

The Validity of Creativity in a Functional Primary Education for Productivity and National Development

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Abstract

One of the most challenging issues that Nigeria has encountered in recent time is low economic and capital growth stemming from recession. In an attempt to curdle this sloppy slump, various goals of development programmes have been articulated through a diverse policy imputes and adjustments by government. As a means towards achieving these goals, this paper seeks to examine ways of enhancing creativity and functional primary education being the bedrock of every academic and societal development in Nigeria. To achieve this goal, guided demonstration and observation methods were employed to generate information and data. The researchers relied on the feedback received from the learners' performances and observation through concrete experiences deduced therein. Twenty (20) cultural and Creative Art teachers in upper primary school constituted the population of the study. A questionnaire was used for collection of data. Means score was used to determine the factors that hinder the ability of some Creative Art teachers from imparting basic skills in the pupils. From the findings of this study, it was revealed that some factors militate against the functionality and acquisition of skills in pupils. Hence, some recommendations were made which includes pragmatically trained teachers who are endowed and have the creative potentials be employed to teach the pupils.

Keywords: Primary Education, Teachers, Creativity, National Development

Introduction

Cultural and creative art is a skill oriented subject that creates a platform for capacity building and self-development in the child for national development, Yanda (2006). He further stressed that cultural and creative art is a constitution of music and dance, dramatic art and creative art. According to Olaitan (2001), cultural and creative art is a utility subject which equips the child for self-employment and paves a channel of sustainability for nation building. Though the economic status of Nigeria is shaded with corruption, mediocrity, political gambling and sectional clandestine agitations for self-exposition, none could be that renowned if the individual lived a purposeful and self-reliant life. Cultural and creative art offers numerous contributions to life endeavours. It creates occupational opportunities for self-sustainability and facilitates national standards for productivity and economic recuperation, Okeke (2005). According to Okechukwu (2003), a nation with an effective and functional primary educational system holds mastery of the functions of self-dependence and interdependence of families and individuals nurtured through the knowledge of cultural and creative art and strengthened through learning experiences, competencies, management and regulation of policies, norms and belief for the realization of independence of the individual.

The goal of education as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (FGN, 2013) is to prepare the individual for useful living within the society. This confirms the viability and relevance of cultural and creative art to the development of the individual and realization of the panacea for national development. Perhaps, that is the reason Yanda (2006) emphasized

cultural and creative art in his music development as a subject that prepares the learners for self-reliance, self-sustainability, environmental survival and independence for the good of all. The primary focus of primary education through effective management and utilization of cultural and creative art is to equip the individual with the right skills to enhance capacity building through self-discovery and help the individual contribute to the development of the society in which the individual lived in. According to Yanda (2006), cultural and creative art liberates the child from the shackles, carnages and bondage of selflessness, vulnerability and unemployment, which is evident in the multi- distinctive potentials created in cultural and creative art right from the foundational stage of the academic system.

There is the need to make the teaching of cultural and creative art subjects more dynamic and functional in primary schools. If its role for sustainability of life and self-reliance for socio-economic well-being of the individual and society must be realized, its recipients must be taught to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge, theoretically and practically, broad enough to cater for the generality of the individual's needs and the demands of the society. If the desired approach from incubation of policies to implementation of programmes towards skills acquisition is managed fervently, the knowledge gained will be applied purposefully and the propensity to which productivity will be enhanced can never be imagined.

Concept of Skill Acquisition

Skill acquisition is a cognitive development generated through instructional experiences and concretized through performance. According to Nwabudike (2009), skill is internalized. It is knowledge, understanding or habit imbued for creating or doing things for the good or benefit of the environment. As emphasized by Olaitan (2001), skills and knowledge in the art or science, when properly employed in any given or desired situation, yields measurable results that must be valuable and attractive. Skill is the ability to perceive and perform a familiar knowledge of any art or science, united with readiness and dexterity in execution or performance or in the application of the art or science to practical purposes. According to Okeke (2005), skill has to do with a demonstration of the knowledge or habit of acting, thinking, interacting or performing in a comprehensive manner acceptable to the environment in such a way that the process is repeatedly practiced. Skill acquisition is realized when cognitive tendencies are resolved physically or concretely through psychomotor exercises. The teaching of the theoretical aspects of cultural and creative art in the classroom facilitates basic practicals from where the skills acquired are actively made manifest.

Skill acquisition is a process, Tyankoni (2011). The number of times it is taught or practiced plays a specific role in strengthening its effect on the individual. Skill acquisition means a specific and prolonged form of learning about a task or event.

According to Tyankoni, acquisition of skill occurs at three stages in learning:

- i) At cognitive level
- ii) At associative level and
- iii) At autonomous level

At Cognitive Level: This is the level when learners receive instructions and develop performance strategies.

At Associative Level: At this level, previously learned strategies that are appropriate are applied; thereby strengthen the new situation on the basis of feedback.

At Autonomous Level: This is the last stage of skill acquisition. At this stage, performance strategies slowly become more autonomous and less subject to cognitive control or external interference.

Cultural and creative art as a subject therefore serves as a utility course through which every learner is prepared, equipped and nurtured to prepare for tomorrow. At the autonomous stage of skill acquisition, during teaching-learning situations, lasting changes are effected with selected experiences, Tyankoni (2011). Experiences gained in the previous stages are reorganized, more initiatives applied to strengthen new strategies with the aim of igniting a more vibrant approach to self-realization. As learners involved in practical lessons, there is a recurrence of most of the experiences in the lesson which captures their attention and pave way for knowledge retention which is then utilized for posterity. Unfortunately, some of the subjects in the curriculum within the Nigeria educational programmes lack the capacity to equip learners with the strategic skills good enough to carter for the future of the individual, harness and facilitate sustainability in entrepreneurial spheres and expose the learners to self-reliance.

Teachers are fundamentally known to make the resource abode on which learners grow. Skills acquired are meticulously doctored, nurtured and given out to individual learners by the teachers as skill acquisition involves human and material resource. Teachers play a major role in human management and are referred to as human resource managers, Okechukwu (2003). Teaching cultural and creative art effectively requires trained personnel who must be competent, creative with potentials that are ingenious and generate material resource and funds. According to Okechukwu (2003), teachers make the pivot by which every learner swings. Today, there are insufficient teachers of cultural and creative art. Very few teachers in the areas of music, fine art, dance and drama are available for the technical aspects of the subject. As a result, there seems to be a complete absence of teachers in these areas of arts and the facilities for the training, very mush farfetched. This therefore calls for an urgent response of the Ministry of Education to strategize towards improving and training the teachers for a more result-oriented teaching-learning of cultural and creative art. As stressed by Shehu (2010), skills can only be learnt under the guidance of skilled teachers. Nwabudike (2009) affirms this analogy, stressing that teachers use material resources to inculcate necessary skills to learners. Okechukwu (2003) opined that to acquire skills in cultural and creative art by learners, there must be activities that generate learn-ability, actions that excite, and conducive environment that must facilitate positive responses. Incidentally, there has been an assembly of ad-hoc teachers/trainers in cultural and creative art today in the schools due to inadequate professionals. These teachers are professionally untrained but need to be closely supervised during teaching-learning situations.

Cultural and creative art studios and laboratories are unavoidable tributaries of performance for practical's and guided demonstrations for which every teacher should function. Unfortunately these facilities are absent. Perhaps, this may have contributed to the handicap found in the availability and utilization of instructional materials by teachers. Without the desired or needed equipment and tools during training and instructions, activities are reduced and subjected to normal classroom teaching and learning thereby exterminating creativity, enhancing mediocrity and hampering performance. Okechukwu (2003), asserted that lack of appropriate instructional methods make teaching and learning ineffective. The fundamental essence of establishing cultural and creative art is to liberate children from poor family backgrounds from the shackles of poverty by equipping them with the skills that can prepare them for the future, as independent and self-sustaining and reliant individuals. Consequently, children need to be taught functional skills that lay foundations for earning a living and for economic progress of the nation, (Oyin, 2006). Emphasis therefore, ought to the place on human and material resources for any learning skills that should lead to purposeful living in all spheres of interest and endeavour. Cultural and creative art is

ingenious and has the capability of equipping the child with skills that are not just creativity pruned, but pave way for potential opportunities for self-employment, create avenues for national economic development through micro-scale production, and create a platform for training and equipping others for more occupational opportunities therein. By so doing, social vices, violence, bullying, idleness and other forms of environmental unrest could be reduced. Emerson (2008) noted that display of self-reliance represents the true nature of an individual having the ability to stand on his own, independent of any pressure or influence and function in any given situation to provide for himself and also assist others who are in need. Rabi (2007) emphasized that the worst growing and complex economy could be created in situations where cultural and creative art teaching is carried out extensively by professionals who have low creative potentials, or are ill-equipped for practical tasks of this capacity. Today, the government of Nigeria supports and promotes programmes that envelop initiatives that culminate self-development, self-actualization and self-reliance as a means for recuperating from the low economic state presently experienced by Nigerians. Cultural and creative art if properly harnessed from the primary school level will make the desired impact by improving skill acquisition tendencies as a means towards realization and sustenance of self-reliance, self-employment and independence of the child from economic cramps of the Nigerian state.

Research Questions:

1. What are the factors that hinder pupils' ability to acquire skills in cultural and creative art?
2. What ways can the teachers improve the acquisition of skills in cultural and creative art?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine ways of improving skill acquisition in pupils in the primary school cultural and creative art. Other specific Objectives are:

1. To examine the factors that hinder pupils' ability to acquire skills in cultural and creative art.
2. To find out ways of improving pupils ability in the acquisition of skills in cultural and creative art.

Methodology

The Study adopted survey design. A questionnaire was the instrument used to collect data for the study. The population of the study consisted of all the cultural and creative art teachers in upper primary in Ikot Ekpene Education Zone. Ten (10) primary schools were selected through simple random technique and 20 teachers of cultural and creative art from the selected Schools formed the sample of the study. The instrument consisted of 27 items. 15 items were to examine factors that hinder ability to acquire skills and 12 items were to find out ways of improving pupils' ability in acquiring skills. The score of the items in the questionnaire was arranged on a 5 point-Likert scale of strongly agree, to strongly disagree. The instrument was subjected to face validation and reliability testing using Cronback Alpha as it dealt with multiple scored items. This yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.78 and 0.76 respectively. The instrument reliability coefficient was 0.84.

Administration of Instrument

A total of 20 copies of the instrument were administered to the 20 respondents and all the copies were validly completed and returned. The instrument was administered through personal contact to the researcher. The respondents' response was used for data analysis. Data was analysed using mean for research questions. Any item with a mean of 3.0 and above

was considered agreed while any item below 3.0 was considered disagreed.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the factors that hinder pupils' ability to acquire skills in cultural and creative art?

Table 1: Mean Responses of the respondents on factors that hindered pupils' ability to acquire skills in cultural and creative art.

S/N	Hindrances to Pupils' Skills Acquisition in Cultural and Creative Art	Mean	Remark
1.	Socio-cultural Background of pupils	3.4	Agreed
2.	Lack of textbooks	2.6	Disagreed
3.	Lack of qualified teachers	3.8	Agreed
4.	Lack of well-equipped laboratory	4.5	Agreed
5.	Inadequate number of teachers in school	4.7	Agreed
6.	Lack of tools and equipment	4.3	Agreed
7.	Use of teachers methods	3.9	Agreed
8.	Lessons lacks Practical	3.8	Agreed
9.	Lack of parental support	4.0	Agreed
10.	Lack of funds for needed items	4.2	Agreed
11.	Allocation of unequipped classroom	4.8	Agreed
12.	Altitude of pupils towards the subject	3.2	Agreed
13.	Use of simple double period per week	3.7	Agreed
14.	Teachers negative attitude to teaching profession	3.1	Agreed
15.	Lack of competent teachers	3.6	Agreed
	Grand mean (N = 20)	3.8	Agreed

Table 1: Based on the result herein, the cultural and creative art teachers agreed on 14 factors out of 15 that hinder pupils' ability to acquire skills in cultural and creative art, with mean score range from 3.1 - 4.8

Research Question 2: What ways can the teacher improve the acquisition of skills in cultural and creative art?

Table 2: Means Responses of Respondents on ways of improving pupils' acquisition of skills

in cultural and creative art

S/N	Ways of Improving Acquisition	Mean	Remark
1.	Sensitization of pupils on importance of cultural and creative arts	4.3	Agreed
2.	Organization of entrepreneurial club for pupils	3.7	Agreed
3.	Employment of qualified teachers	3.9	Agreed
4.	Teachers should be creature and motivating	3.1	Agreed
5.	Adequate numbers of teachers	4.3	Agreed
6.	Availability of tools and equipment	4.5	Agreed
7.	Use of relevant teaching techniques	4.3	Agreed
8.	Enough practical lessons should be taught	4.4	Agreed
9.	Educate parent and seek support at PTA	3.8	Agreed
10.	Adequate funds should be provided	4.0	Agreed
11.	Use of project and demonstration methods	4.0	Agreed
12.	Provision of competent Teachers	4.5	Agreed
	Grand Mean (N = 20)	4.0	Agreed

Table 2: shows the responses of teachers on ways of improving pupils' skill acquisition in cultural and creative art. They agreed that all the 12 items generated on the table above are necessary factors that can improve skills acquisition in children of cultural and creative art. The items recorded Means that ranged from 3.1 - 4.5 which are within the limit of 3.0.

Discussion

In table 1, the findings show the factors that hinder pupils' ability to acquire skill in cultural and creative art. These factors include Socio-cultural background of pupils, Lack of qualified teachers, Lack of tools and equipment, use of irrelevant teaching technologies, Lack of lesson for practical, Lack of parental support, Lack of funds for needed items, allocation of unequipped classroom, attitude of pupils towards the subject, use of single or double period per weeks, teachers negative attitude toward the subject, and Lack of competent teachers. The findings of this study is in agreement with that of Nwadike (2007) and Okechukwu (2003) who stressed that teachers can only use material resources to inculcate skills in cultural and creative art. Okeke (2005) and Olaitan (2007) also agreed that skill acquisition is realized through connected psychomotor exercise which includes use of tools and equipment, organisation of practical classes etc. Shehu (2010) concluded by soliciting for skilled and competent teachers to supervise and guide productivity for sustainability of the individual.

In Table 2, the result indicated ways the teacher can improve pupils' acquisition of skills in cultural and creative art. This includes sensitization of pupils on the importance of cultural and creature art, employment of qualified teachers, availability of tools, enough practical lessons, use of project and demonstration methods, provision of competent teachers among others. Shehu (2010) stressed that only competent teachers could lead to the acquisition of functional skills and realization of the goals for self-reliance.

Oyin (2006) supported all the points above by stressing that emphasis should be placed on human and material resources for any learning or acquisition of skills to be realized for purposeful living in all spheres of life. Rabi (2007) also support the assertion that the worst growing and complex economy could be created in situation where cultural and creative art teaching is carried out extensively by professional who have low creative

potentials, or are ill-equipped for practical takes of this capacity.

Conclusion

Cultural and creative art is a utility course that equips every learner with all the necessary skills for self-reliance and sustainability of life. Through cultural and creative art, gainful employment could be established with the internalization of knowledge, ideas and idylls in the individual for independence in the pursuit of life's endeavours. But there are certain factors that hinder the ability of pupils to acquire skills in schools. These include lack of equipment and tools lack of qualified teachers, lack of competent teachers and funds. Ability of exterminating these hindrances through the provision of the right environment with the availability of the relevant equipment, tools and teaching methods could bridge the gap already created to the detriment of the pupils and the development of the nation, Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. Government should employ trained and professional cultural and creative art teachers for effective delivery and implementation of its unique essence.
2. Administrators and Government should provide and equip laboratories and classroom for the teachers of cultural and creative art in the primary schools.
3. Cultural and creative art societies and clubs should be formed to sensitize the pupils' on the reliance and benefits of studying cultural and creative art.

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