the embodiment of cultural values. Industrial design in Nigeria is craft-based and situated in the field of applied art (Kashim 2004).

The arts, humanities and culture education are widely acknowledged as encouraging creativity and critical thinking, challenging orthodoxy, promoting self-expression and understanding of the human condition, and deepening awareness and appreciation of cultural distinctiveness, heritage and history. The arts, through inter alia drama, visual art, music and dance and the humanities through inter alia literature, history and philosophy have “transformative powers” which makes vital and necessary societal contributions and underpinning democratic society

(McCarthy, Ondaatje Zakaras, and Brooks 2004; Belfiore and Bennett, 2007).

Contributions of Research and Innovation in Arts Humanities and Culture Education

Researches which lead to innovation identify how knowledge is translated into innovative actions and how diversity can lead to positive change. However, such positive changes have occurred through the use of digital processes which vastly increases the imaginative possibilities of new works of art, as well as the speed at which particular effects can be achieved. Digital technologies facilitate the creation of new, born-digital artworks by artists and almost anyone with access to basic technology. The movement from the traditional education system into the sphere of the internet, provides not just the inspiration for new works of art, but the content for remediating existing work.

At a broad level, arts and humanities research contributes to a constantly growing body of knowledge on human experience, agency, identity and expression, as constructed through language, literature, artefacts and performance. The arts and humanities have a particularly strong affiliation with the creative industries. There is growing evidence showing that arts and humanities research helps to fuel these industries (Crossick, 2006; Oakley, Sperry & Pratt 2008) and that the creative industries in turn stimulate and support innovation (Bakhshi, McVittie & Simmie 2008). The video games sector is a good example of

where the creative industries make a significant contribution (Oxford Economics, 2008). Developers of video games increasingly call on art, drama, non-linear narratives and music to produce innovative games. Content innovations in video games have a two-way relationship with the technological innovations that make them possible (Miles and Green, 2008).

Art and design research can make complex information intelligible. According to Hasan, Philippe and Christopher (2008), John McGhee, an Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded researcher at the University of Dundee, has undertaken research to show how 3-D digital visualisations drawn from animation and computer imaging in the film, TV and games industries can enhance medical scans, and so help communicate the processes of disease to patients. Movement, colour, form and light are all intrinsic attributes of animation, and they can offer alternative perspectives when conveying information and translating knowledge. The synthesis of these qualities creates aesthetic images that can connect to people, while communicating complex meaning. They can also help medical practitioners consider how they construct images to improve their own understanding of disease.

Languages play an integral part in the globalised innovation system, where there is an increasing need to understand, and potentially collaborate with, other cultures (Bound et al, 2007). According to Confederation of British Industry (2008),

there is, for example, a strong business case for language skills within the UK economy, where languages are growing in importance as UK firms increasingly operate in a global marketplace. A key area of innovation language research in the UK, for instance, has been in intercultural communication, translation and interpreting skills (Kelly, Arnold, Brooksbank-Jones, Hudswell, Quince and Wood, 2007; Hasan, Philippe & Christopher et al 2008).

The research and innovation has introduced digital technology to create multiple and parallel lenses with which to analyse and present the cultural/human record. New research methods allow scholars to ask questions of analogue data that has been digitized which would have been impossible when it was in its native form, as well as to interrogate vast new born-digital datasets. New technologies and methodologies enable an unprecedented ability to recreate and simulate, providing powerful new methods to study intangible events or experiences (such as performances and battles). These new methods facilitate a wide range of research that was previously unavailable to most humanities researchers, from identifying patterns across time and space in large datasets, to recreating physical environments that no longer exist (e.g. buildings, cities, streetscapes and soundscapes) to test our theories about them. The supplementation of the traditional publishing ecosystem through dynamic, web-based publication formats, opens up the potential for a greater variety of research outputs for

which global impact is possible in a way that traditional publishing structures could not support.

Summary and Conclusion

In summary, research in arts, humanities and culture education contributes to a shared, open and accessible pool of ideas, concepts, understandings and modes of analysis. Secondly, the differences between approaches and ideas are in themselves a resource for thinking and innovation. Research in arts, humanities and culture education creates needs and desires, and points to possibilities. Their methods are processes of innovation in themselves (Leach & Wilson 2009).

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