

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN VISUAL ARTS: HORIZON FOR POVERTY ERADICATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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### **Abstract**

*Nigeria has the largest natural resources in the world; yet, gross unemployment is beating hard on the populace. It has become practically impossible for government to reduce high increase of poverty in the country. This is as result of unemployment. The main issue is the abundant of resources and their conversion into wealth is the knowledge gap which can only be filled by entrepreneurship in Visual art. The courses prepare the students with the knowledge, skill and innovation of a variety business in a good setting. This paper examines the concept of entrepreneurship and Visual arts, the concept of both for skill acquisition in job creation, the need of entrepreneurship in Visual art, the problem of Visual art in teaching and marketing of art products. Recommendation is given that entrepreneurship should be introduce and made compulsory in Visual art discipline in tertiary institutions of Nigerian schools.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Skill acquisition, Job creation and Visual art.

The problem of poverty and unemployment rate has being facing the growth of economy in Nigeria for decades. Nigeria as a nation with multitudinous resources (both human and non-human) does not need to face problem of poverty and lack of job creation. These problems has being there because the natural resources is seemly not have been adequately tapped and channeled to profitable investments that will provide great fortune to maximum economic benefits. In this effect, lack of employment among the youth is becoming rampant and the order of the day that if care is not taken will “continue to degenerate until alternative measures are created” (Imran, 2003, p.3). It is pertinent to note that a nation that wants to move the resources from its low level to the high level survival and have economic growth, needs people of high skills and required standard knowledge to tap these resources. The ability, knowledge, willingness, orientation and all that will take to tap these resources must be instilled into people to make them self-reliance and reduce poverty in the country. The entrepreneurship in visual art will go a long solving this problem, because the knowledge acquired from the course will help rapidly to change the situation of the unemployment in the country. However, it is observed that in as much as visual arts has all it takes to make one self-actualization, but, there is still big problem in attaining to the dream of success in this discipline to come to reality. The big problem here lies on the appreciation of the art work, marking of the art works and establishment of mega industry by the graduates of the discipline.

Thus, the researcher believes that if Entrepreneurship is introduce in Visual Arts studies will go a long way to encourage the graduates to acquire skill and knowledge that will be useful in the marking of art works produced. This paper seeks for the need for introduction of Entrepreneurship in the Visual Arts department in order to acquire qualitative skills and knowledge for job creation for development of the country. To this extent, the paper sought to provide answers to the following:

- i. What is the concept of entrepreneurship and to what extent is it relevant to Visual art discipline to enhance the growth of economy?
- ii. Who is an entrepreneur and what are the basic entrepreneurial skills and traits?
- iii. What is the current trend of poverty and unemployment in Nigeria?
- iv. To what extent will entrepreneurship in Visual art enhance a sustainable job creation in Nigeria?
- v. In what way would entrepreneurship in Visual arts contribute to poverty reduction in Nigeria?

### **Conceptual Framework**

Poverty is a universal phenomenon with great negative impact in human development. The grip of poverty has eaten deep into the economic growth of the world especially in African countries, Nigeria precisely. This has manifested in the people inability to have three square meals a day, clothing and other basic necessities. The problem of poverty in the country is so much that Nigeria presently is classified among the poorest nations of the world. The social economic performance in the country revealed “poverty as the most challenging issue that serves as a roadblock to social economic development in Nigeria” (National Bureau of Statistics, 2005).

Efforts has been made to eradicate poverty in the country (both local and international), but to no avail. So many programmes like National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), the Rural Agricultural Programme (RAP), Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and etc. All these programmes are for promotion of life by equipping the citizens with job and to eradicate poverty in the country. Unfortunately, the programmes established for the purpose were unproductive as poverty still persists.

Looking at the pocket and daily expenses will tell a Nigerian citizen the kind of economy Nigeria is running. A country with millions of people that depends solely on one channel of revenue (Petroleum) is considered operating under a weak and crippled economy. Nigeria needs to be more creative, innovative and practical oriented. The artists, craftsman, skills and practical knowledge, provided society with the basic needs as clothing, agricultural implements, utensils and other essentials forms of technology. They were held in high esteem and respect in the society. The knowledge on practical oriented courses will help to find other sources of revenue generation. Practical oriented course like Visual arts needs to be back up with dreamed achiever course like entrepreneurship course in order to equip the students with skills and knowledge that will enable them to establish lucrative reliable business and marketing strategies in marketing of the produced work.

There is great need for government to work on curriculum and put it into action by committing all the hard work and processes of education qualitatively. The introduction of entrepreneurship course in Visual art discipline will go a long way in helping the graduates of the discipline to acquire qualitative education that will enable them fit into the society and contribute their own quota to the development of the country as well.

Due to gross growth of poverty in the country, scholars came up with different definitions of poverty based on their perspective. According to Olomola and Aakaye (1999:6) “poverty is living condition in which an entity is faced with economic, social, political, cultural and environmental deprivations”. Oteje (2010: 12) defined “poverty as hunger, lack of shelter, being sick and not being able to see the doctor, not being able to go to school and not knowing how to read, not having a job, fear of environment, powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom”. United Nation Development Programme in its Human Development Report (1997: 10) classified poverty as “poverty of income and poverty from a human development perspective-denial of choices and opportunities for living tolerable life”.

In agreement to the above citations, Jubrin (2010: 8) described “poverty as misleading equating rise in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to fall in poverty”. He grouped poverty in Nigeria as evident in Unemployment, Inflation and Fuel scarcity. Among the three mentioned factors, unemployment is the main concern of this research because of the great havoc it has caused to the peace of this nation. Unemployment is the main critical issue facing the country. Unfortunately, the critical issue is the least discussed circle.

Unemployment is the resultant of poverty in the economy. Unemployment is the state of being unemployed or not having a job. The rate of unemployment is an indication of the health of an economy. When citizens of a nation were gainfully employed, the nation will be termed healthy in economically and vise visa.

Graduates unemployment is among people within academic degree. Unemployed graduates are increasing numerically and this need not to be ignored. The key area that has been the subject of this paper is in reducing poverty and youth unemployment through the introduction of entrepreneurship in visual art. The notion that “entrepreneurship should be an essential part of a lifelong learning approach is now generally acceptable” (Eurydice, 2004:20). In this regard, Visual arts discipline which is well equipped with desired skills for self-reliance should be backed with entrepreneurship skills and knowledge for producing art works and other strategies in business to set

up one's own skill work or establish mega industry. To enable the individual adapt to any situation and do away with problem of unemployment in the country.

### **Concept and Scope of Visual Arts**

Art is a way of life. Emu (2007: 5), defined "Art as the ability to acquire skill, trade, craft or expertise in things we do and the power of doing anything". While, Visual arts is defined as the study and creation of things in forms, texture, lines and colours which give pleasure to the mind and satisfies sense of beauty. Visual art in this context, according to Ununmwangbo (2009: 2) defined it as "being creatively inclined". He further describes it as being a veritable tool for job creation, poverty alleviation as well as a socio-economic emancipation agent. In agreement with Ununmwangbo, Onobrakpeya (2000: 10) describes Visual art as "a tool that provides room for anyone who is ready to excel, an untapped gold mine that is ready to accommodate as many as that are willing to embrace it". According to Egonwan (2010: 9) "Visual art is usually a gifted person to express an idea in a chosen medium which is divert to any use through which the sole purpose of giving a rewarding emotional experience is achieved". This implies that as long as an object is man-made, it should be able to give some kind of satisfaction.

However, the scope of art is a generally a wide area of study covering: the Performing and Visual arts which are divided into Fine and Applied Arts, which is the main concern of this paper.

**Fine Arts:** has to do with the appreciation of beauty. It is used to describe "the branch of art that appeals to man's sense of beauty and higher emotions" (Agholor, 2004:5). This includes: Drawing, Painting and Sculpture.

**Applied Arts:** This is a branch of art that has to do with creation of objects meant for functional purposes. According to Mukoro (2005:11) "Applied art involves making of objects that serve a particular function". It is often beautiful and for industrial design. This involves: Textiles design, Ceramics and Graphics.

### **Roles of Visual Arts in Job Creation**

Unemployment is believed to be the resultant of poverty in the economy. Unemployment and poverty go pari-pasau in bring the economy of a nation to the lower level. The knowledge of Visual arts will help to go a long way in solving the problem. Visual art is a branch of art that deals with practical knowledge. In Visual art, hidden skills and creative ideas in an individual is developed. As skill and practical oriented course, students of Visual arts discipline, are opportune to make use of the available resources to yield good products for the masses. Visual art prepares an individual with steady job.

However, it is worthy to note that all wholes of life are covered with works of art. Hence, there is reflection that "life is art" and "art is life". This implies that life without works or products of art is meaningless. The graduates of Visual arts discipline has better chances for self-employment, employment of labour and the same time contribute in economic growth in the country. The graduate from such discipline has chances of becoming a graphic artist, ceramist, textile designer, a painter as well as sculptor.

As a graphic artist that offers the services of communication all round the corner of life, does not only "advertise industrial or commercial products, but also makes these products appeal and acceptable to consumers" (Feldman, 1972: 16-70). He can work in many arms of government: industries, publishing in printing companies, advertizing agencies, research institutions, military establishments, television stations, newspaper companies, etc. they can also work as creative photographer.

Ceramics is the art of producing pottery with natural or synthetic material like clay and artificial materials. The products of "ceramics are utilitarian, industrial and decorative function" (Rhodes, 1982: 15). The demand for these products by hotels, private homes, churches, architects and engineers, is on daily increase. Hence, the ceramist can work in ceramics industries as well as some research agencies like Project Development Agency (PRODA). He can also work as cultural officers in the industries.

Textiles: The "art of designing and producing fabrics is one of professions which steady grow with the economic, industrial and aesthetic standard of people" (Jungerman, 1989: 5). There is great career prospect for those in this field. Textiles field produced specialist in the field like: Textile producers:

those that produce fabrics, Textile technologist: those that maintained machine, Textile designers: those that design on fabrics, Textile weavers: those who engage in weaving and Fashion designers: those that fashion textiles fabrics into cloth and other end uses. Specialist in this discipline can work in textiles related industries and in the ministry. They can work as technologists in higher educational institutions. They can also work as cultural or principal officers in the ministry.

A painter and Sculptor is specialist in their own field. They are usually known worldwide. One can choose to be full time professional painter or sculptor, constantly holding exhibitions in and outside the country. Both can also work in the ministry. The services of a sculptor can be needed in the engineering firms.

It is pertinent to note that apart from the above mentioned works based on their specialization, any of them can also work as a teacher in schools. They can also set up their own company if capital is available.

### **Entrepreneurship Education**

Entrepreneurship is creative process of organizing, managing an enterprises and assuming the risk involved in the enterprise. It involves the learning of skills needed to assume the risks of establishing a business and passion needed for the running of the business. Entrepreneurship also refers to as an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. This covers creativity, innovation, risk taking, the ability to achieve objectives. Its goal is to promote creativity, innovation and self-employment.

According to Hisrich and Peters (2002: 10), entrepreneurship is a process of "creating something new and assuming the risks and rewards". Aruwa (2006:8) sees entrepreneurship as "the willingness and ability of an individual to seek for investment opportunities to establish and run an enterprise successful". While, Awodun (2005: 118-120) defines entrepreneurship as act of:

- i. Recognizing opportunities
- ii. Mobilizing resources
- iii. Ensuring the provision of new goods and services to customers
- iv. Obtaining profit in return and the risk to bear.

This implies that entrepreneurship is not only to invest creativity and innovation but the ability to market it to financiers, parties and clients to realize profit. Entrepreneurship provides an individual with all round skills to excel in business. It also provides an individual with the ability and skills to enhance his destiny and that of his nation.

### **Entrepreneurship Skills**

A wide range of skills are seen in entrepreneurship business, these include both personal traits and skills:

- i. **Management skills:** this entails the ability to manage time and people (both self and others) successfully.
- ii. **Communication skill:** the ability to sell ideas and persuade others.
- iii. **Innovation skill:** this entails one who is able to carve out a new idea in the market and often visible to others.
- iv. **Result-oriented skill:** to be successful in the drives that only comes from the set goals and targets and pleasure in achieving.
- v. **A Risk-take skill:** to be successful in any risk waits to succeed in the business.
- vi. **Total commitment skill:** single mindedness, hard work and persistent energy are essential elements in the entrepreneurial business.
- vii. **Technical skills:** need to have necessary fundamental knowledge to be able to lead your technical team and make informal decision.
- viii. **Flexibility skill:** due to constant change of environment a successful entrepreneur needs to understand the change and adopt strategies and offering to meet changing market conditions.
- ix. **Vision skill:** entrepreneur thinks ahead of the future and has a vision of where the business will be in the future and be able to communicate your vision so as to motivate employees, investors and parents to help achieve that vision.
- x. **Focus skill:** entrepreneur must have focus to make sure that goals are achieved, customers are satisfied and employees are motivated.

### **Traits of Good Entrepreneur**

The following traits are found in a good entrepreneur:

- i. **Leadership:** An entrepreneur is naturally a leader with the vision and the drive to do things right and steer the business towards success with ease.
- ii. **Energetic:** He energetic for hard work and motivating those that come in contact with them on account of their drive and determination.
- iii. **Creative and Innovative:** He is ever ready to create good designs and sell products that are interesting which offer several benefits and have competitive edge. Making sure they capture the target market on launch without much difficulty.
- iv. **Confidence:** He must be self confident in his research and master the skills necessary to implement them carefully.
- v. **Organized:** He must highly organize and making sure things are achieved in a much shorter time.
- vi. **Highly seeking:** He will hide in areas where he is not confident, therefore, will not hesitate to seek help when necessary.
- vii. **Highly Competitive:** It is very competitive and will strive to offer better services and productions than other competitors.

### **Roles of Entrepreneurship Career in Poverty and Job Creation**

The term entrepreneurship is a wide term that emphasizes on starting a new business, creating something new of value, with necessary resources in the face of risk and education for business ownership on the skills needed to acquire in establishing business. It offers the following services:

- i. **Employment opportunity:** People see entrepreneurship as meant for those who do not have business careers that is a specialist in the field who sets up his own business, trains others and leads a nation towards better opportunities, which is a significant input to an economy.
- ii. **Research and development system:** Inventions provide an easier way of getting things done through better and standardized technology. Entrepreneurship contributes greatly towards research and development.
- iii. **Self-sufficiency:** The entrepreneur not only becomes self-sufficient but also provides great standards of living to its employees.
- iv. **Challenging opportunity:** Although entrepreneurship is a challenging task to people, yet, in most of the cases gives reward more than what one anticipates. It does not only reward an entrepreneur at financial levels but also individual level. It provides self satisfaction to the entrepreneur.
- v. **Apparent prospect:** The individual learns while he earns. The knowledge and skills an entrepreneur develops while owning his enterprise are his assets for life time which is usually lacking when he becomes an entrepreneur. He benefits as well as the economy as a whole.
- vi. **Wealth creation:** Entrepreneurship creates wealth for nation as well as individuals. All individuals who search business opportunities usually create wealth by entering into entrepreneurship. The wealth created by the same entrepreneur plays a considerable role in the development of a nation.

### **The Need of Entrepreneurship in Visual Arts Discipline**

It is observed that entrepreneurship as a course is not taught in Visual arts departments in Nigeria Universities, while, it is briefly taught in a section in the colleges. Such knowledge will not give a graduate artist in Visual arts discipline qualitative knowledge and skills that will help him/her establish standard business for production and marketing of art products. Hence, Visual art a powerful tool for meaningful employment needs to be seriously backed up with entrepreneurship for acquisition of meaningful skills and knowledge for self-reliance and be useful in the society.

It is pertinent to note that with the knowledge in Visual art and entrepreneurship disciplines, graduates of the discipline will do extremely great in establishing business for self development as well as the development of country.

A graduate of Visual arts can turn resources into products that are useful to the public, but cannot turn produced products into sold products. The knowledge of entrepreneurship will help him better. It will help him to have deep knowledge on how to run the mega industry, where to go for help,

marking of the products, the risk involved and the best strategies to apply in winning people to buy the products. These were not taught in Visual art.

### **Problems Affect the Teaching and Growth of Visual Art Production**

There are big problems that hinder progress in any system when proper measure is not taken. This has been a problem facing Visual arts discipline today in the marketing of art products. Graduates of Visual art discipline were taught how to produce and become self-reliant, but were not taught the skills and strategies on how to become an achiever in the marketing and setting up of a mega industry. Thus, the following problems affect the teaching and growth of Visual art in the society:

**Problem of poverty:** Visual art is a product of creativity and innovation. The high rate of poverty has caused a lack of concentration among the artist. Thus, poverty has become a bottleneck to people's creativity and innovation. Poverty also scared interested students away from offering Visual art courses in school as the cost of art materials is on the high side.

**Lack of confidence:** Due to the artists that are not recognized in the society, art works are not appreciated and demand is very poor, most of graduates of Visual art in colleges swap over to other disciplines for their higher degree. Due to lack of appreciation of art works by the public, some of these products will become waste or turn to be used by the producer. People see art products as produced by the artist around them, hence, can easily dash out or market at a giveaway price not minding the cost of the materials and time factor in the production. Students lack confidence to study the course in school and face the society as they see these lapses.

**Lack of capital:** There is always a problem of capital to set up a mega industry in art production. This has been a major problem facing graduates of this discipline in engaging in self-reliance business of art production. This discourages the interested ones to study art in schools.

**Lack of business skills:** Not all the students have the mind and skills to engage in business. Business skills and strategies were not taught in Visual art discipline on how to market art works. The marketing of art work discourages some interested students from offering the course.

**Fear of failure:** In the modern society, people derive joy in celebrating one's failure instead of encouragement. Our culture and society are not accommodative for any failure. Fear of failure is one of the major obstacles in attaining to any business venture in the society. Majority of students are feeling reluctant whenever they try to solve a problem and come out unsuccessful. Thus, they run to courses that will not give them stress like self-reliant courses like Visual arts that will expose them to risk.

**Lack of awareness:** The setting up of business exposes the individual concern to risk. The society that is still battling from hand to mouth may not understand the need to create awareness of the business before embarking on it. Awareness and experience are vital ingredients in establishing any business. This will definitely play a role in sharpening and straightening the mind in fishing the best among the best. Graduates of Visual art discipline were not taught this and therefore engage on any how art production and marketing of art works.

### **Conclusion**

Based on discussions so far, one can understand that there is a need to integrate entrepreneurship education into the numerous government job creation programmes especially Visual arts, so as to educate graduates the skills and relevance to have a lifelong artist who is an inventor, creator, marketer, rather than being a job seeker looking for a white collar job. Hence, from the above mentioned problems of Visual art which can be solved with the knowledge of entrepreneurship education, one deduces that entrepreneurship education could be seen as a right instrument that can help in the promotion of Visual art from access to quality for the growth of employment that will improve immensely the economic growth and development of Nigeria as a nation.

### **Recommendation**

There are skills for the establishment of business, production of products and marketing of such products. Such skills are not taught in Visual art discipline and graduates of the discipline need to acquire knowledge of them to be able to acquire skills for self-actualization. With the discussions so far, the introduction of entrepreneurship in Visual Arts Department will go a long way in closing the gap of poverty and unemployment problem in the country. This will help the graduate of Visual art

discipline to achieve great heights in establishing small scale industry. This will also enable them acquire qualitative knowledge in becoming self-reliance and contribute to the economic growth of the country. Hence,

1. The Ministry of education should endeavor to see that entrepreneurship is introduced into Visual art curriculum and made compulsory as this will provide necessary knowledge and skills among the graduate of the discipline to set up business and be useful to themselves as well as the country for economic development.
2. Visual art is a practical oriented course with high cost of art materials. In this regard, Government should encourage the students of Visual arts discipline by placing them on loan scheme that will help them address to the problem of high cost of materials squarely.
3. The association of Nigerian Arts should not fold their hands and watch the success of art turn to failure. They should seek for the support of the entrepreneurs and teamed to institute a committee that will go round the secondary and tertiary levels of Nigerian schools to orient the students on the values of art production and the need to engage in the business after graduation. They should also endeavor to orient them on the risk of establishing business in such discipline in order to prepare their mind on the best business strategies to use in order to avoid failure and have confidence on themselves.
4. Works of art is part of life, and there is saying that without art life is like spent inside a cave. Nigerian society should try and learn to appreciate artist and works of art in the country. Artists in their own side should learn to produce for aesthetics, iconographical and utilitarian purposes as they are the factors that command attraction and demand of art work.

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