

**VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, ARTISTIC CREATIVITY PRACTICAL ART
EDUCATION IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINBLE DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL
STABILITY IN NIGERIAN**

CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

Several factors appear to have an impact on the career decisions of individuals. Since the turn of the century, many researchers have been involved in analysis of influential factors on vocational education in collaboration with creativity theory and practice of practical art education. As a result several definitions have been given to vocational education. Many people look at skill education as both technical and vocational. Many academic have added to the confusion by inferiorating vocational education in relation to technical education (Adetoro, 1986). The general belief is that vocational education is skill development training that has little or no theoretical bases. This is far from the real it}' of things. The actual confusion may arise from the unpalatability of the word "VOCATION" a certain kind of work or trade an individual qualified for (Oxford English Dictionary (1997 Ed). This is perhaps the main reason why the relationship between technology and engineering has led to a struggle among the polytechnic graduates to add the prefix "engineer" to their names.

Vocational and art education is for people - youth and adults interested in preparing for and progressing in a career in some type of satisfying and productive work. School administrators and programme planners on the secondary and post-secondary levels must be concerned about vocational and technical education, because more people are becoming aware of the value of occupationally oriented programmes.

Vocational education according to Wenrich (1957:6) is a specialized programme elected only by those individuals who have a special interest in preparing for a particular occupation or family of occupations. It is that part of the total process of education aimed at developing the competencies needed to function effectively in an occupation or group of occupations.

Vocational education according to UNESCO (1974) and Towe (1969) is three dimensional:

- (a) it has a component of general education
- (b) prepares the individual for occupation, and
- (c) consists of continuing education.

In light of the above, all occupational related training could be called vocational education. It is irrelevant, whether it is at the secondary school, polytechnic or university level. Since the dimensions above are relevant to technical education. It can be regarded as "subset of vocational educational education, just as commercial and agricultural education are subsets of vocational education" (Ehiamentalor, 1980:31)

The National Policy on Education envisaged that the training for occupation at the junior and senior secondary schools should be basically prevocational. That is preparing students for entry- into vocational skill programmes in future. These views, however, appeared to have changed over time. Contemporary studies seem to suggest that family background, in terms of parental socio- economic status Duncan, et al, (1968) Toby (1991:54) and a study by Ridgeway strongly conformed that parental socio- economic background and traditional beliefs were significantly important in the vocational choice process of African youths During the early seventies sons were forced to learn the trades of their fathers and daughters to learn those of their mothers without considerations to other factors as interests, aptitudes and even personal preference (Toby, 1991:54) Nolnar and Dunkebages (1981)

These views, however, appeared to have changed over time. Contemporary studies seem to suggest that family background in terms of parental socio- economic status has no effect on the career choice of students as an individual.

The symbolic relationship between artistic creativity and vocational education for achieving a sustainable

po- litical and democracy stability in contemporary. Nigeria education, the two vocational, artistic creativity has to go together. In this contribution to a UNESCO Report, (1985; p. 1) Uche Okeke explained that the national education policies of African States have generally shown little or no concern for appropriate African visual literacy programmes. This state of affairs has militated against all genuine attempts to develop the creative abilities of young people and to provide an aesthetic education for the adult population. It has made cultural development in Africa still more difficult.

Consequently the young, is unable to produce works that reflect contemporary "Nigeria life as it really is or to manifest the essential aesthetic quality of his people's experience of life and their quest for economic and technological progress in the modern world.

Our concern in this paper is the discussion of the role of artistic creativity in vocational education and the practice of practical art education in contemporary Nigerian education.

What is Artistic Creativity

Speaking on artistic creativity, Sikszeuthnihaly (1976:246) Fatuyi (1988:134) recalled that it is a process by which an individual:

- (a) thereby achieving a new emotional and cognitive balance.
- (b) formulates a problems articulating the previously inarticulated conflict.
- (c) experiences a conflict in perception, emotion or thought.

There are three categories of artistic creativity they include:

1. Imaginative Abilities: This is the power or energy to think and create things by imaging them and producing them, observational skills, and the development of perceptual thinking.
2. Design orientation: Which is the design skills or construction abilities, role identification, sloping and fashioning skills, organizational skills, identification of needs and societal aspiration and structural knowledge.
3. Aesthetic or visual ability or power of literacy: training the eyes to see, developing of abilities to see things in close relationship, the study of relationship between objects, people and place.

Wangboje laid emphasis on the methods and technique of fostering creativity in vocational education or training He said that "contemporary educational approach in our institutions of higher learning tends to alienate the individual from their cultural roots from which they should derive inspiration for further creative endeavours" Interpretatively, therefore, creative endeavours include scientific experimentation, cultural and technological learning and production orientation including manipulative or manual skills training.

The Role of Artistic Creativity in Vocational Education

Since art seeks for the truth and for perfection the traditional artist's role was that of a spirit - controlled being Okeke (1982) describes their personality as those being "held in awe and wonderment. Their function was to bring into being the spiritual essences of traditional belief.

Artistic creativity is involved in all aspects of human behaviour. The artist is not left out in the exultation of creativity trait. Creativity in terms of personality product, process and environment involves the production of something new and unique. Adeyanju (1988:3) .

According to Gilbert and Mccarter (1942:3) artistic creativity has been with us since the earliest cave dwellers made their first tentative steps toward civilization and it can not be separated from vocational education and as long as civilized life continues on our planet.

Artistic creativity cannot be separated from vocational education, since vocational education is concerned

with

. the whole hierarchy of occupations from those requiring relatively short periods of specialized preparation, such as clerk - typist, computer operator, road side artist, Bricklayers, tailoring, to occupations requiring two or more years of specialized. Both formal and informal education such as inhalation therapist, it includes the whole spectrum of the labour force from semi- skilled workers to technicians and paraprofessionals.

The day to day activities of professional technician is based on artistic creativity Almost everything in our environment are based on creativity, the buildings in which you live, the furniture inside those buildings, the clothes you wear all were designed by a creative artist. The walls of your home are decorated with posters, prints Photographs, may be original paintings, that you have hung to give personal meaning to your world all are the work of a creative artist.

According to Fatuyi (1996), being artistic in all things is to be cognitive, thoughtful or imaginative. Artistic cognition plays a complementary role to reason. It deals with a type of knowledge that an individual extracted in any type of vocation he or she chooses to specialize, artistic creative serves as an alternative adaptive functions.

Creativity according to Fatuyi (1988:113) is derived from the word create, to cause to exist, bring into being originate, give rise to, bring about and produce. The artists do create cause to exist, bring about into being, originate, give rise to, produce by portraying ideas, giving character to objects, places or things. All of these things imply role playing such as active participation in the planning, construction, shaping and moulding and fabricate.

Creativity thus implies initiative originality exploration, experimentation such as trial and error or adventures, individuals differences, on the stage of being different, uniqueness of ideas, innovation and discover}' - creativity is a form of perception, a state of mental or vesual power with reference to an individuals' capabilities - all these are embedded in vocational education or training. For an individual to be good in any area of vocational job , he has to be creatively arrested, he has to exhibit his inner emotion in all things.

For an individual to master and be exceptionally good in any area of vocational specialisation he or she has to be trained towards the three major aspects of education objectives on which creative drive are established, (i) The promotion of cognitive knowledge (ii) The psychomotor and (iii) The inculcation of affective domain.

1. Cognitive Knowledge Domain:- As perceived by my sources, cognitive study in creativity is the acquisition of facts, information or knowledge through creativity. The learning of facts and the mastery of new techniques through appreciation, vital to the development of an all round educational orientation. This developmental process is necessary in achieving sustainable political and democracy stability in contemporary Nigerian Education.
2. Psychomotor Training:- This aspect promotes the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies of both mental and physical nature as an equipment for the individual to live and function effectively in our society.
3. Affective Domain or Training:- Affective training is the development and promotion of cultural knowledge. The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of individuals and society. This process

can also be described as the training of the mind in building valuable concepts, generalizations and understanding of the world around us.

As a result the role of Artistic creativity in vocational education is to provide background of the environment and allow the student or individual to develop through the inventive and creative possibilities which the area of specialization prescribes.

To develop the basis of aesthetic awareness together with the ability to discriminate and appreciate the value of his or her environment.

To develop the ability to use imagination, to improvise and experiment with self confidence. To develop and promote political and economic consciousness in an individual.

Vocational Education and the Practical Arts Education

Vocational education and the practical arts are often confused even though they are quite different in purpose, the former is 'specialized' education and the latter is general" education Both general and specialized education are essential ingredients of education for work while it is imperative that we avoid a dichotomy between the two, it is equally important that we understand the distinctive purpose of each and the relationship of both to occupational education.

Practical art according to Wenrich (1964:13) is a phase of general education dealing with organization, tools materials, processes, and products of agriculture, business, industry, and the home and with the contribution of workers engaged in these field. It is a type of functional education with a heavy emphasis on activities and is taught on a non-vocational basis.

In the real sense, the practical arts and vocational education both draw their subject matter from the world of work, of the practical, of everyday living. Because the source of content is the same, the subject matter areas are parallel. For example agriculture can be taught as practical arts or as vocational education. Industry can be taught as industrial arts or as vocational industrial education.

The practical arts areas most commonly found in the public schools are industrial arts, general agriculture, general business, and general homemaking. The practical arts meet all of the criteria of general education.

1. They are intended for everyone - those planning on going to college as well as those who are not.
2. They are concerned with the total personality physical and intellectual development mental and emotional stability, habits and attitudes toward work and workers as well as skill in the use of tools and materials of our culture and the technical understanding necessary to use our resources most effectively; and
3. They are concerned with the individual's non specialized activities - preparation for effective and efficient living no matter what one's vocation.

Practical art is the study of industrial tools, materials, processes, products, and occupations for general education purposes: the learning activities are usually carried out in shops and laboratories, William (1957:13) in industrial arts students receive orientation in production and consumption, advertisement, through actual experiences in planning, producing testing, servicing and evaluating types of consumer and industrial goods Wenrich (1951:13)

Through these experiences children at the elementary and secondary levels learn how industrial products are made, and how to use and maintain these products intelligently. They develop general skill and resourcefulness in working with technical and mechanical things. They learn about woods, metals, plastics,

ceramics, textiles, and other industrial materials and learn about electricity, motor engine, structure and other items of concern to people at home, on the farm, in industry and in recreation.

Above all, they experience critical thinking in solving technical problems thereby developing an understanding and appreciation of the complex integration of industry into our modern technology society.

The goals of industrial arts or Practical Arts are to:

1. Develop an insight and understanding of industry and its place in our culture.
2. Discover and develop talents, aptitudes, interests, creativity and potentials of individuals for the technical pursuits and applied sciences.
3. Develop an understanding of industrial processes and the practical applications of scientific principles
4. Develop basic skills in the proper use of common industrial tools, machines, computer and processes.
5. Develop problem - solving and creative abilities involving the materials, processes and products of industry.

In Achieving Sustainable Political and Democracy Stability in Nigerian Contemporary Education

Education in a democratic society is charged with the responsibility for providing to all citizens the opportunity to become and remain occupationally competent. To accomplish this task adequately specialized vocational and practical art education should be an integral part of the total education process for everyone. Each level of the educational system has a unique role to play in assisting every student to make wise career choices and to achieve maximum occupational competence.

Career choice is a developmental process which begins in early childhood and extends from the elementary school through the post-secondary school, levels, which are the agents of vocational and practical art as brief discussion of the role of each agent follows.

Elementary School

The elementary school develops in children an awareness of the world of work and some insights about the need for and value of work, including positive attitudes about it. Children should learn that all citizens in a democracy are producers of services, products, and ideas.

Occupationally oriented learning at this level should be integrated into the regular instructional programme, reading social studies and science are examples of subjects which can be enriched by including occupational concepts. Introduction of the television, field trips and movies have great potential for providing experiences which can help children understand the world of work. Activities involving the use of some of the basic tools and materials of our culture and the simple processes of our technology should also be included in the experiences of all children.

Early Secondary School

The early secondary school or junior high school should continue the developmental process by providing experiences through which youth can explore the world of work at this level. There should be a variety of experiences in the practical arts as well as part-time work experiences through which youth can assess their interest and abilities in relation to occupations, resulting in more intelligent career planning

High School

In the high school youth should be given the opportunity to explore further the world of work and their interests and aptitudes in relation to particular occupations. For those who have made a choice of occupations, specialized vocational education programme should be made available. These programmes should be varied and flexible enough to serve the needs of several categories of students.

1. Those who will seek employment immediately upon leaving high school
2. those who will continue their vocational preparation on the post-secondary level and therefore need to

acquire
some of the basic knowledge and skills for their chosen occupation.

A Post Secondary Institution

The role of the post secondary institution technical institute is to provide specialized vocational and technical education for those who want to continue their vocational and technical studies and those who may not have had the opportunity in high school for specialized education and adults who are unemployed or employed but need additional training.

A comprehensive career education programme attempts to put together all components outlined above. E.g preparation for the world of work should be a part of everyone's education beginning with common experiences on general education of the elementary and junior high school levels with specialized (vocational) education made

available in high schools to youth who are ready for it.

Vocational education at the secondary school system has been a topic widely discussed both in the media, workshops and seminars (Ehianetalor 1989) National policy on education has shown a misunderstanding of prevocational education and its actual needs. He further said that neither the Federal Ministry of Education nor State Ministries are aware of the yearly total population of the beneficiaries of the 6-3-3-4.

The Federal Ministry of Education cannot boast that it knows the actual enrolment figures or the cost needed to run the prevocational programmes to meet the specification of the National Policy on Education as a result to implement any programme successfully without knowing the population of the beneficiaries.

RECOMMENDATION

The high rate of unemployment and underemployment among school leavers in our country is a serious issue for concern. It is contended that one of contributing factors of unemployment and underemployment among school leavers in the country could be inadequate or lack of vocational guidance. As a result the following recommendations are made for effective vocational occupation and creativity to achieve political stability.

Vocational guidance should be encouraged in the vocational schools or institution because some of the unemployed school leavers were not given sufficient and relevant vocational and occupational information that would enable them graduate smoothly from school to a suitable occupation. We can blame the country's educational system for this ugly situation.

Bajuwoye (1986), argues the many Nigerian students find it difficult to choose subject combinations required for different occupations. Consequently, he submits that teachers in schools need the services offered in vocational guidance to enable them collect, analyse, interpret and present relevant information about occupations to students.

Also vocational guidance in schools will help parents have a better perspective about their children in relation to careers and employment forces in the locality. Through the services, parents will be in a better position to help their children to make better vocational and occupational decisions based on their children's abilities, interest and aptitude.

Results of some studies on vocational development among students in the country show that many students choose from a narrow range of occupations, a large proportion of students aspire to enter into some professions than actually enter, many students select occupations either above or below- their ability as measured by psychologist tests.

From the foregoing, it becomes obvious that the vocational technical school would fail in one of its primary functions - preparing the individual for a useful life without the services offered in vocational guidance.

The need for Manpower.

Manpower refers to personnel who have been trained and certified to teach at a given level of education. Manpower as used here shall refer only to vocational personnel needed to teach at the vocational and technical institutions. Highly qualified experienced and efficient staff should be attracted into the vocational schools by Government and the Government should offer them attractive remunerations and condition of service. In service training facilities such as seminar and workshops of further improve their academic background and thus acquire more techniques of handling their schedule of duties.

As a result Federal and State Governments should ensure adequate and regular funding of the vocational institutions.

Equipment:

Vocational education requires tools, equipment and space. Unlike the conventional classroom skill subjects

vocational education requires a special classroom. Setting or workshop and studios.

The teaching of aesthetics of and creativity in all aspects of vocational job is needed to develop the basis of aesthetic awareness together with the ability to discriminate and appreciate the value of one's environment.

Also to develop the ability to use imagination to improve and experiment with self confidence the teaching of the above concept must be emphasised to students. CONCLUSION:

Both practical arts vocational education and creativity are needed in a comprehensive career education programme: neither one is a suitable substitute for the other. The practical arts introduce individuals to the world of work. Through exploration experiences with general education for effective living in a technological society. Vocational Education, on the other hand, prepare some for employment in a specific occupation or family of occupations by providing those experiences which will help one to develop the competences needed to qualify for such employment. Both practical arts and Vocational education are essential components in a comprehensive programme. In these two topics above, cannot be separated away from the artistic creativity as a result the word creativity has to be emphasised on both practical arts and vocational education.

Creativity activities consist of two types of knowledge.

1. The Constitutive knowledge form is information about agentic powers Fatuji (1988) (one's power to control one's life) and it is perhaps the most meaningful information that any of us can get.
2. Since creativity is a means of attaining a high level of self consciousness, a self conscious individual must constantly strive to prove that he or she exists as a psychological entity not just as a physiological organism. Therefore individuals must continue to act and to monitor its environment in order to find out whether they are

in fact autonomous agents, whether their existence makes a difference

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