Vocational Education - Trends and Issues (Case Study of Pine and Applied Arts Discipline)

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Abstract: Vocational education could be regarded as that aspect of education, which provides the recipients with the basic knowledge and practical skills needed for entry into the world of work as employees or as self-employed. In effect, vocational education is the education that is focused on building a self-reliant society. Technology has grown beyond mere study of skills (practical arts). It now includes the study of knowledge, practical materials and skills. Technology is the acquisition and application of scientific, technical knowledge, materials and skills. Meaningful development is a relative term based on how an individual or society nation improves its living conditions in whatever form. Pine and Applied Arts encompasses all facets of drawing and painting, sculpture, textile design, graphic design, ceramic design, technology and development, art education, art history and art appreciation each of these in turn constitutes only aspects of Pine and Applied Arts. Art schools are not manufacturing industries to be expected to flood Nigeria markets with goods. Rather, they are institutions for acquisition, development and application of knowledge, scientific and technological skills without which there can be no technology development.

Keywords: Vocational education, basic knowledge, practical skills, practical materials, scientific, Technical knowledge, Pine And Applied Arts, drawing, painting, sculpture, Textile design, Graphic design, Ceramic design, Art education, Art History and Art Appreciation.

1. Introduction

The word vocation as a noun connotes career/profession but as an adjective, it qualifies education, hence vocational education according to Olaitan Tn Ghiametaler and Ogunsaaju (2005) is expressed as education designed to develop skills, education for training people for work, education for people who have chosen their occupation and require further development. It then means that vocational education curriculum implies that construction of knowledge and work experience systematically developed under the auspices of school to enable the learner increase his or her control of knowledge and experience. This leads one to minimizing hardships, stress and strain and making man desirous of a prosperous future.

Vocational education has been an important component of international assistance to education (Middleton, Zidennan 2993). However, project support has often been preferred to a more integrated sectoral approach. Recent shifts in international assistance seem to seek sustainability through a long-term strategic approach.

Current directions include institutional capacity-building, strengthening private training and training by the employer, improving the management and efficiency of public institutions as well as their capacity to raise funds. At the same, support for general secondary education seems to be considered as a priority for the fostering of flexibility, the increasing of trainability and the achievement of equity (Hallak, 2990).

Vocational education refers to initial or further vocational education leading to upper secondary level vocational qualifications. It can be curriculum based education or preparatory education for a skills examination. Education leading to further or specialist vocational qualifications are further - vocational education and the qualification are based on skills examinations. Vocational education is organized both as education provided by educational-institutions and as apprenticeship-training. Apprenticeship training is a work dominated form of studying in which the majority of vocational skills are learned at a work place and then supplemented with theoretic knowledge studies, usually at an educational institution. Major occupational areas which constitute vocational education areas fine and applied Arts, Agriculture education, Technical Education, Business Education, Trade and Industrial Education, Home Economics. Emphasis will be place on Pine and Applied Arts which is only one area of vocational education.

2. Concept of Vocational Education

Vocational education is regarded as education which provides the recipient with the basic knowledge and practical skills needed for entry into the workforce. Vocational education nurtures skills that are necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial, and economic development. In effect, vocational education is focused on building a self-reliant society/ as well as a self-reliant nation.

In the United States, the Smith-Hughes Oct in 2Q^ established vocational education as an integral part of the individual’s⁹ total education. The act created education programs in agriculture, home economics, Pine and Applied Arts, trade, and industrial occupation (Uazerson 2Q9Q).

Vocational education, as part of a general education program, essentially/ constitutes any/ form of education with the primary/ purpose of preparing people for useful employment in a recognized occupation (Okoro 2Q3Q, Oranu, 2QQQ). Olaitan (2QQQ) describes vocational
education as that type of education which is concerned with
the development of skills, knowledge, and attitudes
necessary for success in any occupation. Vocational
education includes technical education that provides both
practical and theoretical instruction (Oni, 3000). Such
instruction is usually given to those who need employment
in commerce and industry or in any type of enterprise which
involves the use of tools and other machinery.

Aderemi (2000) explains vocational education as that
aspect of the total education process that focuses on
individual occupation.

Pudding (299Q) defined vocational-technical education as
that type of education which fits the individual for gainful
employment in recognized occupation as semi-skilled
workers or technicians or sub-professionals.

Today, most of the vocational-technical education programs
in Nigeria are computer oriented.

It is therefore, important that computer education
components be introduced into vocational subjects in
junior secondary schools. The Universal Dasic Education (UDE)
recently made a juror secondary schools certificate
compulsory for the entire growing citizenry.

Incorporating computer education into the required
curriculum at this level can provide a unique opportunity to
ensure that individuals are prepared for advancement.

It will be wrong in discussing vocational education without
mentioning technology. Dateman and Hewitt (2989) stated
that the word technology as a term originated from the
Greek word tekne meaning art. A similar word to it is tekton
which stands for a builder or carpenter in Greek. Techno,
therefore implies practical arts or skills - logy - (ogia) means
to "speak of". In which case logy has come to imply the
study of skills. Technology has grown beyond mere study of
skills (practical arts) it now includes the study of knowledge,
practical materials and skills. The study materializes in its
practical application of knowledge and skills. As a result, the
term technical is defined as the acquisition and application
of scientific technical knowledge, materials and skills.

Pine and Applied Arts

The term Pine and Applied Arts is misleading as it bound to
create a wrong impression that arts has two categories, the
Pine (Beautiful), and the applied (industrial/utility). Beautiful (Pine) and utility (Applied) are naturally like
cubes. Dorks of Art have both an aesthetic and utilitarian
dimension. Therefore, any attempt to separate them will lead
to utter confusion.

Pine and Applied Arts in just one of the many areas of
human activities used to sustain life. Agriculture, Medical
Science., Religion., Drama, Music and Dance, politics etc.
Each of these areas constitutes a fibre knot together under
the canopy of knowledge. This knowledge is acquired,
developed and applied through a process known as
education. The vast nature of knowledge itself coupled with
many factors including that of derivative, benefits from
division of labour, have encouraged specialization in human
activities, fine and Applied Arts being one of such
specializations.

The curriculum of Pine and Applied Arts can be classified in
two major sections? Theory and Practical. The later heights
more that former. For instance, out of nine major courses
offered by Pine and Applied Arts in Colleges of Education
and Universities in Nigeria, only two Art education and Art
history are theory courses, (n essence workshop/studio
practice takes precedence over theory.

This is not a strange phenomenon for the fact that painting
and sculpture which are essentially activities of the
psychomotor are regarded as "parent" of Pine and Applied
Arts. Though it can be argued that Art education and art
appreciation are pursued as separate disciplines in the
universities, one can point out that the psychomotor
activities in Pine and applied Arts form the basis for Art
education and art appreciation.

Art in Human Activities

Man is able to survive due to the activities he engages
himself in. his basic needs include food, shelter, health and
knowledge of how to survive. To meet these basic needs,
man initially employed the services of his hands as basic set
of tools operated by muscular energy. Gradually, stone and
wooden implements supplements the hands in psychomotor
operations. With increased knowledge which led to the
discovery of fire and minerals, their uses were explored.

Arts and crafts are the parents of all forms of technology, be
it electronic technology, space technology, medical science
technology, etc. This opinion is attested to the fact that
without relevant working tools, man cannot compete with
the weaver bird in weaving or with the ants in construction.

A machine no matter how complex cannot come into being
without first fashioning relevant tools to work on the
production of its parts. The accounting profession has a
dictum that money feeds on itself to grow. In technology the
statement many imply that machines uses self to produce
machines. Graphically the picture is this, the hand first uses
muscular energy to produce a tool or an implement, the tools
or implements once produced become self sustaining.
In technology the
weaver bird in weaving or with the ants in construction.

In educational experience where learning takes place there is
an observable change in behavioral pattern of the learner.
The change is either ephemeral or lasting. The permanence
establishes a learning tradition which becomes a culture to
be passed on from generation to generation. Knowledge not
use tends to atrophy, but its transmission improves the living
conditions of individuals as well as that of the society in
general.

Before the invention of mechanical and electronic methods
of production, the hands were the main tools used in production. Though the mechanical means of production seemingly makes less demand on the use or hands, the hands have remained indispensable tools for manipulative activities.

**Pine and Applied Arts for Self-reliance**

The history of production industries as stated by Pursell and Carroll (1980) reveals that the origin of production is art and crafts and not science. Art and Crafts penetrates man’s major needs and activities such as, tools in all facets, household furniture, clothes and costume recreation, arts technology and science. Artists rather scientists. Were the first people to provide man with basic needs through the application of skills in production. It was craftsmen who worked on wood and iron to produce tools, weapons, furniture etc.

Wood technology at one time or the other had been a vogue in technological development of many nations. Even with the developed nations the wooden age witnessed the role of craftsmen (artisans) in many forms of wood constructions to include machines, vessels and house. All early machines wind-mills, water wheels crane, wagons, spinning wheels, etc. were built in wood by artisans (craftsmen) as observed by Hlungende (2QQ5).

The level of technology in the twentieth century man has arrived at is due to the foundation laid by artists (craftsmen) in the production of tools.

Every knowledge and skill acquired develops through practices, (n real life situations, people are taught almost everything with the exception of reflex actions. Work ethics, work culture, work benefits, and any other thing derived from work has to be conscientiously cultivated through vocational education in general and Pine and Applied Arts in particular.

Pine and Applied Arts is not the only discipline endowed with acquisition and development of cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills, but it possesses more ingredients to develop them faster than other disciplines. Creative thinking is conceptual and perceptual dimensions are promoted by Pine and Applied Arts. Many areas of science and technology use tools or machines with require highly developed psychomotor skills. This also is an area where Pine and Applied Arts claim superiority.

Okorie (2999) expressed that design is art and any technological product so far as it is originally designed and functionally utilitarian is a product of art. For a nation to attain a state of self-reliance, it must build, as Eguelu (2995) pointed out, a solid technological base for the product of food, raw materials, goods and services. All these cannot be achieved without vocational education.

Vakubu, Iloh (2999), Ehiametalor, Egbe, Ogunsaju (2985) and many others echoed the role of vocational education in human development without which self-reliance can be everything but a mirage.

Emphasis on self-reliance does not mean hundred percent dependence on self for technological development. Rather it is used in the context of Sambo (2999) and others to conceive a situation where the individual or a nation does not depend wholly on external sources for development. Cooking inward creatively to solving pressing socio-politico-economic problems is what self-reliance is all about.

The most important aspect of self-reliance is in creative and inward looking aspect of as cultural trait. In a culture like Japan, United States of America and others where the use of hands and ability to create are rewarded, each person works hard to excel in his/her own form of activity.

The making and production of tools leading to assembly of complex machines begins with arts and crafts skills. Since no nation can be *developed* technologically without the knowledge of producing and using tools and machines., it becomes pertinent to first of all acquire the relevant knowledge and skills which is the preserve of Pine and applied Arts.

3. **Conclusion**

De must member that any form of technology began as an art or craft at the time first tools was fashioned out by an artist or a craftsman.

Knowledge and skills developed in some aspects of Pine and applied Arts (drawing both technical and free-hand., three dimensional design and constructions, craft) when applied in technology save time, enhances competence and makes the learner more dexterous in the use of skills. Then this takes places., education becomes a thing of delight to be attained within curriculum provision. Therefore, acquisition of some Pine and applied Arts skills that is relevant to other disciplines like engineering, building etc., should be made mandatory in pursuance of such courses, just in the same way as mathematics is to science based courses. It must be noted that crafts, design, and technology are all art expressed in one medium or the other, employing specialized knowledge and skill.

The introduction of computer instruction into various vocational subject in Nigeria junior secondary schools curriculum, vocational institutions must be prepared to train teachers with modern technology computer components so that they can, turn, train their students adequately and effectively with appropriate computer devices. Integrating computer education curriculum into various schools obviously holds enormous financial implications for Nigeria, on the other hand, failing to embrace and integrate computer education may have far greater implications for the youth society and nation of Nigeria.

4. **Recommendations**

Pine and applied arts be made compulsory in both junior and senior secondary school curriculum so that one will be sure of the kind of vocational areas to follow or pursue for greater advancement of knowledge and to be self-reliant after school completion.
Integrated computer aided design and instruction be introduced into various vocational subjects in Nigeria junior and senior secondary school curriculum which in turn will help in providing the recipient with the basic knowledge and practical skills needed for entry into the workforce.

References