

Entrepreneurship: A Panacea for Creating Opportunities through Metal Junk Art.

By

FAGOYINBO OLORUNWA TAIWO

*Department of Arts and Design, Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro
E.mailteefag3@gmail.com*

and

ADELEYE ADEKUNLE JEREMIAH

*Department of Arts and Design, Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro
E.mail: adeleye206@gmail.com*

Abstract

The problems facing Nigeria ranges from poverty, unemployment, over dependence on foreign goods and technology. The Nigerian government introduced entrepreneurship education as a pathway to stimulate self-sufficiency, self-sustainability and self-support skill in students. The aim is to ensure graduates take advantages of personal resourcefulness to be self-employed. This is because entrepreneurship concerns the persistent pursuit of opportunities to create wealth through innovative usage of materials found around them. Therefore, this paper examines the impart of metal junk art as entrepreneurship education on self-reliance with a view to assessing its implication on the universe of opportunities. Entrepreneurship as an instrument of social change and in education is also given attention to in this paper. The secondary method of data collection was employed where conference papers, journals and textbooks were used. This paper argues that metal junk art will equip the students with the required skill necessary for entrepreneurship by converting waste to wealth. It is recommended among others that skill acquisition programme should be encouraged and funded properly in order to overcome poverty and unemployment in Nigeria.

Key words: *Entrepreneurship, skill, metal junk art, self-reliance, unemployment.*

Introduction

The necessity of entrepreneurship for production was first formally recognized by Alfred Marshall in 1890. Marshall suggests that the skills associated with entrepreneurship are rare and limited in supply. He claims that the abilities of the entrepreneur are "so great and so numerous that very few people can exhibit them all in a very high degree" Marshall (1994), however, implies that people can be taught to acquire the abilities that are necessary to be an entrepreneur. Unfortunately, the opportunities for entrepreneurs are often limited by the

economic environment which surrounds them. Since the time of Marshall, the concept of entrepreneurship has continued to undergo theoretical evolution. A modern school of thought claims that the role of the entrepreneur is that of an innovator. Therefore the introduction of skill acquisition as part of programme of study in our tertiary institution marks a watershed in our educational development in Nigeria. It is both vertically and horizontally elastic to allow for the identification and development of every conceivable innovation, skill, talent and knowledge so that the wastage inherent in our previous educational development efforts could be stemmed.

In Nigeria economic front, government policies have always had direct and immediate consequences on the contemporary Nigerian artist. But rather than succumb to economic and social pressures and become marginalized, the visual artist is today very much in the vanguard of proving that a creative mind cannot remain unemployed. Self-employment- a slogan which government has popularized through ENTREPRENEURSHIP is being confirmed by the emergence of young entrepreneurs in Nigeria that easily becomes a yardstick to measure the visual artist's adventurism.

THE RELEVANCE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

A lot of parents choose careers for their children and wards thereby frequently choosing the more supposedly prestigious disciplines such as medicine, law, engineering and the sciences. Rarely do they ever choose art or other supposedly less prestigious disciplines which do not seem so obviously useful as the prestigious ones because at every point in time, everybody can discern or decide whom he needs especially when he is in trouble. With his body he needs a Doctor; he needs a Lawyer when in trouble with the society and when in trouble with his environment he needs an Engineer or Scientist.

Not many see the immediate need for entrepreneurship and art. For the average Nigerian, entrepreneurship seems so far away from his needs. But the truth remains that our needs for entrepreneurship is even more basic than for law, medicine and engineering. For entrepreneurship is the very foundation upon which we perpetrate our existence in which our life in society rests. Directly or indirectly we consume art on daily basis without realizing it. The houses we live in, the clothes we wear, the vases in which we display our flowers, the furniture we use are all products of art and entrepreneurship and in this sense we are all consumers of art products.

The ability to see and appreciate as well as discerning the beautiful and the ugly is a direct result of our experience with art as entrepreneurs or as consumers of art. The entrepreneur helps to identify the skill display and mobilizes the necessary resources to exploit the opportunity. Clearly without art and entrepreneurship, human society as we know it today cannot exist.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS AN INSTRUMENT OF SOCIAL CHANGE

From the above discussion, it is clear that entrepreneurship plays and continues to play a vital role in human endeavors as it encourages social change in several ways. First, entrepreneurship being always concerned with creativity, frequently encourages experimentation which leads to discoveries of how to use old things in new ways. Metal junk art has come to revolutionize clay works and wood carving in sculpture and alter our pattern of consumption of materials and products. As experimentation continues, new designs and products will emerge to transform our tastes, habits and institutions in various ways ranging from slight modification to radical alteration. The economic and social consequences of such experimentation attract much attention. It does not require any stretch of the imagination for anyone to see that entrepreneurship can make valuable contribution towards our economic recovery and social mobilization.

Entrepreneurship in itself is a form of self-employment, so the artist need not seek further employment beyond the limits of his studio. Interestingly, by its nature, entrepreneurship is an infinite creator of employment opportunities, particularly at this time when economic situation has caused lack of materials for artistic production. This is a time for an opportunity and a challenge for all Nigerian artists to improvise and experiment and thereby fashion new tools, discover new materials that are available but hitherto unrecognized and therefore untapped. As we accept the challenges of our economic situation we expect a wide range of art materials and products to take over the market and provide a means of livelihood for thousands of people who would otherwise remain unemployed or are devoid of any means of livelihood.

Another way entrepreneurship functions as an instrument of social change is the exploitation of its ability and readiness to appeal to the spirit of man and society. Cachia, (2010). Entrepreneurship has power to affirm, challenge and or change societal values like a remote tuning device. Entrepreneurship, through its utilization of skill practice of art form and content can stir up and mould the thoughts and feelings of the individual and of society in subtle and potent ways not easily matched by other influences in the society. Agoha, (2011). It will be ideal to bring back to our minds as earlier noted that human society function in a designed environment; that the form and colours we encounter and consume, the spaces in which we live and work and recreate are all designed and built by some Entrepreneurs who through those designs regulate and control what happens in that environment for better or worse. As we become more mature in our understanding of the relationship between entrepreneurship, environment and behavior, it should be possible in the future to deliberately select an activity or behavior that a design should stimulate and with this understanding, it should be possible and practicable to design for relaxation, for productivity and contemplation. Certain factors must be present before these desirable changes can take place. Entrepreneurship must serve as a point of convergence of the cultural policy and the national policy on education leading to the recognition of entrepreneurship at all levels.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN EDUCATION

Apart from providing product for meeting our most basic needs, entrepreneurship is also relevant in education. Entrepreneurship should be given adequate attention in the school curriculum because students develop skills in the use and handling of materials and media through which they express themselves in visual form. Entrepreneurship is probably the only subject that finds practical use in other subject areas. In our sciences and social science an ability to show creativity in entrepreneurship can help the student far more than he may be able to do in words. Students of medicine, engineering, architecture and the biological sciences have found entrepreneurship to be very useful in tackling some of their problems. Entrepreneurship is also a language of communication by which the students can talk about himself, his life and feelings about the people around him. Entrepreneurship will complete the education of the student whose education, if limited to the sciences and humanities only, will be defective because these areas of study will take care of those aspects of the students personality or character that deal with his emotion and the natural urge for creativity with symbols. Kehinde, (2008).

A study of entrepreneurship of the past can reveal the contributions the previous generations have made; the way they expressed their ideas, approach to solving problems in their works. If we look at the role of entrepreneurship in some countries, we find that much of the history of these societies have been rarely written from the evidence that was found by examining their entrepreneurs. In Nigeria, for example, the early Europeans who wrote about the people thought that Nigeria has no culture and no civilization just because we could neither read nor write at that time and consequently could not document the lives and activities of the past generations before the coming of the Europeans with their education which introduces reading and writing into our society. Surprisingly, the whole picture changed when Nigerian entrepreneurs, particularly the crafts and artifacts, metal works and jewelries were analyzed and studied. Evidence from these studies reveals that some of these works were made more than two thousand years ago, making them the oldest known entrepreneurship in Africa South of the Sahara. These people were known to have worked in a sophisticated manner than we could ever imagine.

METAL JUNKS ART AS ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Creativity is the essence of entrepreneurship and if art (metal sculpture) is skill practice, it then means that entrepreneurship is skill practice because without skill practice there is no entrepreneurship and if there is no entrepreneurship there is no art. The artistic possibilities of metal as sculpture medium, the new borrowed industrial technology and the traditional method of working them, came into being when some group of European artists around 1920s sought for the fundamentals of space and time to interpret the reality of life. A Spanish born sculpture, Julio Gonzalez (1876-1942) championed the course of using three dimensional lines and structures to define volumes in metal sculpture. This innovative idea has been

creatively explored by sculptors from the early 1960s to the present. An amalgam of these metal sculptures in structure approach subject matter, bits and pieces and procedure show global artistic influence based on freedom of artistic expression in its entire ramification towards mastery of their profession.

The desire to design and create things with an instinct is born with mankind and embedded in entrepreneurship. Not only for economic gains but also for aesthetic values. Metal junk art reveals an interest in design and allows us to appreciate the ability of mankind to develop the creative mind and translate that into tangible creations (entrepreneurship). This observation helps us to understand the importance of metal junk art and the role it plays in entrepreneurship.

The medieval period metal art took on a renewed life as part of entrepreneurship. It was not uncommon to see heavy hardwood doors hang on elaborately patterned hinges. In Europe at that time, metal workers (entrepreneur) took great pride in their craft (entrepreneurship) as they worked tirelessly to build ornate decorations, gates and other metallic hardware for their impressive cathedrals. During this period too, ladies employed some metal craft of their own gold and silver jewelry, crucifixes and other subjects of faith crafted to exquisite perfection by monks in their monastery cells. Other beautiful metal arts were produced with ornamental precious metals enhanced with jewels or enamel motifs. During the Spanish and Italian Renaissance, more emphasis was placed on metal ware like heavy hardware gates and doors, candle sticks, home decor and lighting fixtures. Entrepreneur crafted these works of art primarily for interior decoration. The availability of disused metal materials in Nigeria has helped the entrepreneur to fashion out functional objects for mans use which is evident in the articles used in tackling our day to day problems. The local cooking utensils, candle stands, lamp stand, burglary proofs etc. are products of discussed engine parts found around us and which constitute nuisance to our environment at times. The good thing about this is that turning waste to wealth has helped to expose our youth to explore their creative ability to become self-reliant. Self-reliance is a vital key to self-actualization and national efficiency.

Metal junk art is endowed with more new ventures and opportunities that can encourage graduates to start their own businesses upon graduation and also develop graduates who are innovative thereby addressing the level of poverty in the country through entrepreneurship in metal junk art.

SOME SCULPTORS OF METAL JUNK ART IN NIGERIA

Akeem Muraina and 'Dotun Popoola are renowned contemporary Nigeria metal sculptors who see beauty in trash, rubbish, junk and useless things, converting them for aesthetic purposes through their entrepreneurial abilities.

Samples of their metal junk arts:



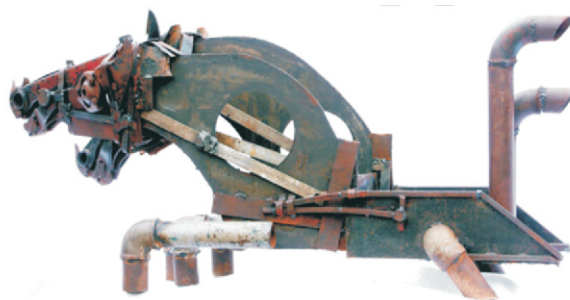
Medium: Metal Junk (found metal objects) by 'Dotun Popoola



Medium: Metal Junks. Title: 'Akuko gagara' by 'Dotun Popoola



Medium: Metal Junk and Steel. Title: 'Agbefoba' by Akeem Muraina



Medium: Metal Junk and Steel. Title: 'Agbero' by Akeem Muraina

CONCLUSION

Entrepreneurs are well known for their activities in helping an economy with the required tools to thrive as the willingness to take calculated risks in terms of time, equity or career, the creative skill to articulate needed resources and fundamental skill of developing solid business plans and ability to see opportunity where others see nothing, confusion and contradiction.

The importance of creativity and innovation through metal junk art has been recognized as panacea for entrepreneurship in solving unemployment among youth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In favor of the relevance of entrepreneurship education towards self-reliance, these strategies are recommended;

- * Adequate funding of entrepreneurial programmes so as to achieve the objectives of the programme.
- * Student should be exposed to available career opportunities in educational entrepreneurship.
- * Need for adequate training of facilitators of workshops in entrepreneurial training programmes.
- * Loans should be made available for graduates of the programme to start their own business.
- * Entrepreneurship should be taught at all levels of education in Nigeria.
- * Graduates should do industrial attachment with successful entrepreneurs.

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