

EXPLORATION OF FIBRE AND FABRICS FOR CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CREATIVITY AND POVERTY ERADICATION: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED SCHOOLS IN AWKA SOUTH L.G.A, ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The issue of poverty eradication in Nigeria should not be treated with kids' gloves, this situation demands an aggressive thought with a result-oriented approach. Most of the time, ignorance of how to solve the problem at the right time becomes a big challenge. It is on this premise that creative innovations need to be made known especially in this era. Applied Arts Education is not left out, due to its richness in the potential to accelerate creativity, and skill acquisitions in education for effective usage and its innovative potential in total eradication of poverty and wealth creation. This paper therefore reveals the innovative skills in Visual Arts most especially in the areas and branches of Applied Arts Education. Many techniques and approaches were discussed and creative skills were detailed for inculcation and imparting of vital knowledge for wealth creation and poverty eradication in our society. This will aid the vital education stakeholders with effective strategies for mentoring and supporting teachers across diverse educational settings, especially in basic public schools. Based on the findings, the researcher made recommendations to harness and fully embrace certain educational opportunities through the power of play and child-centred approaches to build a brighter future for our children. The key words here are creativity, education, poverty eradication and wealth creation through applied arts education. This can ensure that every child in Nigeria receives the quality education they deserve, setting them on a path to lifelong learning and success.

Key Words: Education, Development, Textiles, Fibre, Fabrics, Creativity, Poverty Eradication

Introduction

Creativity entails the making of a novel thing. It is a problem-solving technique that gives birth to a new concept. Creativity involves innovations, inventions and modifications. Hornby (2015) sees creativity as having the skills and ability to produce something new. Creativity can be seen as the process of sensing problems or gaps in information, forming ideas of hypothesis, testing and modifying these hypotheses and communicating the result of this process. It is the awareness, observation, imagination, conceptualization, and re-arrangement of existing elements to generate new ideas.

Creativity is the capacity to perform mental works that lead to an outcome both novel and applicable. Creativity is the skilful use of ideas to generate new creative products. For one to be creative, it calls for a state of uninterrupted self-motivation and expression, and creativity can apply to works of art, engineering, and almost every aspect of technology.

Statement of the Problem

There is a need to infuse Art using exploration methods on fibre and fabric to strengthen effective teaching and learning in the Basic primary schools. This will give the opportunity in

to the production of Indigenous toys not popular in society especially in the Nigerian basic schools. Fibre and fabric exploration in education will aid learning pupils, teachers and parents to develop a range of essential creative skills and foster self-expression. This therefore will get rid of the dearth of locally produced educational toys and materials for effective teaching and learning of children in most basic schools in our society.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study includes;

- To examine the availability of locally made educational toys and learning materials in the basic primary schools suitable for effective teaching and learning of children.
- To ideate, produce and sample locally made educational toys for basic primary school children

Research Question

- To what extent are the availability of locally made educational toys and learning materials in the public basic primary schools suitable for effective teaching and learning of children?
- In what ways can ideas be transformed into useable toys for the Pre-primary school children?

Review of Related Literature:

Creativity and Education

The National Policy on Education (NPE 2004) recognizes education as an instrument per excellence for individual and national development. The importance of creativity in education cannot be overemphasized. In Nigeria, as in the world all over, education is the right of every child, with education, every child is reckoned to gain inevitable and functional knowledge, develop skills in physical and intellectual as well as good behaviours and values inevitable to life and be a good member of the society. The summary of basic education is to produce a literate society whereby all individuals may apply their literacy in terms of knowledge, skill and values to ensure their survival. Creativity plays a vital role in wealth creation, improvement of quality of life, advances economic growth and positively moves the society forward. Creativity in education is a properly organized process that leads to the acquisition of skills for efficient and effective living.

The values of creative expression in Art cannot be over-emphasized. Art is creative. Art in itself means a lot, according to Lowenfield (1977) 'Art is the key to unlocking the creative potential of a child or a person which when unlocked, serves as a vehicle for proper application of knowledge acquired in other fields of study'. Again Uzoagba (2009) defines Art 'as a means of self-expression by the skillful use of a medium. This means that art is a skilful expression, skilful communication, and skill construction.

Creativity and Poverty Eradication

The issue of poverty eradication in Nigeria has not over the years received aggressive tackling by the government, private and public sectors of our economy. However, this has resulted in a lot of graduates accepting anything in the form of payment as salaries and wages just to keep the body and soul together. The era is now for Nigerian graduates to acquire practical strategies towards battling with the problem of poverty and unemployment which has been the creator of hunger and starvation. It is in light of this that creativity and skills have to be inculcated in the training of our students both from the basic schools up to the higher level of education. Obi (2010) suggests practical-based skill-oriented training in

secondary and tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Efforts have also been made by the government to reduce unemployment and eradicate poverty. The programmes may not be serious as a kind of window dressing and unseriousness as nothing tangible seemed to have come out of the efforts. That is not to say anyway that some people in the process had not gone home with billions of naira for their families while every other person could be forgotten or not remembered. According to Okonkwo (2010), 'Nigeria was registered among the 25th poorest countries on the planet'.

There is a great need to accelerate creativity and skills acquisition in education for poverty eradication in Nigeria due to the growing problem of unemployment. This has contributed largely to the worsening problem of poverty among the populace. According to Nwachukwu (1998), 'Nigeria is one of the African countries faced with challenging economic and political problems. The problems have given rise to the depreciation of the Nigerian currency, high rate of unemployment crime, poverty, hunger and frustration. The negative effect of this situation is overwhelming and for one to move out of this satiation of poverty and unemployment, some Nigerian graduates have taken to crime, 'yahoo-yahoo', and drug abuse and many have depended economically on their parents. This according to Ogunkunle (2009) is 'because they lack the necessary creative skills to be self-reliant and to function in today's economic era'. This current situation has contributed to creative awareness in Nigeria of the need for self-employment and self-reliance, which gave rise to functional education with an emphasis on skill acquisition.

Education is a discipline that is concerned with this context with the methods of teaching and learning in schools or learning environments as to various non-formal and informal means of socialization. In so far as it is sufficient to state that the importance of education is well appreciated in Nigeria today, it is vital to acknowledge that its functionality and creativity are not yet fully embraced in the real sense of it. Obasanjo (2012) noted this, stressing Fafunwa's point that schools of higher institutions must change their focus from training employment seekers to training employment creators as it will enhance employability. Zeiberger (1999) further emphasizes that since the activity of the mind is separated from the learner, formal knowledge has no educational value if there is no practical mastery of the knowledge acquired. Obama (2001) stressed the importance of education to the national development of co-related knowledge and problem-solving skills acquired in mathematics and science to the cure of diseases, like cancer, AIDS, and the development of new energy technology to protect the environment. In the same way states that the insights and critical thinking skills gained in history and social studies help to fight poverty and homelessness, crime and discrimination for a fairer and freer nation. He also states that every single academic pursuit has the propensity to instigate ingenuity and creativity that it needed to build new companies, create jobs that will boost the economy of a nation.

The values of creative expression in Art include; aesthetic awareness, individuality, expressiveness, inventiveness and resourcefulness. Creative skills Education is consequent on the needs and desires of the society. The need for technological advancement and development in Nigeria is a challenge with skills acquisition and self-reliance education can overcome. Education empowers a nation and the creative aspect of education is the means to this end. In the Nigerian situation, the creative aspect of it can be fully embraced in Applied Arts of Visual Arts.

Art is a diverse range of human activities and the products of those activities. It focuses primarily on the visual Arts which includes the creation of images or objects that

include painting, sculpture, printmaking photography, textiles, graphics, and many other visual media. Art features have been seen in terms of mimesis, expression, and communication of emotion or other values. The nature of art and art-related concepts such as creativity skills and interpretation are explored in a branch of art philosophy known as aesthetics. The word art can refer to several things, a study of creative skills and a process of using the creative skills, a product of the creative skill or the audience experience with a creative skill. Education is the gradual process of acquiring skills and habits that make an individual fit into his society thereby obtaining a certain level of responsibility to oneself and the entire society.

According to Stephany (2005), “Art is very important to education. Through art, many people can acquire a wide range of vital skills. Art plays a positive role in brain development; it causes the brain to focus on specific areas of learning which improve the overall thinking skills of people in several ways due to they have often used to problem-solving technique which is creativity and innovations”. Art forms can be utilized through visuals. Visual arts are related to other aspects of arts but specifically address the sense of sight or vision.

They are the arts that are seen rather than imagined. Visual arts are meant to expose and teach, and they can be shown or displayed through drawings, paintings, sculptures, textiles, and many of them. Art plays a vital role in wealth creation and national development especially when it comes and deals with creativity and the acquisition of vital skills and it creates awareness to the happenings of the communities. Its roles could be seen in the areas of education, health, politics, agriculture, religion, commerce and industries. Visual Art is very vital in the development of the economy and the nation's building. It helps the learners to develop self-esteem and offers the opportunity in creating ways to express emotions and personality. The involvement in visual arts motivates ones and paves ways and willingness to learn thereby fostering creativity in oneself. It therefore helps to provides the visual literacy skills that one needs to be critically engaged within the fact-paced media saturated world. Visual Arts help one to access one's strength, especially in the visual spatial learners, fast learning is aided with the use of pictures, charts, and other visual forms information. Moreso, visual Arts help in providing an effective way to build skills, develop content comprehension and empower the learners with skills they need to succeed in the challenging world. Therefore, it is very important for visual Art to be integrated into all areas of the curriculum to allow all learns to gain creative knowledge and acquire creative skills that a visually competent creative professional will need in order to succeed in any economy and wealth creation.

Accelerating creativity and Skill Acquisition through Applied Arts Education for poverty eradication and wealth creation

Applied Arts Education comprises Textiles, Ceramics & Graphics. Each of these is packed with lots of creative skills and opportunities that can ensure and generate wealth creation if pragmatically engaged. They provide great avenues for poverty eradication and skill acquisition as seen in the straw production by the researcher below:

The straw production by the researcher



Plate 1: The process of making part of the human body using the straw



Plate 2: A model of the human eye. Ogochukwu Emodi-Nnoruka, 2024



Plate 3: The human eye made of rubber straw. . Ogochukwu Emodi-Nnoruka, 2024



Plate 4: The human nose made of rubber straw, . Ogochukwu Emodi-Nnoruka, 2024



Plate 5: The mouth made with rubber straw, . Ogochukwu Emodi-Nnoruka, 2024

The Straw

Rubber Straw of assorted colours were used by the researcher to produce the sense organ of the body, the nose, the eye, and the mouth.

Procedure for the production include:

- i. Rough sketches were made
- ii. Paper board of 20 cm by 30 cm was cut
- iii. The straws were cut with the aid of scissors in the dimension of 2cm
- iv. Gum was used to fixed the rubber straw on the paper board to prevent falling down from the board.

Mean (\bar{X}) and Standard Deviation (SD) on the Extent the Availability of Locally Made Educational Toys and Learning Materials in the Public Basic Primary Schools Suitable for Effective Teaching and Learning of Children by Teachers

(n = 50)

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	MEAN	SD	DECISION
1.	Locally made educational toys are available in adequate quantities in my school.	1.60	.49	LE
2.	The educational toys available in my school are specifically designed for the pre-primary and primary school curriculum.	2.26	.66	LE
3.	Teachers frequently use locally produced learning materials for classroom activities.	2.00	.61	LE
4.	The locally made toys and learning materials in my school are durable and safe for children's use.	2.24	.62	LE
5.	I am satisfied with the variety of locally-made educational toys in my school.	1.38	.64	LE
6.	The availabilities of educational toys enhance children's engagement in classroom learning activities.	3.02	.51	VHE
7.	Teachers have been trained to effectively utilize locally made educational materials in teaching.	2.16	.84	LE
8.	Locally made learning materials in my school are aligned with modern teaching techniques.	3.00	.53	VHE
	Cluster mean	2.21	.33	LE

Key: = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; n=Number of the Respondents =50

Very High Extent (VHE) = 3.50-4.00, High Extent (HE) = 2.50-3.49, Low Extent (LE) =1.50-2.49 and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 0.50-1.49

Textile Design

It is obvious that humans are always in dire need of materials for covering the body. Osaigbovo (2012) states that man desires to constantly beautify himself. Attractive clothes gets more patronage and in this regard, the textile designer is in a very serious advantage of acquiring basic creative skills. The textile designer has the ability of engaging in various designs of fabrics.

- **Cloth production:** Cloths can be produced in various styles using different techniques. It can also be through the combination of many techniques, tie-dye-batik, serigraphy and stencil cut techniques.
- **Tie-dye Technique:** It is a process whereby fabric is gathered together in one of the below techniques;

- **Folding Techniques:** it is done by folding the fabric accordingly in a flat form to enable it get the dye chemical in the process of dye bathing.
- Clamping Technique: it is done by clamping the fabrics together and holding firm with code or cotton line. This will permit the fabric to be clamped firmly in the dye bath when dying.
- **Stitching technique:** It is done mainly with needle and thread. It is normally used to achieve a unique design especially when designing with pencil or wax charcoal on the surface of a fabric.
- **Knotting Technique:** it is normally done by knotting the fabric with small cups, stones, beads, in order to achieve a desired design on the surface of a fabric during dying, in order to prevent some parts from taking in dye bath.
- These are resisting methods of fabric production; with a lay-down procedure as follows;
 - Provide a 100% white cotton fabric brocade
 - Wash and desize with clean water and soft soap
 - Allow the fabric to dry neatly
 - Then prepare the fabric in one of the above explained techniques and carefully prepare the dye solution accordingly and dip the resist part in the dye bath
 - Allow for twenty to fifteen (20 to 15) minutes – stir and turn the fabric diligently.
 - Remove the fabric from the dye bath.
 - Properly allow oxidation in a flat surface for ten to fifteen minutes (10 to 15)
 - Wash thoroughly with common salt and clean water.
 - Spread on a flat surface for fixing to occur properly
 - Wash with clean water and soft soap
 - Then allow the fabric to dry properly
 - Fix and size the fabric properly
 - Then package for usage (consumption)

Batik: Batik is a form of textile design which involves the use of manual wax-resist dyeing technique. The important materials for batik are bee wax; pencil, crayons, block designs, designing foams, stencil cuts, brushes, dye chemicals and materials.

The following steps serve as guide when and during batik preparation

- Prepare the fabric (100% white cotton brocade) for the batik design.
- Spread the fabric on a flat clean surface and prepare your design.
- Apply the desired pattern on the fabric using soft pencil and fabric chalk or pastel.
- Melt the bee wax in a pot or pan using heating method
- With the aid of brush and designing foam apply and create the desired pattern with the melted wax.
- Carefully prepare your dye chemicals
- Then soft fold the fabric to create and obtain the elements and principles of design with the illusions of space and design.
- Drop the fabric gently into the prepared dye solution.
- Allow the fabric to absorb dye for about ten to fifteen minutes (10 to 15 minutes)
- Stir carefully and bring out the fabric
- Remove the fabric from the dye bath
- Allow oxidation to occur on a flat surface
- Remove the wax with hot water

- Allow the fabric to dry on a flat surface
- Fix the fabric carefully
- Size and package for consumption

Weaving: cloth weaving is among the oldest man's craft in textile art. It is done for utilitarian purpose. In weaving one may fully embark on tapestry weaving for decorations. Weaving of macrame etc.

Tapestry: Is a special method of weaving in which the yarns are manipulated freely to form a pattern or design on the front of a fabric. The term tapestry is applied to furnishing fabrics in which the design was produced by means of coloured threads inserted by hands as required. In tapestry weaving, yarns of different colours are inter laced on a simple hand table loom and are wrapped to the desired pattern. There are different fabric structures in which two or more warps and wefts of different materials are used. Materials for tapestry are;

- Yarns of different colours
- Tapestry needles
- Beads of various colour
- Scissors
- Paper for design
- Pencils

Macramé: Macramé is a unique textile art that is made by using a different kind of weaving technique. It is made in straight or round loom that is mostly used for interior decoration. Macramé is an Arabic word. It is a name for the technique of knotting, in a decoration form. The yarns for macramé will be smooth, firm and fairly twisted in order to give clarity to the pattern, and to give it a designed shape and texture. The materials for macramé are;

- Yarn or twine of different colours
- Cotton cords
- Jewelry
- Beads
- Pendants
- Shells

In the technique of macramé weaving a set of four (4) yarns are slop in two and joined to the next set in a continuous repetitive motion, resulting in a decorative spiral formation of the knotted threads depending on the design. Forming and creation of an openings with beads and various ornamentals forms is an added aesthetics.

Knitting: This is the art of making garment and fabrics by interlocking loops of one or more yarns either by hand with knitting needles or with knitting machines. It is a method by which thread is being turned in a cloth. It is of two major type. The machine and hand knitting. **The hand knitting** consists of loops called stitches which are pulled through each other. The active stitches are held on the needle until another loop can be passed through them. An example of hand knitting works are seen in places like markets, offices, homes, churches and so on. Its vital materials are knitting needles, yarn, thread and wools of various colours. **Machine knitting** is used to produce lace materials which are of two types, weft knitting and warp knitting. Weft knitting in weft knitting the yarn runs horizontally or the walls are perpendicular to the course of the yarn, while in warp knitting, it is like the opposite of the weft knitting; that is the yarn runs vertically.

Embroidery: Embroidery is the art of decorating fabrics or any other materials with needle, thread or yarn. It is a craft both for male and female. Embroidery is done on the surface of a cloth with needle and yarn. There are two types – machine embroidery and hands craft embroidery. The important materials for embroidery are needle, thread, paper and pencil.

Crocheting: Is a form of needle work by which fabrics are made from yarn or thread with the aid of a crochet hook. Crocheting is similar to knitting but differs. The different is that one loop is active at a time in crocheting and crochet hook is used in place of an ordinary needle. Crocheting begins with placing a slip-knot loop on the hook to create a chain of a suitable length. The vital material in crocheting are the crochet hook and thread or yarn of various colours to add beauty and aesthetic view.

Needle Work: Is the art of creating designs and patterns using needle and thread of various sizes and colours on fabrics. This can be achieved with various techniques, different sizes of needles and various sizes of threads of different colours fabrics. It is used in furnishing and decoration of public and private places. The common needle works one can embark on are quilting and stiches of various types. Most fabrics used for decorating interiors of houses can be beautified with stiches and quilting. Examples of needle work materials are head rest covers, curtains, arm rests, bed rest covers, sewing and tailoring are not left out. This is because, for textile to obtain its functionality purpose, it must undergo sewing and tailoring.

Textile Management: Is an area of textile art and design that is spreading wide. It is made up of fashion designing, costume/make-up artists, stage managers/stage designers. This aspect of textile is required experience in textile design.

Ceramics: Is the making of objects in clay and having them subjected to firing up to 700oC and above to make them durable and impervious to liquid after glazing if need be. Ceramics is a pottery work that offers the artists that opportunity to explore virtually any form, making use of the vital material clay. These clay works are fired in a kiln, they become hard and rock-like and cannot return to their original clay form. This is the reason why piece of broken pottery can be in underground for decades of years. Ceramic and pottery practices are available for poverty eradication, skill acquisition and wealth creations. They are as follows:

- **Decorative Ceramics:** It is the production of flower vases of various forms and shapes, both for interior and exterior purposes.
- **Architectural Ceramics:** It is the production of lusters for building purpose. Ceramics art is a unique art, in forms of decoration in sculptures, in conceptual or functional vessels. Tiles are produced with clay. Other ceramic products are cups, plates, ceramics beads, plan holders, lamp shades.
- Fabrication of ceramic tools and equipment.

This is the training to which one is exposed to while in school and the zeal with which one assimilates the knowledge is very important in acquiring this creative skill. A good knowledge of fabrication of simple ceramic tools and equipment can give one a golden avenue in wealth creation. Table wheelers, turning tools, modeling tools of various sizes and shapes can be produced and marketed in schools and places were need be.

- Material processing and sale many studio potters including students are ever ready to buy already processed clay to save the time in clay processing before use. One can embark on a regular supply of clay to individuals and school that need it.

Graphics: Is the process or technique of working with words and pictures to create solution to problems in visual communication (Preble, 2004). Some of the duties of a graphic designer include illustration of book covers, bill boards, posters, hand bills, logos, road signs calendars, vests, specialists in graphics should produce complimentary and business card with their address and phone numbers to be easily contacted.

- Photography is an aspect of graphics which should not be past time business but should be practiced with the aim to make a vital economic profit.

Creative skills for Acquisition in Visual Arts according to Enendu and Emodi (2013)

- **Designing skills:** with the internet constantly expanding, a plenty of careers are available for visual art students in web design, graphic design and digital media design. Computer graphics student can combine traditional painting with algorithmic art, digital art, industrial design, video game designer, character designer, animator, cartoon etc.
- **Teaching Skills:** Visual Arts students with the gift for sharing their knowledge may engage in part time teaching of Fine and Applied Arts during vacation. They may provide private Art lesson to those that need it especially for examination classes. With this skill, one can be economically empowered.
- **Commercial Skill:** Most visual Art students in schools survive through commercial works like greetings cards, portraits, banners, stickers plaque, signpost, complementary cards, litter headed papers, filters etc.
- **Exhibition:** Visual Artist must at times organizes internal exhibition where works are displayed for people to see and buy. Art patrons are welcomed and these will enable them to join their counter parts in other school or organizations to exhibit in public places like galleries. Through this they engage in wealth creation and economic empowerment.
- **Skills in Craft:** Majority of art students survive through handwork where they use material like raffia, wood, metal, beads and twine to produce creative works like baskets, hats, shoes, trinket box, chairs and clothes which they sell at shops and open places. This creates a vital economic opportunity.
- **Textile Design Skill:** Visual Art students creates wealth through tie-dye of fabric which can be used to make dresses, table cover, window blind, bed spreads, wall hanging, gift wrap cushions and so on. Printing on fabric or vest, batik and re-dyeing of old clothes. Creative skills and wealth creation in textile cannot be overestimated.
- **Skills in Graphic:** Graphic is a two-dimensional design. Many sustainable skills in graphics are listed as follows; making of posters, photography, drawing, illustration (cartoons, pictures) for magazines and children's books, calendar, medical or science illustrations prints and printmaking.
- **Fashion Skill:** Visual artist generate wealth through trade and fashion illustration with their strong creative skill. They also engage in fashion designing in both traditional and media fashion. They create online and print advertising for clothing, shoes and accessories. they sometimes work part-time in fashion magazines agencies and departmental stores.
- **Ceramics and Sculptural Skill:** these are three-dimensional art work. Ceramic and product are in high demand and financially rewarding. Sculptural work can be executed through construction, assemblage, craving or modeling with stone, wood, metal, cement,

clay etc. a good visual Artist who specializes in ceramics or sculpture can get contract from either the church, government, schools, hotels, royal houses or individuals.

- Online teaching, writing books, writing blog becoming an Art therapist, Art entertainer, film making, helping other Artist in various field of practical work. Becoming a model, Architectural design, theater designers and television products etc.

Conclusion

Creativity cannot be separated from Art, creative skills in visual Art are increasing almost everyday and for one to pursue a career in visual Art one should have a creative bent of mind and an eye for details.

Recommendations

- In light of the above, students of Applied Arts should seriously acquire creative skills that were made available while in school, which will enable them to practice their profession on their own, thereby creating wealth and alleviating poverty.
- Efforts should be made by government, education stakeholders and private sectors to establish a showroom or art galleries where art works and innovative products of arts could be displayed for the public to patronize and as well learn the creative method and techniques of such production.
- Art exhibitions should be encouraged by government, private and public sectors, this will encourage creative skills and abilities in the younger generations thereby alleviating poverty and fosters wealth creation.
- Management of tertiary institutions should make efforts to provide enabling environments to enable artist and learners of art works to establish showrooms, galleries and studios for showcasing and displaying their works, in order to improve in their unique talents and skills.

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