



Diversifying Nigeria's Economy through Visual Arts for Sustainable Development

* Aliyu Mohammed Bisalla; Christopher F. Ibrahim

School of Environmental Studies, Department of Art and Industrial Design, Federal Polytechnic Nasarawa, Nasarawa state.

ARTICLE INFO

Article No.: 0222622024

Type: Research

Full Text: [PDF](#), [HTML](#), [EPUB](#), [PHP](#)

Accepted: 28/02/2022

Published: 10/04/2022

***Corresponding Author**

Aliyu Mohammed Bisalla

E-mail: bisalla2003@yahoo.com

Keywords: Visual arts, training, economic development.

ABSTRACT

The idea of economic diversification is now a national issue, and no thoughtful inclined economic dogma formulators and managers of contemporary times can afford to weaken the teaching of the visual arts which is an in-house economic edifice (micro –economy). The arts and agricultural produces have sustained the Nigeria economy in the past, before oil and gas was discovered. Nigeria economy still depends largely on oil and gas sector, but the current administration in its effort to rebrand the economy is trying to shift base to other sectors of the economy. In conformity, the outcome of various researches published on economic submits call for attention of the public and private sectors of the economy, certified groups, persons, scholars, economists, media practitioners, the essential for adaptation of the creation of the other sectors to revive the entire structure in conformity with the desired economic growth. This paper intends to discuss with detail definition and clarification of few vital concepts, analyze the importance of visual arts and its role in economic diversification. Finally, Nigeria has economic and human asset endowed with creative manpower; what the nation need is sustainable, reliable, enlighten programs and solidification of the visual art education together with established art practice.

INTRODUCTION

The peculiar role that Visual Art plays in the development of the Nigeria economy cannot be over emphasized, and it is very glaring that the Art as an educational initiative and a specialized training, when

intended carefully in the structural work of national advancement policies will stimulate the prospective that will add importance to the different sectors of Nigeria economy.

Omuaru and Nyah (2014) observed that consecutive regimes have exhibited a lack of logical

aptitude and political will to link the arts and the economy. This has caused negative influence on the economy and the overall aesthetic significance to education. Every national of any country needs the economic resilience of his or her country's lively economy that must indicate to the comfort of the citizens. The authors further expressed those current economic growth guides for a smart professor who might be a mysterious nonsense to a rural dweller who possibly cannot feed on a three square meal. Therefore, a humble clarification of urbanized economy to an average Nigerian is to make ends meet. This paper points out the opportunities in the arts that would stir national economic growth that will reflect on the populace.

In similar submission, Oyedemi, (2015) posits that Nigeria has boundless artistic prospective in the visual arts, in which, when harnessed can add to the development of our indigenous economy like any other source of income, and even much more than oil and gas contributed. Our view on economic growth guides is narrow when it comes to art in the face of current economic experiments. For example, the visual arts in developed communities like the United States of America, United Kingdom and the Asian nations have accomplished considerable advancement than countries of Africa. Nigeria's reserves in visual arts still depend mainly on foreign inspirations. The role played by Visual art in the Nation's economic growth and development cannot be over emphasized. Various writers have elucidated over time on the significance of arts to economic development. This sector of the economy needs serious consideration in other to maximize its possibilities. Joe, et al, (2010) argued that if the visual arts are properly organized, there would be a sustainable instrument for national growth.

The Concept of Art

The encyclopedia Americana International (1995), in Godwin, (2009) maintained that Art is a challenging theory to describe because it's broad impact. The term "art" originates from "ars", the Latin term for "skill", which is a remarkable aptitude that is noticeable in any social effort as ability, as practical to visual art of synthetic project, print and construction. Though this preserves the unique connotation, "the art of cooking". Art therefore, to others is an attempt to create forms that appeal to our minds, which is beyond mere picture making, painting or sculpture in our environment. Similarly, art is one of the skills in producing an object in its extra practice, but a worldwide linguistic in visual practice. Art is furthermore measured as a process and as well as an invention. As a process, it means it involves phases through which we give sensuous and tangible appearance to our ideas and moods about the domain. As an invention, it means it can be imageries, structures, nutrition, attires, instrument, song, dance, drama, amongst others.

Obizue,(2000) argued that there is no single and generally accepted definition of Art, any definition that take care of the activity(process)and the art work (product) could be accepted as a good definition of Art. It is also in that regard that Egonwa,(1988) maintained that art is the result of the manipulative skills applied by man usually a gifted person to express an idea in a chosen medium, which divorced from any uses to which it may be put, that has the sole purpose of growing a rewarding emotional experience.

Nevertheless, art means the visual arts as it is generally used today, the part of creative aspects that is pursued to connect mainly through our sense of perception. Consequently, art can be said to be; dramatic arts, Liberal arts and visual arts. Dramatic arts include music and dance. However the liberal arts include antiquity, critical thinking, poetry and literature. Visual arts comprise visual and applied arts. Visual arts; which include drawing, painting and sculpture, while applied arts comprise of graphic design, textiles design, metal design, architecture and ceramics, artistic activities, are the usual means of developing the artistic capacity of the individual and for noticing and providing for one's expressive needs. Edesi, (2014) in similar submission upheld that arts are practically concerned courses alongside the theory. Which includes the followings; painting, drawing, sculpture, architecture, ceramics, textiles, photography, graphics, interior decoration and furniture. These are widely practiced areas of interest today. Other courses related to the arts that are also practiced are theatre and performing arts, which includes; music, dance, film and video arts.

The Role of Art Education in Economic Development

The pride of any nation is the graphical environment which depends on her survival. Any

Man-made object we see around is the outcome of the visual skills of a 'designer' – whether it is an architect, a Scenery, Custom, realistic or industrial designer, an illustrator and Photographer. Art involves a wide discipline that need to be studied by Individuals, for effective job opportunity and income generation. Thus, many people assume that to study Art, one will only end up being a professional artist; as this is far from being the truth, artistic knowledge and experiences are capable of changing individuals to be creative in whatever field they featured.

Omuaru and Nyah, (2014) quoted Blakeslee (1994) "*we know from experience that no one can assert to be actually educated without basic knowledge and skills in the arts*". Though, Blakeslee articulates American understanding, the case may be different in Nigeria as majority of our decision makers and other influential persons may not have been effectively exposed to arts in the school, and may likely disregard it in some unusual way, yet they use the products of art. They express superstitions, hypersensitive on issues regarding religion and the arts, and brand it as 'fetish'. Majority of them who turn in this way could be psychotic

from childhood when offered with toys and artworks, which eventually leads to misconception. Clergymen and spiritual leaders ignorantly mislead people fundamentally live behind the time and carry along the consciousness of the past.

In the light of the above, Ajakeye,(1982) in Enamhe, (2004) lamented that Art was previously not accepted as a main subject in schools, and as such, Parents discouraged children from studying art expressing that art is for indolent people and for persons who cannot do better in life. Bisalla and Adeyemi, (2016) still maintained that the significance of Visual art education in economic diversification cannot be over emphasized, therefore visual arts education is the ingredient of socioeconomic and political stability of a nation and its economic survival. For quiet sometime now Nigerians have adopted education as an official component for achieving socio- economic stabilities and political survival, Visual art education is expected to create a true democratic Nigerian society and a spring board for economic diversification.

Oyedemi (2015) lamented those Arts especially images on canvas and other supports has been an object of great asset in the 21st century, and Nigeria economy is now diversified for income generation as people look at other sectors of the economy to earn their living especially in the areas of visual arts. It is worth to note that some paintings of the great artist like Picasso were on auction for 300million dollars today.

Omuaru and Nyah, (2014) sees Art as an educational enterprise and a specialized practice, when intended conscientiously within the border work of domestic growth strategies will project prospectives that will enhance significance to the micro and macro economy of Nigeria. Unfortunately, previous governments of the country have shown no interest in connecting visual arts to the nation's economy.

The Practicing Arts and Economic Development Product Design

This fact remains crystal clear that from the prehistoric times the artist is a maker, a product designer and a producer of inventive concepts in principle and training. The creative talent of the artist is exploited by the industrialists.

Buser, (2006) reported that one of the first early generation artist, Leonardo Da Vinci in his "resume", he emphasized his skill at inventing instruments of war such as fabricated bridges, siege machines, explosives, mortars, armored boats and mining techniques, primitive tanks , catapults, guns, and other firearms. Nowadays, the creative and knowledgeable skills of the artist are embraced for the production of range of products, like household objects, cars, air crafts and ships.

Omuaru and Nyah, (2014) maintained that numerous industrialized and business companies have departments responsible for the production of creative goods. The automobile is one of the companies that deal with aesthetic forms that are of high artistic quality.

Significantly the artists' visual impression effects the engineers and technicians imagination. Nevertheless, the aestheticians craft cannot be evaded when one views the interiors of automobiles.

Importance of Economic Diversification

It is glaring that the contrary significance of complete reliance on trade in oil amplified the requirement and request to expand Nigerian economy that is largely depended on oil to non-oil export trade. Advocates of this augmented percentage of non-oil export; dispute on the non-oil trade has great proficiencies in driving Nigerian economy to a more preferred progressive development. Therefore, Esu,(2015) reported Onwualu,(2012) that "*the significance sequence attitude to agriculture is capable to open up the trade and create numerous activities, that will skillfully provide jobs and enhance industrialization and therefore makes the non-oil sub-sector to hold the champions for upcoming Nigeria's feasible economic development*". Nevertheless, successive Nigerian governments have made determinations over time to propagate the non-oil export trade by instituting reassuring programs, most of these policies documented variable notches of achievements, for example, the strategy of industrial development in the 1960s, occupation liberalization programme in form (SAP) of the early 80s and trade advancement program in the 90s, that was implemented through increased strategy sustenance to Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) which were made in other to improve output and therefore, ship of indigenous goods.

Abdullahi, (2018) opines that "the way forward to economic diversification, sustainable growth and development that any successful diversification of the Nigerian economy would require complete fiscal and monetary policy reorientation" Which in so doing there should be a strategic shift by targeting massive investments that transform the lives of the people and qualities of the resources of our nation can be achieved. The author further states that Nigerians must imbibe a mindset that is patriotic, progressive and willing to make hard choices and sacrifices in life styles and consumption habits. The foremost multi-billionaire businessman and investor, Aliko Dangote, correctly understood the imperatives of growth when he remarked while talking to a group of businessmen" what prompted the nation to go into stagnation was deficiency of progression. Except development is trendy in diverse segments of the economy, it would be difficult for the economy to stand on its own." The author identified further the types of growths that are expected in a successful economic growth and development; demographic (natural population increases and migration) and economic (per capita output). Only the latter accounts for improvements of living standards, if it outpaces the former, growth therefore, requires massive investments in physical and human capital. To catch up with the rich countries and attain higher standards of

living and quality of life for our people, we must strive to develop our national resources and attain a high level of technological know-how, skills and education. No nation has developed waiting for other people to come and invest in its country. Foreign investment in the economy is relatively small at just over \$5billion for all of 2016. This cannot by itself stimulate the kind of growth required to transform a large economy like Nigeria's. Hence we cannot rely on foreign investments to revitalize growth. To achieve take-off into real sustainable growth we must mobilize massive local financing and create transparent institutions that encourage large-scale investments in agriculture, manufacture, education, healthcare and training of our population. We must establish a dependable legal and security architecture and framework, (including good and transparent corporate governance) that various economic actors can rely and count upon. The author further suggested that there is a need to identify our areas of strength and growth poles that can drive the development process and invest massively and consciously in them at the same time diversify in such a way that we end our total reliance on a single exhaustible commodity-oil.

CONCLUSION

If Nigeria is to accomplish growth and development, her economy has to be expanded. Therefore visual art education is a valued benefit in constructing a novel socio-economic mandate. The unindustrialized countries must give stern believe to visual art teachings. A high-quality education is indispensable as it will enhance immeasurably to the structure that will lead to the general socio-economic recovery and development. Therefore prominence ought to be positioned on visual art accomplishments from elementary through secondary level teaching as it will prepare the youths with the professional skills to pledge

a meaningful existence regardless of the preferred career that children have chosen to commence as divergence does not ensue in a vacuity, and a single traffic economy needs to pave way to the dynamic growth of numerous segments of the economy especially in visual arts, for example developed economy like Germany, Japan, China and Switzerland have placed top priority in skill acquisition to enhance sustainable growth and development.

REFERENCES

- Abdullahi, A. (2017), Diversifying the Nigerian economy for sustainable economic growth and Development, www.dailytrust.com.ng/ accessed July, 08 2018
- Busser, T. (2006) *Experiencing Art*. Thomson Wadsworth, U.S.A. (Pp.384, 385)
- Edesi, K. (2015) Visual Art education in Nigeria, over schooling and paper Qualification, *Jorind*. 12, No.1
- Egonwa, O.D. (1988) *Nigerian art introductory notes*, Benin City
- Esu, G. (2015), Economic diversification and economic growth Evidence in Nigeria. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281448248>, accessed July, 07 2018
- Godwin, I. (2009), Art, Employment and Society, *African Research Review*, an international Multi-Disciplinary journal, Ethiopia Vol.3 No.4 (Pp.140-152)
- Obizue, J.E. (2000) *Essential teaching on Art*, Abuja, Nigeria, Just communications.
- Omuaru, T and Nyah, A. (2014) Impact of Arts on Economic Development: The Nigeria Experience, *Journal of economic and Sustainable Development*, Vol.5 No.15
- Oyedemi, J. (2015) Visual Art Practice: A Catalyst for Developing a local Economy in Nigeria, *Journal of Arts and Design Studies*, Vol. 36