

THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ARTS IN BASIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

OJO, Oluwasegun Michael

*Department of Cultural and Creative Arts
Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo.
Phone: 08067643108
Email: oluwasegunojo113@gmail*

Abstract

The influence of Cultural and Creative Arts on basic education in Nigeria is examined in this paper. It features in different aspects of Nigerian education, especially at primary and junior secondary levels, in form of teaching methods, co-curricular activity and entertainment. It is relevant as an instrument for achieving high-level attendance, retention and academic performance in basic education. However, Cultural and Creative Arts could bring about an indiscriminate intermingling of males and females. Teachers' role towards ensuring positive influence and guiding against negative ones include counselling of parents and other stakeholders, monitoring pupils at work and at play and co-operating with all stakeholders in ensuring achievement of educational objectives. It is recommended that Cultural and Creative Arts should be included in all programmes of teacher education.

Keywords: Creative arts education, universal basic education, theatre education, music education

1. Introduction

Fafunwa (1991, p.3) defines education as “the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of a positive value to the society in which he lives.” In addition, Uduanya (1986, p.6) further defines education as a “process by which individual is enabled to develop his capacities through the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of a positive value to the society”. Uduanya, (1986) opined that Creative education involves developing musical and other creativities work in the individual through the acquisition of musical knowledge, musical skills, musical values and attitudes. Education is therefore a systematic instruction, training or schooling concerned with the transmission of

something worthwhile. Lawton and Gordon (1993, p.4) affirmed that “man’s relationship to creativity becomes educational when succeeding generations are assisted in becoming critically education intelligent about musical style and forms about the social, emotional and physical phenomenon that characterize music as art form”.

Cultural and creative art education on which this paper is focused is therefore, that of schooling, systematic instruction and acquisition of skills, knowledge, values, behaviour and creative responsiveness which is acquired in western typed schools where the role of teachers and students are defined. Such formal schools have Cultural and Creative Arts curricula and a time frame of study as well as the award of certificates or degrees on completion of the study. Education is vital to the development of an individual and a nation. In realization of this, the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has adopted education

as an instrument for effecting national development (National Policy on Education, 2004). Moreover, the Government's concern for the achievement of national objectives has led to the introduction and execution of educational policies at different periods of the nation's history. For example, Universal Basic Education (UBE) was introduced in September 1999, as part of the efforts to make education available to all Nigerians. In this programme, the Government intended to enrol all children of school age and retain them in school to acquire compulsory basic education for nine consecutive years. That is, when the children are enrolled in primary one, they are to be encouraged to complete six-year primary and three-year junior secondary education without breaking.

The Government has invested a lot of human, material and financial resources into the programme in order to ensure its success. Also, some aspects of the school curriculum and co-curricular activities have undergone modification while others have changed completely in order to ensure their relevance to national and individual needs. Execution of Government policies on education occurs mainly in educational institutions such as primary and secondary schools. Therefore, teachers in these schools are charged with the responsibility of utilization of available resources and ensuring the achievement of national objectives. Specifically, the educators are to ensure that relevant knowledge and skills are acquired by learners who would subsequently utilize their expertise in various sectors of the nation. This aspiration can easily be achieved when learners attend school regularly. Although, several CCA educators have been using different motivational strategies like a free textbooks, free feeding, free tuition etc to pupils in public schools to ensure regular school attendance in schools. The fact that Cultural

and Creative Arts serve as an attraction to people cannot be denied, in view of the love both children and adults have for it, either as performers or as or as spectators. Children, in particular, are attracted to places where they can sing and watch plays. Cultural and Creative Arts are capable of attracting children as an organized subject in schools. Moreover, it could influence the realization of the Government's intention to achieve 100% of admission, retention and graduation rates of children in UBE schools (UBE Act, 2004). It is, therefore, necessary that the prospects and challenges of Cultural and Creative Arts and consequently the roles of educators towards ensuring a positive influence on the achievement of UBE objectives should be examined.

2. Cultural and Creative Arts in Education

The four different areas of study are merged to form a subject called Cultural and Creative Arts: music, fine arts, drama and craft. These areas are collated into a single subject, expected to be taught as one subject unlike what it used to be when teachers handled them as two or three separate subjects (Owolabi, 2013).

2.1 Music Education in Cultural and Creative Arts

Music education is a well-established academic discipline and a serious field of study. It is not mere singing, dancing, or entertainment but an important intellectual subject which contributes to the general growth and development of the child. Music education curriculum involves the cognitive, affective, psychomotor and aesthetic domains. It focuses on the learners' needs and interests. Music education is concerned with music learning, understanding, literacy, perception, performance activities, skills, appreciation, aesthetics and values about music to young learners (Ajewole, 2001).

2.2 Theatre Education in Cultural and Creative Arts

The word 'theatre' has a plethora of definitions. Two of these definitions are germane to our discussion. According to the BBC dictionary (1992), a theatre is a building with a stage in which plays and other entertainments are performed. It is also a process of acting or writing plays. In agreement with the second definition, Barranger, in the Encarta Dictionary (2009) refers to theatre as a dramatic performance; while the Encyclopedia Britannica (2009) defines it as an art concerned almost exclusively with live performances, in which the action is precisely planned to create a coherent and significant sense of drama. Drawing an inference from these definitions, a theatre could mean a place for staging a drama. It could also mean the art of staging a drama. In this paper, Cultural and Creative Arts as a subject will be used as a creative art, which is organized in a school, a radio, television and in public places.

Olapade (2013), noted that Cultural and Creative Arts has existed since ancient time even before the introduction of writing. This implies that Cultural and Creative Arts have been a part of societal activities from the early period of human history. It constitutes one of the means of educating, entertaining and informing people. At the primary and secondary levels of the Nigerian education system, it features both as a co-curricular activity and a method of teaching. As a co-curricular activity, many schools have dramatic societies and music clubs which produce plays within and outside their schools. The plays \music focus either on school subjects or on socio-economic and political activities in their community. Also, professionals in creative works do visit schools in order to entertain and educate members of the school organization. Media organizations such as radio and television also present music and theatre on different aspects of the academic

and social lives of the students in particular and the larger community in general.

School drama \music is performed by students. These are taken mainly from literature books which the students read as part of their learning process. Through drama and music, students' knowledge in music, fine Arts, languages, literature and life experiences become wide, permanent and easily applicable. Thus, the objectives of education could be achieved through creative work. Another aspect of Cultural and Creative Arts in education is its use as a method of teaching and learning, especially in primary and junior secondary schools. This method popularly referred to as the 'play-way method', involves acting a play and playing music. Students are engaged in activities that bring them pleasure or enjoyment (Salman, 2001). Teachers and learners are involved in different classroom activities using their sense organs of seeing, touching and hearing. This method could make class lessons practical, more permanent and easily applicable. It can be used to teach any subject in the school curriculum. This assertion is in agreement with Bello (1981), who noted that occasional use of the play-way method in the classroom will help to enliven lesson, create interest and sustain attention. Topics in the English language, mathematics, music, literature in English, health education and other subjects on the school curriculum could be easily sung or dramatized, he stated further. In the same vein, David and Nurse (1999) opined that the act of singing or play was an important vehicle for learning for young children. They stated further that play could assist educators in avoiding an over-formalized early childhood education, and that through play, children would be able to exercise the body and the mind, socialize and develop intrinsic motivation, curiosity and creativity.

3. History of the Universal Basic Education Scheme

Education as an instrument for conserving, transmitting and renewing culture, makes it obvious that the school system occupies a very important position in achieving the objectives mapped out for learners/students at any level. In light of this was the Universal and Basic Education Scheme launched in 1999 in Sokoto by former President Olusegun Obasanjo. It was a laudable and desirable project that has been embarked upon by Federal Government to replace Universal Primary Education (UPE). Universal Basic Education (UBE) was introduced by the Federal Government as a reform programme aimed at providing greater access and ensuring the quality of basic education throughout Nigeria (Fasasi 2011).

3.1 The objective of Universal Basic Education

1. Ensuring uninterrupted access to a year of formal education by providing free and compulsory basic education for every child of school-going age under:
 - a. Six years of primary education
 - b. Three years of junior secondary education providing Early Childhood Care Development and Education (ECCDE)
2. Reducing school dropouts and improving relevance quality and efficiency
3. Acquisition of literacy, numeracy life skills and values for lifelong education and useful living.

Concisely, the Universal Basic

Education (UBE) scheme is primarily to inculcate in children knowledge in literacy, numeracy and the ability to communicate, lay a sound foundation for scientific and reflective thinking, build character and moral training, develop a sound attitude and above all, develop the ability to adapt to the changing environment. The summation is just to ensure children are taught the culture of the society and the reconstruction is important which invariably indicates that there are desirable virtues the scheme expected Nigerians to achieve. According to the approved curriculum, the 2007 review was necessary for the following reasons:

- i. The need to achieve universal basic education in the training of future generations of Nigerians.
- ii. The need to properly equip young Nigerian with manipulative skills will make them job creators and self-reliant entrepreneurs.
- iii. The need to encourage partnership among Nigerians in promoting our rich cultural heritage and creativity.
- iv. The need to infuse certain emergent issues such as gender sensitivity, world globalization, health issues etc into the curriculum.
- v. The need to re-orientate Nigerian to have positive values for the enhancement and development of Nigerian society (Owolabi, 2013).

4. Basic Education

Basic education is the foundation level of education which consolidates the acquisition of literacy, numeracy and life-long learning. According to Obanya (2007), Universal Basic Education (UBE) was launched in September 1999, as part of 'Education For All' (EFA). (UBE, 2004)

with a view to providing basic education for every Nigerian child of school-going age. It covers Early Childhood Care and Education, which is not compulsory. It also covers the compulsory six-year primary and three-year junior secondary education. There are also some aspects of adult literacy and non-formal education. Universal Basic Education is free, compulsory and universal. There is no payment of tuition and all children must attend school. In fact, parents or guardians who prevent their children or wards from school would face a stiff penalty. These are parts of the Government's effort to ensure that all Nigerian citizens acquire appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, communication and life skills, as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning (Universal Basic Education Commission, 2004, pp 16-17).

Moreover, UBE is very important to the Government and citizens of Nigeria. This is due to the fact that it is pivotal to the attainment of and is interlinked with programmes such as the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), State Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (SEEDS), Education For All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) (Universal Basic Education Commission, 2006).

The curricula and co-curricular activities for primary and junior secondary schools, as stated in the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004) are meant to actualize the objectives of UBE. Some of the subjects for primary education include cultural and creative Arts, English, French, Nigerian and sign languages. Junior secondary education has, among others, English language, French language, Languages of the Environment, Music and one major Nigerian language other than that of the environment. There are other core and elective subjects at primary and secondary

levels but the ones highlighted are of direct relevance to our discussion.

In view of the subjects to be offered at primary and junior secondary levels, basic education will assist children to communicate effectively in their mother tongue, one other Nigerian language, English language and French language, both orally and in writing. Also, knowledge would be acquired on cultural practices in these languages. Thus, basic education would provide the foundation knowledge and skills for effective involvement in the Cultural and Creative Arts as an artist, spectator and playwright. Other professionals in Cultural and Creative Arts include producers, directors, casting directors, musicians, designers, production staff, stage managers, stage technicians, house managers, box officers and press officers (Richardson, 1998). Their foundation knowledge and skills can be enhanced through the UBE programme.

Relevance of Cultural and Creative Arts to Basic Education

Music and theatre are kinds of entertainment and recreational activities. Therefore, they are capable of attracting a large number of people. In particular, schoolchildren are always happy when they watch and participate in music and plays. This is due to the fact that it relieves them of boredom, monotony and strict control of the classroom environment. In this situation, schooling is likely to be more appealing to them; and this may lead to an improvement in attendance and retention of pupils in basic schools.

Moreover, the use of music and drama as a teaching methods provides a venue for teachers and pupils to be actively involved in teaching and learning. It also increases their level of interaction thereby providing them with psychological satisfaction. The teaching-learning atmosphere thus created could enhance school attendance and understanding of

lessons. Also, music and theatre serve as exercises because of the movement of the body in different directions. It is always accompanied by music and dance, which could contribute positively to the physical and mental alertness of the pupils and provide them with another opportunity for attendance, retention and improved academic performance in their schools. Cultural and Creative Arts also promote the culture of the society from generation to generation. For instance, politics and other aspects of societal culture are expressed in drama and music as pupils participate in music and drama, they get familiar with the culture of the environment. This can assist in their acquisition of knowledge in schools. In addition, school children who have talents in Creative work as actors, composers, stage directors and playwrights would be able to exhibit their talents. They would also gain additional knowledge and skills and become experts in their talented areas. As a co-curricular activity, many schools have music clubs and dramatic societies which stage plays for people within schools, especially during important events such as end-of-the-year programs, the school's founders' day and inter-house sports. They also perform drama and music to entertain members of their communities on different occasions. Besides live plays, they also produce radio and television dramas for educational and recreational purposes.

5. Challenges of Cultural and Creative Arts to Basic Education

In theatre and music, there are free interactions of male and female performers. Spectators also mix freely with one another. This could lead to promiscuity among the learners with result that some of them would suspend or even terminate their studies. This is inimical to the achievement of UBE objectives. The use of profane language could also constitute a problem. Some

actors engage in the use of words and foul language which are disrespectful in order to create fun, amuse or entertain spectators. Children could easily pick these words and use them in conversation. Theatre and music time consuming to organize and use as a teaching methods. It takes time to learn the act of drawing, learn a new song, prepare a play, stage a play and discuss the lessons derived from it. Using it as a teaching method may extend a lesson period and affect other subjects on the timetable. As entertainment, pupils could develop the habit of watching music and playing for a long period at the expense of their studies. They could watch plays on television or video till the late hours of the night. This may make them feel sleepy or tired when they get to school. Moreover, the drama and music watched may become an issue for discussion among their mates.

6. The Roles of a Teacher

The role of a teacher in the successful implementation of basic education programmes cannot be overemphasized. As a class or subject teacher, he is responsible for the execution of government policies. He should play his roles as a facilitator of learning, a counsellor, a supervisor and a stakeholder in education. As a facilitator of learning, he should teach what is factual and morally acceptable in society so that learners will be able to distinguish between right and wrong, especially when drama and beautiful musical performances are been watched. Nwankwo (1982) suggested that teachers should be able to design strategies for identifying and selecting the positive influence, and also offsetting the negative ones in society. Also, the teacher should ensure that the use of music and drama as a teaching method does not hinder any other school programme.

The teacher as a counsellor should advise parents, pupils and the government

on the extent to which children can be allowed to watch both musics and plays on television, video and film. Parents should have control over what their children do, especially in theatre. Parents-Teachers Association meetings could provide a good avenue for educating parents on what could be of benefit to children. The teacher as a supervisor should oversee what the pupils do, not only at work but also at play. Hence, he should ensure that time, financial and material resources available to theatre as a co-curricular activity, a teaching method or entertainment, are judiciously utilized.

As a stakeholder, the teacher has the responsibility of ensuring that educational objectives are achieved. He should relate well with other stakeholders (parents, music and theatre practitioners, community leaders and governments) in making use of the performance positively, to encourage and sustain school attendance. He should discourage any incidence of misuse of music and theatre so that its negative consequences would be avoided.

7. Conclusion

The discussion so far shows that music and theatre could influence the achievement of UBE objectives either positively or negatively. It can also be concluded that a teacher is responsible for the identification of strategies which can make learners derive benefits from the performance either inside or outside the school.

8. Recommendations

Since it has been unequivocally relayed time without number that no education is capable of rising above its teacher, the onus, therefore, lies in updating and equipping teachers with best practices capable of generating productive output that will pay back to the nation's developmental efforts and sustain the such tempo. As noted in this study, the art of teaching music and

drama and the position of teachers in Nigeria today call for evaluation and immediate review to engender development. Therefore, drama should be included along with music and dance in the teacher education curriculum. Prospective teachers should learn it for effective use as a teaching method, a co-curricular activity and a source of entertainment. Performances on radio, television, and video in public places should be of high moral standard and well census. In this regard, the government should monitor and control drama, and their organizers should be counselled.

Consequently, the methods of teaching must be given wide publicity and usage at all levels of education to benefit from its prowess in promoting effective teaching and learning delivery, especially in Cultural and Creative Arts to make for the promotion of sustainable development. As such, both teachers and students of CCA are to give all it takes to make the methods work as against seeing it as a jamboree. In light of this, necessary supports are therefore expected from all relevant stakeholders on the issue to ensure sustainable development in Nigeria

References

- Ajewole, J. O. (2013). Music education: Its implications, for the Universal Basic Education. *Journal of Nigerian Music Education*.pp.87.
- B.B.C English Dictionary (1992). Onitsha Africana FEP Publishers Ltd.
- Barranger, M. S. (2009). Theatre. Microsoft Encarta.
- Bello, J. Y. (1981). Basic principles of teaching. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.

- David, T. & Nurse, A. (1999). Inspections of under fives' education and constructions of early childhood. In T. David (ed) Teaching young children (pp 165-184). London: Paul Chapman Publishers Ltd.
- Encyclopedia Britannica. (2009). Ultimate reference it. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britanica.
- Fafunwa, B. (1991). History of Nigerian Education. Ibadan: NPS Educational Publisher.
- Fasasi, A. (2011). Theatre and Basic Education in Nigeria. West African Theatre and Performing Arts Journal. pp. 84.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). National Policy on Education. 4th edition. Lagos NERDC.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2006). 40 frequently asked questions on Universal Basic Education Programe. Abuja: Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC).
- Lawton, D. & Gordon, P.(1993). Dictionary of Education. London: Holder and Stoughton.
- Nwankwo, J.I. (1982). Educational administration: Theory and practice. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House P.V.T Limited.
- Obanya, P. (2007). Thinking and talking education. Ibadan: Evans Brothers (Nigeria Publishers) Limited.
- Olapade, A. (2013). An Assessment of Implementation of practical aspects of music in some selected secondary schools in Oyo. Journal of Nigeria Music Education Pp 121.
- Owolabi, I. (2013) Cultural and Creative Arts under universal Basic Education (UBE): Its Appraisal in Junior Secondary School Curriculum. Journal of Nigeria Music Education, Pp 79-81.
- Richardson, J. (1998). Careers in the theatre. Six edition London: Kogan Page Limited.
- Salman, M. F. (2001). Play-way role playing and storytelling methods of instruction. In I.O. Abimbola (Ed.). Fundamental Principles and Practice of Instruction. Ilorin: Department of Curriculum Studies and Educational Technology, University of Ilorin. Chapter 15, 165-175.
- Uduanya, M.O. (1986). Curriculum Studies. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Ukeje, J. (1992). Educational Administration. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Company.
- Universal Basic Education Commission (2004). The compulsory, free Universal Basic Education Act and other related matters. Abuja: UBEC.