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## **Entrepreneurial and Functional Fine and Applied Arts Education: Veritable Tool for Poverty Eradication, Self Reliance and National Development**

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**By**

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### **Abstract**

*No nation can progress without appropriately harnessing her human and material resources. Entrepreneurship is a sure solution to this difficult situation. Advancement in entrepreneurship would look ridiculous without functional fine and applied arts education. The paper analyzes the concept of entrepreneurship education, objectives of fine and applied arts education, entrepreneurship skills in art education and art concepts that can be taught for entrepreneurial skills that could boost national development.*

Education is a vital instrument of change in any society. According to AluMODE in Oduma (2010), education is an instrument for nation building. The development of a country's natural resources is dependent on the quality of its human resources and the quality of human resources depends on educational orientation and need of a given society. For education to worth its place in the society, it must;

1. Provide men and women with the minimum of skills necessary for them to take their place in the society and to seek further knowledge.
2. Provide men and women with vocational training that will enable them to be self supporting through entrepreneurship.
3. Awake an interest in a taste for knowledge.
4. Put people in touch with and train them to appreciate the cultural and moral achievement of mankind (Oduma, 2010: 11).

Obinna (2004), noted that our formal education system in the recent past seem to be continuously turning out people who are ill prepared to help in the development of the country. That is why it is necessary to provide meaningful education that will

gear the youths towards utilitarian orientation and make them self-reliant and economically independent from non-existent white collar jobs.

At this junction, the importance of entrepreneurial education should not be underestimated because it is the specialized training given to students or recipients especially of vocational and technical education to acquire the skills, ideals and the managerial abilities and capabilities adequate enough to enable them exploit business opportunities within their environment using their creative and innovative ideas. Lack of entrepreneurial skills and unemployment has resulted in high rate of poverty, kidnapping, political assassination, gangsterism, hooliganism, terrorism and other serious societal ills. These worrisome factors are on increase due to scourge of poverty. Poverty is a state where an individual is not able to cater adequately for his or her basic needs of food, clothing and shelter: is unable to meet social and economic obligations, lacks gainful employment, skills, asset and self esteem, and has limited social and economic infrastructure such as health, potable water and sanitation and consequently has limited chances of advancing his or her welfare to the limits of his or her capabilities (Central Bank of Nigeria, 1997). The concept poverty alleviation could be seen as the measures or programmes put in place by Government to ease or relieve effects of poverty in the society, and such could be achieved through entrepreneurial education in fine and applied arts for promotion of self-reliance and national development.

### **Overview of Entrepreneurship Education**

Entrepreneurship education, according to Agusiobo (1997) deals with the “acquisition of right habits, attitudes and skills as well as means of surviving in the face of unemployment”. Also Anyakoha (1993) opined that entrepreneurship education aims at helping the students acquire saleable skills which can help them become self-employed and self-reliant. Eze (2001) agreed with Agusiobo that acquisition of right habits and attitudes is a pre-requisite for all other educational aspiration. This is because Nigerian youths of this present generation seem to be in a hurry to enjoy the luxuries of material wealth while very little is given in return to productive endeavours.

The result is increased cases of examinations malpractices, fraud, armed robbery and cultism.

Mkpa (2001) described entrepreneurship Education which he referred to as functional education as one that is not merely theoretical but rather skills-oriented, geared towards the cultivation of intellectual skill, vocational/technological skill, social skills and the like. He said that such functional education once acquired remains life-long and continually utilitarian. Mkpa (2001) argued that such type of education equips the learner with the “potentials and capabilities for self-reliance (employment), economic independence, and self-actualization” He further argued that the technological lead of nations like Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, who were not long ago

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ridiculed by Nigerians for producing inferior quality goods, was on the functionality of their education curricular, and the focused and nationalistic character of their political leadership.

Entrepreneurship education is a functional education centred on making graduates to be job producers rather than job seekers. Thus, Osuala 2004:6 identified some roles of entrepreneurship education as follows:

1. Provide meaningful education for youths which could make them self-reliant and subsequently encourage them to derive profit and be self-independent.
2. Provide small and medium scale business with the opportunity to employ graduates who will receive training and tutorial in the skills relevant to the management of small business centres.
3. Provide graduates with training and support necessary to help them establish a career in small and medium business.
4. Provide graduates with training in skills that will make them meet the manpower needs of the society.
5. Stimulate industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed areas.

### **Objectives of Functional Fine and Applied Arts Curriculum**

The philosophy of fine and applied arts programme is to provide academic and professional training for NCE teachers in fine and applied arts aimed at developing their aesthetic perception, artistic talents and expression and to stimulate interest and enquires in the practical and theoretical areas (NCCE, 2008). The objectives actually were anchored on the above philosophy for the formulation of functional fine and applied art, curriculum by NCCE 2008:41 as follows;

1. Training professional art teachers to fill the manpower needs of the primary and junior secondary schools;
2. Equipping and providing the teachers with knowledge, understanding and skills in fine and applied arts;
3. Equipping the students with necessary knowledge and skills for promotion of Nigeria and world's artistic and cultural heritage;
4. Developing in the would-be teachers the ability to communicate effectively through art;
5. Preparing teachers to quality for and benefit from teacher education at the university level;
6. Equipping NCE graduates with manipulative skills which will make them self-reliant job creators.

### **Entrepreneurial Skills in Functional Fine and Applied Art Education**

The entrepreneurial skills in fine and applied arts are many and varied. A functionally trained artist could engage in career and self-reliant works as cartoonist for different and many newspapers organization and magazines for satisfactory pay. The

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artist could also engage himself as an engraver, therapeutic artist, tattoo artist, fashion designer, portraitist, photographer, draughtsman, interior designer, textile designer, graphic designer. Others could engage in exhibitions, mural and canvass painting. A fine and applied arts graduate can also set up his own art gallery where works of artists are acquired, displayed, sold, and art studio which usually attracts heavy patronage. Graphic designers are generally patronized for the production of packages of goods, various political, cultural, educational, social and religious works and posters, invitations cards, certificates, book illustrations. Illustrations and diagrammatic symbols, pictures and patterns in computer are also constructed by the graphic artists.

These artistic efforts are professionally and globally known as computer graphics. Interior designer deals with the planning of interior spaces of a home and other business offices, choosing the materials, colours and appropriate furniture as well as organizing such an interior in a way that is aestatically and functionally appropriate.

Therapeutic artists could visit psychiatric homes, hospitals or rehabilitation centres and help in stabilizing the emotionally challenged through engaging them in artistic activities. This can attract handsome remunerations for the fine and applied art graduates.

Tattoo artists can attract big revenue and patronage from sportsmen and women, great musicians and actors. Apart from various industrial metal or iron products that needed engraving for identification, save keeping and protection from theft, the art of engraving has become more relevant to the contemporary society particularly in sporting events. Engravers engrave names of winners on trophies for award presentation during important sporting events. The painter could engage in painting the portraits of politicians and prominent men for very handsome sum of money. The important thing is to make his/her work striking and unique in style. Textile designer can depend on producing tie- dye, batik and block printed fabrics with striking designs in addition to sewing such fabrics into striking styles for customers. The addition of the tie-dye as an art lies not in the beauty and joy derived from the results, but also in the uniqueness of each work (Ekeada, 1988).

Sculptors can engage in execution of sculptural relief on the walls of modern buildings sprouting up in both urban and rural areas for well-to-do citizens in our society. Other sculptural pieces could be produced to enhance the beauty of the environment. Group art exhibition could also offer the art graduates the opportunity to produce and sell their art works at very high prices to several patrons of art and art connoisseurs. Many graduate artists also engage in entrepreneurial skills of bead making. With bead seeds fishing line, fabric, button, zip and other materials, varieties of beautiful objectives such as handbags, flowers, belts, necklaces, bracelets, earrings,

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purses which not only serve aesthetic but also utilitarian functions can also create room for self employment.

#### **Fine and Applied Arts Concepts that can be Taught for Entrepreneurial Skills**

Fine and applied arts as a study covers areas of painting, sculptures, drawing, photography, graphics, ceramics, textiles and craft which could be taught for entrepreneurial skills. For painting skills good quality sable brushes, pencils, papers and cardboard sheets, colours of different shades and make such as poster colours, water colours, oil colours, drawing boards, easels, plywood, palettes, canvass, palate knife among others are viable tools for practical works. Under this concept, students are exposed to the art of drawing and painting human figures which is called portraiture. They learn also how to paint sceneries like mountains, fields, gardens, rivers, streams, green lands, forest among others. This is referred to as land scrape painting. Under nature and still life composition, learners study how to paint objects in groups or singly in addition to painting natural things that have life such as trees, animals among others. Through this study, none the less, they acquire saleable skills that could sustain them even when still studying as students.

Another concept that could be taught for entrepreneurial skills is sculpture which involves the use of materials and tools like cement, wood, stone, metal, plaster of Paris, armature, hand trowel, adze, knives, welding machines, chisels of assorted size to carve model or construct art works that could serve aesthetic and utilitarian purposes. Students are taught how to produce relief sculptural works, sculpture in the round for environment decoration of public and residential buildings. The learners are also taught life and general drawing to acquire proficiency in drawing of manmade objects, nature objects, study of environment or outdoor drawing, imaginary drawing, abstract drawing and also figure drawing which entails the study of anatomy, height and structure of human being. Different grades of b series pencils, sketch pad, cardboard sheets, drawing boards, chalk, brush and ink are employed to make such linear representation and to achieve a predetermined expressive effect. Students are also taught photography as a course in fine and applied arts. Here, they study how to snap beautiful pictures of objects, landscape, human figures and animals with professional touch. The entrepreneurial implication in this regard is that it will provide the students with talents of becoming full time professional photographers with studio that could attract some financial remunerations from covering public occasions like matriculation and convocation ceremonies, wedding functions, church functions and other social and commercial activities.

Graphic design is another concept that is studied under fine and applied art that could provide entrepreneurship potentials for art students. The purpose is to communicate ideas and give information to the public. Aspects of graphic designs

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include poster designs, bill board, package design, crest, logo, badges design, calligraphy, illustration, sign writing, animation, cartooning, illustration and photography among others. Students are taught how to combine elements such as written materials, pictorial materials and symbols for commercial, educational, corporate and typographic needs of the society. The most popular and current aspects of graphics is the computer graphics. Entrepreneurial prospect in textile design is manifested in skills like embroidery, screen and block printing, knitting, tie-dye, fashion design, cloth appliqué, weaving, among others. Ceramics is a practical course that teaches students the art of pottery or production of pots, bowls, plates, flower vases, tiles, bricks and earthen wares. Clay and glaze are the basic materials for ceramics. Under craft, skills that involve the use of hands for production of baskets, beads, mats and other art works uniquely designed to satisfy man's aesthetic and utilitarian needs are taught in the class.

### **Conclusion**

Educational needs and training have always been misdirected due to undue emphasis placed on paper qualification rather than skill acquisition. Fine and applied arts is one of the key entrepreneurial education which if well harnessed could provide entrepreneurial skills for youths, make them self-reliant, useful members of the society and veritable tools for national development.

### **Recommendations**

- 1) Fine and applied art education should be made compulsory at the primary level and junior secondary school (J.S.S).
- 2) At all levels of learning, instructional materials and equipments should be provided to help internalize teaching and learning of fine arts in the learner.
- 3) Bursary allowances should be given to art students as motivational incentives in tertiary institutions.
- 4) Students should be exposed to art workshops, excursion to museums, art galleries, art exhibitions, cultural activities and art competitions to introduce them to career expressiveness of art at early stage .

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