

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

Nzoiwu, Azuka Abigail PhD<sup>1</sup>, Asorogheye Daniel<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Pine and Applied Arts, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, NNAMDF of University Awka, Anambra State

Emails: zuklbgglr[at]gmail.com

Phone: 0603U5D21P0

<sup>2</sup>Department of Pine and Applied Arts, University of Denin, Denin City

**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 an 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 Ghiametalor and Ogunsaju (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 2003). 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, 2000).

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 20<sup>th</sup> established vocational education as an integral part of the individual's<sup>9</sup> total education. The act created education programs in agriculture, home economics, Pine and Applied Arts, trade, and industrial occupation (Uzerson 2009).

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 2003, Oranu, 2000). Olaitan (2000) describes vocational

Volume 12 Issue 4, April 2023

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

Padding (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 Basic Education (UBE) recently made a junior 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 cobuebs. 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 knit 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 may 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 because man's artificially extended hands to produce other tools of diverse nature. Simple tools are composed or coupled for more complex ones. Then the complex tools can be driven by a motor or by muscular energy. Machine shops driven by a motor are used in producing machine parts which are put into use for the benefit of man.

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 use in production. Though the mechanical means of production seemingly makes less demand on the use of 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 Caroll (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 Hlingender (2005).

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, (in 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 (1999) 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 (1995) 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 (1999), Ehiamefor, Egbe, Ogunsaju (1985) 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 (1999) 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

One must remember 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 place, 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.

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