

EFFECT OF POLITICS ON VOCATIONAL ARTS EDUCATION AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the effect of politics on vocational arts education as an instrument for economic development and sustainability in Nigeria. The paper identified that the government wields the greatest power and influence in the establishment and building in education of any nation. In Nigeria the case is different, government established vocational art education and designed policies to be used yet the required attention that is needed in terms of funding and its implementation are neglected and the results have debilitating effect on the society. The paper also stated that vocational art education would have solved the problem of unemployment and poverty when properly addressed and would have produced world class skillful and self-employed individuals who would have effectively competed at the global level. The truth of the matter is that the Nigeria economic down turn is amplified with the high rate of unemployment, loss of employment, increasing inability to pay wages by the government as well as downward review of wages. The paper explains how political interests manifesting selfishness, colonial mentality, legitimacy and corruption be clouded the pursuit of important aspect of education in primary, secondary and tertiary institution. The paper concludes that educational leaders should be based on merit and quality societal policies are made to guide the needs of the society and the product to be produced. It also recommended that there should be adequate funding of vocational art education and other skills empowerment centres in the country.

Keywords: *Politics, Vocational Education, Arts Education and Economic Development*

Introduction

Vocational arts education equips individuals to be gainfully employed as semi-skilled or skilled worker. It also gives instruction in appropriate occupation skills, knowledge and attitude necessary for effective employment. Enamhe (2013) states that arts involves a system of values and techniques engaged in the presentation of conventional events as music and dance, drama and visual arts. He adds that arts education is a candid and very important piece of our education and should not be undermined but prioritized like other subjects in the school curriculum. Akpale (2013) emphasized that vocational education is the aspect of education which leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge. This implies that vocational education prepares graduates or other individuals for

occupations that requires manipulative skills that are expected to be developed and ensure knowledge acquisition and self-reliance. Nigeria as a developing country has myriads of problems affecting its education system. Apart from political problems leading to political assassination and post-election crises, the frightening dimension of the problems are youth restiveness and inability to understand the benefits of skills as it relate to self employment.

Rufai (2013) posit that there is danger posted by the high incidence of unemployment in the country, arguing that only skills acquisition would stem the trend because of unemployment, male youths engage in criminal activities while the female are on high level of prostitution: many of them, both male and female engage in trafficking and so many other crimes because of lack of job and hardship in the country. The government of the day fail to invest in education especially vocational education that can help in reducing the high rate of unemployment in the country which is the major cause of hardship resulting to crimes. Okoli, Omotaya, Ibrahim and Fesina (2016) adds that Nigeria education has experienced retrogression and gross neglects as a result of bad politics in the system. The political class brought in personal interest and ethnic propaganda in governance and this has damaging consequences on human. The society political interest coloured the activities of the ruling class in their hawling of education especially vocational and technical education. The primary purpose of vocational arts education is to increase capacity of individuals or group of persons to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes of productivity that makes one self-reliant and self-employed and also give them the opportunity to employ and train others in their field of work

Politics

Politics has to do with the scuffle of power and it has a lot of influence on a country's education system and economic development. Mohammed and Shittu (2020) posited that politics is a struggle among actors seeking for political power and influence through authoritative allocation of values in the society. The case of Nigerian politics sound like a game of playing as they want or as it pleases them without thinking of the values of individual in the society. When corrupt individuals occupy positions without any positive agenda, there would be no positive outcome to their people. Fernandez-Soria (2012) states that good politics has its main aim to achieve transforming project for the benefit of the common goal oriented to consolidate a desirable society and reality rooted in democracy which is government of the people, by the people and for the people. Almod in Okoli (2013) added that political systems tend to perpetrate their cultures, idea and structure and these could be achieved through education. Governments of the day control and structure the educational systems globally. A good government works and serves the people with good intention but bad politics has to do with persons seeking for power for domination of self and tribal aggradizement. They seek to rule the people and enrich self and cohorts (Okolie, Omotaya, Ibrahim and Fesina 2016).

Vocational Education

The primary purpose of vocational education is to prepare individuals for employment in recognized occupation. It is an education that is geared towards self-employment, income generation and earning a living without depending on anybody or even on government employment that is not always available. Ulsan (2012) viewed vocational education as training

and acquisition of expertise, skills, and knowledge that are creative in nature. Vocational education is relatively related to occupation, trade and vocation in which a person acquires specific skills. It is a field of study that prepares individuals for gainful employment as a semi-skilled or skilled workers. Kehinde and Adewuyi (2015) viewed vocational education as veritable tool for transforming the Nigerian economy. They further added five goals of vocational education in national development. The goals are outlined thus; providing trained manpower, providing technical knowledge and vocational skills, promoting specific knowledge to the implementation and solution of general problems, introducing professional studies, giving training, impacting the skill leading to production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled manpower for self-reliance. Kehinde and Adewuyi (2015) further adds that young men and women should have intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology and how to manage it effectively for economic development and sustainability in the country.

Therefore, empowering Nigeria citizens with vocational arts skills would contribute to economic development and sustainability. When a country is sustained economically, there would be no unemployment, poverty and hardship that results to corruption, kidnapping, insurgence, cultism, banditry, yahoo, yahoo plus, smoking of weeds, army robbery and 419. Lots of person claim that they do evil because of poverty and unemployment. Momoh (2012) observed that the lack of commitment by government to vocational education and inadequate funding has weakened the vocational and technical education in Nigeria. Everybody can never depend on the government for employment because jobs are not available to accommodate all the graduates seeking for employment. With vocational arts education, there will be wealth creation, job creation, industrial development, employment, economic diversification and sustainability.

Art Education

Arts education deals largely with the study of visual arts pedagogy as it applies to teaching and learning Fine and Applied Arts, art appreciation and criticism as well as art history so as to provide learners artistic knowledge and skills to better the society. Arts education focuses on educating learners on the various areas in the study of arts. These areas of arts education includes; the history of evolution of arts, its present state and then its future, the practical activities that are carried out using various media and techniques, the theories that are taught and applied in practical. The practical aspect of arts education is the area that prepares individuals for labour market creativity that makes them self-employed.

Oloidi (2011) identified that if a good consideration of art education is made and improved guidelines on arts are made in schools and colleges, it will go a long way to improve and redeem the negative impression suffered by arts in our society. Arts education in Nigeria has been faced with lots of challenges. The survival of this engine house which services the country should be our concern of how to move it to better level that will help to improve our economic development and sustainability. The state of art has for many years been a source of concern due to neglect. This neglect runs across primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in Nigeria (Enamhe 2013). Uzoagba (2002) in Opara and Ikponmwosa (2018) believes that if a proper understanding of arts education has been made and better instructions on arts followed in our schools and colleges, much would have been done to redeem the subject from the neglect

that it has always suffered in our society. As a matter of fact, arts education neglect is in the aspect of the government who are in the right position to show case this skill employment profession by funding and making it a compulsory subject for trainers in schools and skill acquisition centers. Sadly, where art education are taught in schools, they lack funds to carry out the practicals. Vocational professions are practical oriented that involves money to buy needed materials and equipment needed for teaching and learning.

Economic Development: refers to the transition to new technologies that results to general improvement of living standards of citizens of a given country. A country is termed to be economically developed when members of the country are comfortable and can provide for themselves without living a life of poverty and evidence of reduction of unemployment. Economic development can be seen in the areas of higher incomes, better education, higher standard of living, health, less poverty, a better environment, more equal opportunities, and freedom of life (Ethan 2016). Economic development involves both quantitative and qualitative changes in the economy of a country. It is also part of the development of human capital, critical infrastructure, health service, safety of life, education advancement, environmental sustainability, living standard of the people and when general quantum growth is recorded in a society through the stimulation of some socio-economic process is enhanced.

Opara (2018) identified that Nigeria's case of development is different because the positive aspects of life and needs of this country are not developed especially the area of vocational arts that trains individuals to be self-reliant. This country is rich in human and mineral resources yet a very large number of persons cannot afford three square meals on daily basis. Economic development on the other hand is the improvement of the standard of living of the members of the society by the leaders (Government).

Sustainability development: sustainability development is referred to as the development that meets the societal needs of individual person. It implies that sustainable development major goal is to maintain economic advancement and sustainability. Kelly-Byan (2015) opines that sustainability concerns with fairness regarding the treatment of the present and future generation. Contends that for ethical reason, exploitation of resource should not leave future generations worse off than the current. Sustainability also requires the current generation to be capable of acting otherwise and should manage the resource base on the quality of life. It can be ensured potentially by all future generations (AShein, 2014). Sustainability also requires that the average quality of life be distributed equitable within the present generation and between the present and future generations (Hanley Etal 2013)

The Role of Vocational Art Education

Art education is the education of an individual physically, mentally, emotionally, intellectually, creatively, perceptually and socially. Art education focused on the education of the artist as producer that results to the artist being self-reliance because the individual persons has been trained in aesthetically creative activities as it relates to the practice of arts. Meaning that art is a tool that can be used in promoting and sustaining vocational and technical education. Nkom (2007) in Aliyu & Mamani (2022) unveil that when children are taught arts they develop skills in the use and handling of materials with which the articulates themselves in visual form thereby building in them the ability to draw accurately in science and social sciences which they do better than expressing themselves verbally or in words.

Art is a language of communication used to communicate to other people. Mbahi (2015) supports the view by adding that students communicate their insights while developing artistic skills and aesthetic judgement. Another role that art education plays is that it provides the creativity which students can work, discover and express themselves within their environment. There are lots of roles played by vocational art education in Nigeria especially for economic development and sustainability. They are used for equipping individuals for useful employment in trade and in the use of resources. Vocational arts education helps natural resources to be obtained and transformed into finished products that can satisfy human wants, vocational arts education produces many job opportunities in different fields of specializations, such as being an art teacher, art director, art editor, art illustrator, a painter, a graphic designer, a textile designer, a sculptor, a ceramics and a cartoonist (Opara 2018). Therefore, when the above career prospects are achieved, individual persons who specialize in these lucrative subject areas will bridge the gap thereby reducing unemployment and poverty in the society.

Effects of Politics on Vocational Art Education in Nigeria

The truth of the matter is that the formal and informal process of education in Nigeria has remained deprived of the development that will bring the valuable change for economic development and sustainability. The society and the leaders have lost a grip of what is referred to as development consciousness which should be the guide of our integrated planning to success as the surest antidote to the economic development and sustainability in the country. Omolayam and Fesina (2016) asserted that Nigeria's system of education has experienced retrogression and total neglects as a result of bad politics played in our system of education. The way the political class brought in personal interest and ethnic propaganda in their leadership has damaging consequences on the citizens and the country. (Okolie, Omotayan and Fesina 2016). Leaders should recognize the constitutional jurisdiction and the trust reposed in them through the democratic mandates of the public, even though it is on the other instances a stolen one. The rotting, selfishness and corruption are not allowing qualified or professionals to be in positions are the bane of bad government in Nigeria, and these are among what contribute to the unemployment and poverty, which in turn promote insurgence, cultism, army robbery, kidnapping, and banditry.

Okolie, Nkechi, Omotayan and Fesina (2016) also identified that politics is central in establishment and development of institutions and determine who gets what. Political leaders who give adequate attention to their countries educational system have brought transformation modernization and have cushioned unemployment and all kinds of vices that bedevils societies where leaders neglect the education of their country and invest in personal interests. Obanya in Coffender (2014) noted that Nigerians political class promote corruption and so divert funds meant for education to personal use. Education suffered terribly especially technical and vocational education training. The truth of the matter is that vocational and technical education is the education with large carrying capacity employment which upgrades the economic development and sustainability.

Sustaining Economic Development in Nigeria through Vocational Art Education.

Nigeria is a country that is blessed with natural resources such as oil and gas yet the oil and gas is not enough to sustain the citizens because of our dependence on it, whereas there are

other areas of sustainable economic development as a country that is well endowed with human and natural resource that when managed effectively will ensure the country with the expected potential in the economic sustainability. Mbah and Umurhurhu (2016) opined that functional education that create wealth and makes graduates productive element of the economy is needed. Any country that does not plan for its youths is leading them towards destruction because the future of any country depends on the younger generation who may be in position of taking over the future. The duty of the political leaders is to move the country to the next level by directing the paths of their youths to the level of career in entrepreneurship that will help them and give them the hope of taking the future whether white collar jobs or not.

Therefore sustainability of economy development through vocational art education becomes important since it equips the individuals with useful employment skills. It also helps in transformation of natural resources into finished products that can satisfy human wants all the time. It produces many job opportunities in different areas such as designers, ceramists, paintings of different kinds, textile designers (as in tie-dye, industrial work, batik weaving, silk printing, and block etc.), art illustrators, layout men, paste-up men, photographers or curators in museums. When individuals are trained in these fields they can easily be employed in their various areas of specialization and can employ others which in turn reduces theft, crimes, unemployment and poverty in the country A country is said to be economically developed when there is less much poverty and unemployment. Onoh (2011) states that economic development is the creation of wealth from which multiple benefits are realized. It is an investment activity in growing the economy and enhancing the prosperity and quality of life for all persons.

Vocational art education have positive impact in promoting sustainability in our economic development since vocational arts education exposes individuals to the practical task for developing and producing goods and services to meet the needs of the citizens through effective employment in specific occupation (Opara 2018). Already artists are economic developers by way of being self-reliant as well as in labour market because vocational arts education is a skill oriented profession. Many that went through the formal and informal learning both end up being self-reliant as well as employing and training others in various careers. Elebute and Odokuma (2016) opine that artisans and craftsmen always abhor the monopolization of the government patronage, credit and other business opportunities by the bourgeoisie and formal economy that is mainly reserved for the people with education and formal skill. Vocational arts education has a positive effect on economic development and sustainability in Nigeria since the country has no hope in accommodating all the graduates seeking for white collar jobs. We cannot continue to watch the country collapse in the name of waiting for resource from oil and gas which indirectly has fail to sustain all the citizen in the country.

Challenges of Vocational Art Education in Nigeria.

The growth of any nation can be influenced by well-articulated vocational arts education careers. Vocational art education careers is one of the bones of developmental agenda of many African country. A country like Nigeria whose major source of income over the years is the sales of oil is now facing economic hardship. Vocational arts education has faced frustration because of poor funding by the leaders. Corruption and injustice is another

challenge that vocational arts education face in Nigeria, the government do not care about our educational system because of corruption. The leader only thinks of themselves and not the wellbeing of people and they wants to get everything for themselves and more than they are necessarily entitled. Another challenge of vocational arts education is the area of lack of transparency and accountability.

Conclusion

There is no meaningful development and sustainability in any country without favourable response to the art sectors by the governments. It needs to train and give the populace the type of education that will equip them for self-employment. This can be done through encouraging funding vocational art education and other subject areas with skill empowerment. Such education will equip the individuals with the knowledge, skills and abilities that are needed to expand and increase their productivity instead of relying on the government for jobs that are not available or not enough for its citizenry. The discussion has shown the positive effect of vocational art education as an instrument for economic development and sustainability in Nigeria through skill empowerment. Vocational art education plays the role of making sure that individuals become independent and self-reliant and also give them the opportunity to employ others in their business/firms which helps in reducing unemployment and poverty in the country.

Recommendations

To address these challenges, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. There is need to appoint educational leaders based on merit and quality to ensure effective governance and policy implementation.
2. There is need to develop societal policies that guide educational outcomes to meet the country's economic requirements.
3. There should be adequate funding of vocational art education and other skill empowerment centres in the country.
4. There should be measures to reduce corruption and ensure transparent allocation of educational resources in the country.
5. It is also important to utilize statistical data and real-world examples to inform policy decisions and demonstrate the impact of vocational arts education on economic development.

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