

USING ADULT EDUCATION TO REVITALIZE MATERIAL CULTURE FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *In recessionary economies like Nigeria the populace are in constant state of agony and anguish. The challenging situation manifests in less trade and industrial activities, high rate of unemployment, and experience of inflationary trends by economic analysts. In this era of knowledge economy, the high cultures of Nigeria has remained untapped especially the art of making sculptures and other relevant crafts. This study therefore explores the potency of high culture (sculptures) in economic recovery. Acquisition of skills to make sculptures and other relevant crafts/decorations is an essential antidote to societal ills such as unemployment, social vices, inflation and the nation's economic recession at large. For the purpose of continuity, the adults should teach these skills to the younger generation through Adult Education which is both non-formal and informal. It is therefore recommended inter alia that the National Council for Arts and Culture should encourage the acquisition of those skills regarded as high culture.*

KEYWORDS: Adult Education, Material Culture, Economic Recovery.

INTRODUCTION

The Concept of Culture

The term culture can be said to mean whatever the people of any given society do that has value and satisfies their religious, economic, political, social and technological needs. This definition stems from the fact that whatever a given people do to survive and continually engage in or indulge in has become their culture. In line with the above, Kroeber (cited in Ekwealor 2003:7) defined culture as “all the beliefs, knowledge, customs, arrangements and skills that are available to the members of a society.” Also Sunderson (1988:36) defined culture as “the total life ways characteristic of the members of a society, including tools, knowledge and patterned ways of thinking and acting, that are learned and shared and are not the direct product of biological inheritance” Furthermore, Taylor (cited in Okoh 2004:) defined culture as “that complex whole which include knowledge, belief, art, moral, law, custom and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society’. It is important to note that this definition is universally acceptable and is regarded as classical irrespective of its briefness. Furthermore, Andah cited in Ifeanchio (2012) opines that

Culture embraces all of the material and non-material expressions of people as well as the processes with which these expressions are communicated. It has to do with all the social ethnical, intellectual, scientific, artistic and technological expressions and processes of a

people, usually ethnically and/or nationally living in a geographical contiguous area; what they pass on to

their successors and how they are expressed. pp112

In line with the above excerpt, Macionis (1994) defined culture as “the beliefs, values, behaviour and material objects shared by a particular people”. Moreso, and Oghiator (2007) posited that

culture includes such human behaviours as mode of dress, speech, greetings, occupation respect for elders, maternal and paternal relationship, kingship coronation, engagement in marriage, naming ceremonies, initiation, divorce, death, festivals, worship, ritual observance, music making, dance patterns, and the colour and use of costumes pp

Culture is all-embracing and heterogeneous concept that encompasses every aspect of a man's life and experiences. It is viewed as a way of life or the totality of human efforts and achievements in the struggle for survival in the midst of unfriendly and militant forces of nature. It is a collective and integrated whole, comprising everything relating to his needs as a social being. Culture is expressed in man's religion, language, philosophy, music, dance, drama, political organization, architecture, technology and so on (Ajayi 2003).

From the foregoing, culture is therefore an embodiment of man's perceptions, reactions, activities, products and behaviours that enhance man's survival and continued existence as a social being. To this end, it becomes imperative to discuss the components and types of culture.

Components of Culture:

The components of culture are mainly tangible and non-tangible. The above is supported by Nwanna-Nzenwunwa, Girigiri and Okoli (2007:55) as they posit that “culture has two basic components or aspects – the material and non-material culture”. Material culture consists of all the artifacts (material products) of a society. Such as tools fashioned by man, the products made with these tools for the comfort of man which include shelter, clothing and weapon as well as material inventions of man

Conversely, non-material culture consists of the ideas behind the making or transformation of material objects for man's use. It also includes the norms, values, the belief system, knowledge, ideologies etc. of a society (Akubukwe 1997).

Having gone this far, it is also important to consider the types of culture in this discourse.

Types of Culture:

The existence of many types of culture is not disputable. Haralambos, Holborn, Chapman and Moore (2013:727-728) outlined some types of culture thus

- i. **High culture:** It refers to cultural creations that have a particularly high status. The products of long-established art forms are usually seen as examples of high culture. They include opera, the work of highly regarded classical composers such as Beethoven and Mozart, the paintings of artist such as Leonardo da Vinci and critically acclaimed literature such as the work of Shakespeare and Milton.

- ii. **Folk Culture:** This refers to the culture of ordinary people, particularly those living in pre-industrial societies. Strinati (1995) says Folk culture is often taken to arise from the grassroots, is self-created and autonomous and directly reflects the lives and experiences of the people. Examples of folk culture include traditional folk songs and traditional stories that have been handed down from generation to generation.
- iii. **Mass culture:** Mass culture is a product of industrial societies. It is essentially product of the mass media and examples include popular feature films, television soap operas and recorded pop music.
- iv. **Popular culture:** This refers to any cultural products appreciated by large numbers of ordinary people with no great pretensions to cultural expertise for example television programmes, pop music, mass market film, and popular fictions such as detective stories. Popular culture is used in a way similar to mass culture. While some people see popular culture as shallow or even harmful, others including post modern theorists argue that it is just as valid and just as worthwhile as high culture.
- v. **Subculture:** This refers to groups of people that have something in common with each other (i.e they share a problem, an interest, a practice) which distinguishes them from other social groups.
- vi. **Global Culture:** This implies that we are all becoming part of one embracing culture that affects all parts of the world. While some sociologists argue that there is no existence of global culture, they rather preferred the term globalization of culture which is a process in which some aspects of culture cross state boundaries and become widely dispersed across most areas of the world. This of course would lead to hybridity of culture.

Obviously, the above types of culture are indispensable in this discourse, however, for the purpose of this topic, more attention would be focused on material aesthetic aspect especially the high culture. While these cultures are the products of high level of human intellectualism, it is equally essential that the younger generation learn it. For this reason we shall consider the concept of education or acquisition of cultural skills.

Some of the Material Cultures Associated with Ikwerre Ethnic nationality Especially in Rundeled Clan

It is factual that every given society or clan is known for their cultural heritage. For instance, the NOK culture located in Jos Plateau, Nigeria is known for their terracotta human foot, human head, monkey's body and other figurines. The Igbo Ukwu in the South-east of Onitsha, Nigeria is associated with bronze culture producing objects like beautifully decorated water pot of leaded tin bronze, bronze bowls of different sizes, open work altar stand, pendant ornaments, bells, chain, anklets and wrestlers, jingle ornaments etc. The Ife culture of metal works; and the Benin brass art works are all known (Okafor 1989). Just like the Nok, Ife, Benin, and the Igbo Ukwu cultures, the Rundeled People of Rivers State Nigeria also has their own culture of sculptures and culture of beautifications. Sculptural works are divided into terracotta and wood works and that of human and house beautifications (designs or decorations). Explicitly, the Rundeled culture is divided into

1. **Material Culture of clay (terracotta):** It include such products as Ngbeja (bed), Ngbudu, Ite, and Ududu (pots of different sizes and for various purposes), as well as other figurines.
2. **Material culture made of wood:** It include such products asekwe (chair), adavere (relaxation chair), devele (table), Oknuknu (box), ekpo (masks), nkpara (working stick), okwuda (small mortar), ngbuknewiri (pestle), nvorisi (comb), okwo (drum), ngerenge (xylophone) opio (flute).
3. **Material culture of beautifying human beings or houses:** This includes Ogbarisi ojongo, ode uri, ode ede-ali, oha risi, ote uhie, ote ovo-ovo etc

Material Culture and Economic Recovery

Since the beginning of 2016, Nigerian economy has been in recession. But proper strategy has not been made as to how the economy would be revamped. Considering the culture in economic recovery, Ogbuagu (cited in Anokwuru 2017) has described “Nigeria’s culture and art works as untapped treasure, which when fully exploited would boost the nation’s international trade and investment and invariably impact on the overall well-being of the masses”. For instance, if more investment is made on terracotta industry, it would boost the economy. The production of pots (ududu, ite, ngbudu) for various uses is an economic venture which ultimately has positive impact on the economy. Other figurines made of terracotta would equally improve the economy.

The sculptures made of wood are all economic commodities. This is because each has value hence it can be bought. The ekpo (mask) can be used for masquerade and can be used in some ceremonies for entertainment. The okwo which is a musical drum is bought by several organizations such as churches, women social clubs, etc. It is used for both music and signal such as is used by towncriers.

Also the Ogbarisi Ojongo is very characteristic. It has both social and economic implications. On the social aspect, it is a mark of initiation into woman-hood. As soon as the risi ojongo is made, the girl youth becomes graduated from youth and transited to adulthood. On the economic perspective, the ojongo is so technical that the clay is woven with the hair and it is sometimes as high as one foot from the head. It surprises everyone that this heavy sculpture does not fall even when the carrier lies down to sleep. For this singular reason, the designer is paid high and the materials used for the building or erection of the ojongo are bought. Furthermore, the female youth in Ojongo fashion is always admired and appreciated in the form of gifts and she responds by serving food and souvenir.

Transfer/Acquisition of Cultural Skills:

Culture is seen as the collective body of arts and intellectual work within anyone society hence in this sense, culture is to be found in theatres, concert halls, art galleries, rather than in all aspects of human social life. Also to the general public, culture is often viewed as the aesthetic aspect of society, such as art, music, drama and literature. All these could be regarded as high culture (Haralambos et al 2013; Atemie and Girigiri 2006).

It is said that culture is not biologically inherited but learned. Most of these high cultures must be learnt in either formal education, informal setting or non-formal education. Onyekan (2000) defined formal education as the process of imparting some knowledge, skills and attitudes to

the learners which could take place in varying schools with the purpose of ensuring total development of the children". This definition implies that such material culture are taught at schools in such Departments as Theatre Arts; Fine Arts and Design etc. Formal education is a systematic and organized programme of teaching and learning in a school setting.

The learning of material cultural skills is not limited to formal education alone but also taught in Adult education (informal and non-formal education). UNESCO cited in Adekola, Oyebamiji and Ugwu (2009) defined adult education as

The entire body of organized educational process whether the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges or universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in new direction and bring about changes in attitude or behavior in the two fold perspectives of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social economic and cultural development pp 23-24.

From the definition above, it is understandable that cultural transmission can be done through adult education. This in other words constitute socialization of younger generation in any particular skill. It is based on this premise that Wokocha (2012:6) stated that "the process of socializing the members of each new generation is the role of education. And this is an imperative of the nation-state surrounded by borders wherein the pedagogical process is governed". Stressing further on the importance of adult and non-formal education, Ifeyinwa cited in Adekola et al (2009) noted that "while formal school system is established to take care of children and youth, adult and non—formal education is designed for matured individuals who may have had insufficient education and who never participated in any formal education".

The role of education in this context therefore is the essential need to transfer these cultural skills to younger generation for continuity. This role can be played by Adult Education because most of this high cultures are known more by adult members of the society.

CONCLUSION

Material culture especially the sculptural designs has the potency to turn around the economic woes of Nigeria if properly harnessed. Acquisition of skills in artwork or sculpture has the ability of not only enhancing self reliance but also job creation to accommodate the teeming unemployed youths. Export of the products can enhance favourable balance of trade and payment. It is equally important these skills be incorporated into the Adult Education curriculum to guarantee continuity else some of the high cultures may be threatened with extinction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The national council for Art and Culture (NCAC) should promote or encourage the acquisition of these skills that are regarded as high culture.

2. The NCAC should organize events to exhibit artworks of excellence.
3. Several other creative endeavours should be encouraged such as leather work, tie and dye etc.
4. Museums should be built in each Local Government Area to preserve the cultural heritage of the people of the locality.
5. Adult Education centers should be located in all Local Government Areas to teach these skills for continuity.
6. The products of the high culture should be properly advertized beyond the shores of Nigeria as its export culminate in favourable balance of trade and balance of payment.

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