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Enhancing Visual Arts and Design in Ibogun Campus, Ogun State Amidst Multi-faceted Challenges

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Abstract

This is a discourse on approaches to enhancing visual arts and design on the Ibogun campus of Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State. The Fine and Applied Arts (FAA) discipline is created for the production of graduates that will be technologically and creatively strengthened to solve industrial and societal problems. This cannot be attained when an institution is faced with multi-faceted challenges linked primarily to a lack of infrastructure caused by poor funding. The main problem is that the FAA Department at Ibogun Campus lacks digital art labs and standard studios to teach the course. Experiential and humanistic learning theories were chosen as the theoretical frameworks that back up this research work. The study aims to identify trends in visual arts and design within the context of Nigerian education with a view to determining solutions to problems facing Fine and Applied Arts as a course and department. By design, this is a qualitative study; thus, the library research method was employed together with observation and unstructured interviews for data gathering. On this premise,

reasonable recommendations were put forward. However, while the study acknowledges the efforts of the university management, it uncovered that infrastructural problems are not only affecting FAA and Ibogun campus; the Ibogun community as a whole is also feeling the hitch. FAA Department was created almost two decades ago but still lacks a brand name, unlike other Nigerian tertiary institutions with special (name) identities for their art schools. Consequently, the study, among other suggestions, recommended that the FAA Department Ibogun campus be branded as 'OOU Ibogun Art School', while government intervention through adequate funding is advised. The department also needs to concentrate more on creative technological innovations since this is the era of artificial intelligence.

Keywords Visual design; Industrial art; Community; Education; Creativity and Technology

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Introduction

Visual art and design is an established field of study in Nigeria. In practise, it brings about beauty and purpose; the environment, nation, and human lives benefit from its end results. Many creatively designed products were first conceptualised and then artistically developed to create works of art that are appealing to the eye. Some of these products transcend beauty to make an impact for their usefulness in daily engagements such as healthcare, education, information and communication, religion, and entertainment, among others. This buttresses the role of visual art and design as a discipline and in practise within the heterogeneous society in Nigeria. Professional bodies and scholars alike have emphasised that art is more about aesthetics and design tends towards functionality (Premier's Technology Council, British Columbia, 2008; Obasuyi, 2016; Onyemachi & Jonah, 2019). While this cannot be argued, it can be weaved together. This is simply to establish the fact that the duo (art and design) tows different paths to make what is unknown to be revealed, what is ugly to be visually appealing, and what is lifeless into "life." In that regard, visual art and design have their unique similarities and differences, such that art may ooze out different meanings to its recipients or those perceiving it, but design will always emphasise a uniform point and message. The use of symbols, colouring, principles, certain design elements and resources, and techniques coupled with technology are notable features of visual art and design practises. Even in design education, these are some of the components students are exposed to so as to become knowledgeable creatively.

Creativity is also a prime feature of the visual arts and design, but while some students are naturally and artistically gifted, others are battling to be creatively independent so as to meet academic standards. The ability to use one's intuition in judgement and in the right direction for a concrete result, tangibly or intangibly, is what creativity is all about. The education sector is expected to cater for all students irrespective of their academic profile or status, whether weak or excellent, with special concentration on the ones that are 'weaklings' in Visual Arts and Design and other courses. This is another reason some schools operate a multi-campus structure: to acquire more students, they spread their tentacles of infrastructure to cater specially for academic programmes so as to make them robust and attractive, thereby better addressing the academic needs of students. Regrettably, this has not been fully met or achieved as regards education in some institutions in Nigeria, especially universities with a multi-campus system, a structure that has a great impact on the host community. This, amidst the many problems, is the main issue that led to this study. It was even more alarming when the former Executive Secretary of the Nigeria University Commission (NUC), Prof. Okebukola, cried out that satellite campuses churn

out poor, half-baked, and unemployable graduates (Johnson, 2021). Ordinarily, the education sector in Nigeria, a multi-ethnic society, is bedevilled with many problems. The Northeast is yet not free from insurgency and the attack of Boko Haram. This is a dangerous terror group that insists on rejecting (western) education, as depicted in the documentary of Gemma and Karen (2018). Southwest and Southeast equally possess their own array of peculiar challenges. Farmer-herder clashes in some situations have forced many community schools to compulsorily shut down, disrupting and hindering educational activities. Cultism in higher institutions has also taken another turn in recent times. Incessant industrial strike action by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) also characterised university education in Nigeria, owing to bad governance and their (i.e., the government's) misplacement of priorities. Some problems are sociocultural and some are politically masterminded or orchestrated, while others are based on tribalism or religious sentiments or biases. No wonder the problems are multifaceted. It is worthy of reiterating that Visual Art and Design being offered as a course in Nigerian higher institutions has the potential of also moulding a man: morally, creatively, and practically; to be useful for himself and the larger society and not become truant, jobless, or a terrorist and killer. With concentration on this professional discipline, questions arise as to how solutions can be derived to strengthen this field of endeavour, especially in an incapacitated multi-campus setting like the Ibogun campus (that houses visual art and design). Therefore, the main aim of this study is to identify the trends in visual art and design in the Nigerian educational context with a view to determining solutions to the challenges facing the Fine and Applied Arts (FAA) Department, Ibogun Campus, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria. The scope of the study is this very department: FAA, located in Ibogun, the land of the 'Egbas'.

** Visual Arts and Design, Creative Arts, Fine and Applied Arts, Industrial Art/ design are names used interchangeably in **Section 2** especially as they are being used in Nigerian Visual Art and Design Educational System.*

*** In the same vein, Fine and Applied Arts' also refers to Visual Arts and Design, especially as specific with FAA Dept. Ibogun campus, OOU. Thus, both are used interchangeably (in the discussion) in subsequent **Sections 3.0 – 5.0** and **Conclusion** to depict same creative endeavour.*

Visual Art and Design in Nigeria: Educational Perspective

Visual art and design as a discipline started in 1953 at three of the first-generation universities in Nigeria. They are the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (ABU), and the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University, OAU). It was offered as a Bachelor of Arts (Fine or Applied Arts) in UNN, a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Science (Industrial Arts) in ABU, Zaria, and a Bachelor of Arts together with a Bachelor of Education (Fine or Applied Arts) in OAU (Ogunduyile & Akinbogun, 2006). It was a four-year course at the three institutions. Other first-generation universities invested more in other creative programmes such as theatre art, communication and literary studies, and drama, among others. A school like OAU also offers some of these courses as part of its academic offerings. The three institutions were able to maintain the programme, and second-generation universities like the Federal University of Technology, Akure, the University of Lagos, etc. equally followed suit up until today. As a trend, some public institutions recently established are also incorporating visual art and design into their programmes with a suitable naming convention. Notably, they fall within the Creative Arts, Fine and Applied Arts, Visual Arts, and Industrial Art or Design. They are often situated in the Faculty of Environment Sciences, Technology, Design, and Studies or the School of Vocational and Technical Education. The technology-based universities award the degree as a Bachelor of Technology, and it is a 5-year academic programme.

A very conspicuous trend from long ago that is still in vogue is the attribution of special names to the visual arts and design departments. There is no concrete record of how it began, but credit can easily be ascribed to the first-generation universities (especially ABU and Zaria) since they were the driving force that laid the foundation for the creative arts' programmes. A typical example is Zaria Art School (which is a customised name for the Department of Fine and Industrial Arts, ABU, Zaria); there is OAU Art School (which depicts the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, OAU); and Nsukka Art School (for the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka). Other known ones also include: FULafia Art School (for the Department of Fine Arts and Industrial Design, Federal University of Lafia, Nasarawa), UYO Art School, YabaTECH Art School, Auchi Art School, and many more. This does not exempt polytechnics and colleges of education, as observed. To mention a few, the Department of Art and Industrial Design at Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, Abeokuta, is customised as MAPOLY Art School; Auchi Polytechnic, Edo, also labels its Visual Art and Design Unit as Auchi Art School; and Adeyemi College of Education, now Adeyemi Federal University of Education, has

Ondo Art School. These special personalised names have really helped to foster meaningful and rewarding (creative) visual art and design collaborations and project the brand name and image of the respective departments within and even outside their institutions. It differentiates them uniquely from the generic departmental names, despite the academic programmes of the 'schools' tilting in the same direction. Many visual arts and design departments have keyed into this style, while a few have remained neutral as regards this creative strategy.

Academically, curricula are reviewed every five years. One common trend in the 21st century is the structuring of the course contents to accommodate and reflect the current wave of digital advancements. As a result, there is a general shift in which almost all universities are systematically upgrading to offer advanced courses in computer art, multimedia communication, electronic art, and digital art, among others. Ideally, this is a good movement, and if well nurtured, it will promote the development of quality manpower within the circle of visual arts and design, which will eventually serve as an economic booster. Irrespective of the development, the suggestion of Afolabi (in press) would still need to be considered, which is that specialists must be employed to teach some advanced new courses. He expressed his fear as well, querying if the new courses are actually 'advanced' considering the tenets and technical demands of the fourth industrial revolution, which capture areas such as artificial intelligence, among others. However, in all the educational stages in Nigeria, visual arts and design are taught, but in line with Afolabi (in press), Ogunduyile, Kayode, and Ojo (2008) also cautioned specifically that the "4-year tertiary school system should consolidate the training by providing specialist education to all the branches of art". The branches of the creative arts are broad, but the scholars in their statement are particular about the visual arts (see Figure 1).

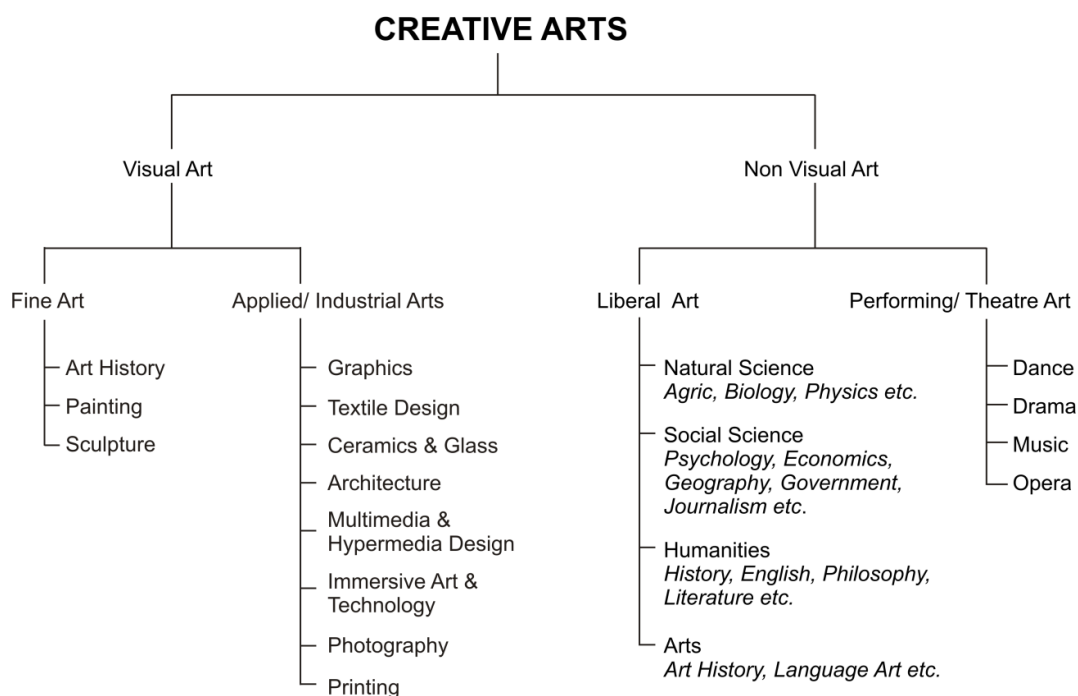


Figure 1 Branches of Creative Arts in the 21st Century

There are six options domiciled in the Department of Fine and Applied Arts and Industrial Arts. They are: graphics, textiles, ceramics, painting, sculpture, and art history, and that has been the standard in Nigerian universities with visual art and design courses. The first three are applied or industrial arts, while the last three are within the realm of fine arts. The applied or industrial arts and design are also functional arts (Onyemachi & Jonah, 2019), i.e., art for utility, while the fine arts are for aesthetics or to beautify the environment. The six options are available within the classroom synchronously and not via an online teaching platform, perhaps owing to the fact that visual art and design is a field of study that is practical-loaded. Diploma courses or short-term versions of the courses are rather available and are still handled or taught right in the classroom and studios. Art history, on the other hand, is theory-based and dominated fine art departments at its inception. Thus, the crop of graduates that were first produced from the first and second generation universities were more art historians that later taught art in schools. At this juncture, it is proper to mention that the major philosophies that guided the creation of visual art and design courses in Nigeria are well spelled out. In summary, it is to produce graduates that will be technologically inclined, creatively and practically equipped to solve industrial and societal problems, then gainfully employed or practise independently for sustenance (Akinbote, 2019 citing Kashim, Ogunduyile, & Adelabu, 2012; Handbook FAA Dept., 2020). This has actually been achieved, as some artists and designers are already making

positive impacts within and outside the creative industry. Although this sounds pleasing, it does not amount to all-round achievement for the education sector owing to the lamentations of Ogunduyile, Kayode, and Ojo (2008) about creative practitioners dropping out. Part of the reasons for this setback include professional bodies not rising up to perform their tasks, poor orientation (due to improper guidance and counselling) about job prospects right from school before students' graduate, a problematic economy, and poor remuneration.

Fine and Applied Arts (FAA) Department, Ibogun Campus:

Brief Historical Sketch

Fine and applied arts is a course and, at the same time, a department with full accreditation at Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria. The public and state university, created in 1982, operates a multi-campus structure in which the Department of Fine and Applied Arts (FAA) is situated in the Egba zone, Ibogun, Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State (OOU Online, 2022). Hence, it is a satellite school also known as Ibogun Campus. Historically, FAA was one of the pioneer departments on the Ibogun campus; in December 2015, courses were restructured and the Faculty of Environmental Studies was birthed, which houses the FAA Department. Up until today, there were three other satellite campuses. Despite the fact that Ibogun campus experienced many difficulties and hitches before turning out to be a dream come true, out of all the campuses (excluding Ago-Iwoye, the main campus), Ibogun seems to be at the 'top of the radar', thus well known. "The history of the college (that houses FAA) is not different from the history of any project that is destined to be great; the road would necessarily be tortuous and arduous" (Handbook FAA Dept., 2020, p. 15). The 2004–05 pioneer students of the FAA Department graduated in the 2008–09 academic session; from inference, the course is a four-year degree programme for the award of a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Fine and Applied Arts.

Conventionally, and like other universities in Nigeria, the Department (FAA) harbours six options: painting, sculpture, art history, graphics, textiles, and ceramics. At the helm of departmental administrative affairs is the Head of Department, who is directly answerable to the Faculty Dean. Currently, in the 2021–22 academic session, the department is manned by nine academic staff (teaching both theory and studio/practical courses) and four non-academic personnel. Simultaneously, the student capacity is a good number to reckon with. Infrastructure

in the department includes studios, lecture rooms, stores, a gallery, and offices (with internet facilities) for day-to-day activities. Despite the fact that the Department of Fine and Applied Arts on the Ibogun campus has been in existence for almost two decades, it does not have a brand name like other Nigerian institutions (both new and old) that showcase their creativity through a personalised name for their valued visual art and design departments. However, the mission of the department is to be a leading academic setup within the university, Southwest Nigeria, and the global community through the development of creative solutions (Handbook FAA Dept., 2020). In all, the multi-campus university, OOU, was created for community development to build the nation, putting into consideration all the ethnic groups and tribes in Ogun State. Little wonder that the Ibogun campus materialised, thanks also to the dogged intervention of indigenous and community stakeholders.

Major Challenges of a Multi-Campus University as peculiar to Fine and Applied Arts, Ibogun Campus

Critical challenges militating against the smooth functioning of Fine and Applied Arts as a field of study on the Ibogun campus are in two parts: infrastructural and non-infrastructural. As hinted earlier, the lack of infrastructure to cater for the academic programme so as to make it robust and attractive, thereby better addressing the academic needs of students, remains a major problem. The infrastructural challenge actually led to this study, and how these problems are multi-faceted is elucidated accordingly in this section.

OOU has its unique structure like every other setup, but there is a great dearth of digital art labs and standard studios in the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Ibogun campus, an essential infrastructure to practise and teach visual arts and design. In the aspect of the internet, the available studios do not have access to stable internet facilities; thus, accessibility to "SaaS" (i.e., software as a service) is a serious issue, while offline programmes are expensive. SaaS is a subscription-based plan for special programmes, deployed via the internet for digital studios. Studios meant for visual arts and design, whether digital or non-digital, will require funds to maintain, but the paucity of funds is evident. Salary payment alone gulps #330 million per month, and the state government supports the university with only #70 million. Reportedly, after tax deduction, the school is left with around #40–45 million as an allocation per month (Dr. Okewale, Joel Adeniyi, Chairman, Academic Staff Union of Universities, OOU Chapter, personal communication, January 19, 2022). It is worthy of mentioning that digital labs depend

on electricity for their effective functioning; sadly, epileptic power supply is another common issue that must be resolved for this to address the academic needs of the students. Also, such digital art studios will not operate themselves but must be manned by capable hands; as a result, instructors and technologists are key, but staffing is another major challenge. Until recently, the Department (FAA) was manned by only 4–5 academics who were also practising visual art and design experts. Manpower is still an issue that calls for attention. Available studios in the different aspects mentioned are filled with these setbacks; concurrently intertwined factors make them inefficient, hence a multi-faceted challenge.

Additionally, Ibogun, a community with a large expanse of land, is known for farming, but the land lacks good clay; by implication, Ceramics' students (of the Ibogun campus, OOU) are highly affected. This is obviously a non-infrastructure problem, but matters also to be resolved; for successful completion of a course in visual art and design. Students have to travel to neighbouring cities like Lagos and Abeokuta to source clay. Disappointedly, the roads (as infrastructure) within Ibogun leading to the satellite campus are bad. They are not motorable, not only for FAA staff and students but also for the community, yet the deplorable conditions of the roads are not getting the attention of the government. This is even as a higher citadel of learning (recognised, licenced, and endorsed by the National Universities Commission) is situated in a peaceful community. It is really disturbing that despite the detailed report of the Needs Assessment Committee since 2016, design education in Nigeria (whether in multi-campus settings or not) is still lagging in terms of growth and development. Succinctly, the decadence as exemplified above was captured in the report for the government's awareness and prompt action since it was even the Federal Government that set up the committee in the first place to assess the needs of the Nigerian public universities (Othman, 2016).

Implications of the Challenges

Administratively, the university management of OOU is really trying their best to run the school, but the infrastructural and non-infrastructure problems, among others, are the types that have a ripple effect. Certainly, they can influence students' decisions (negatively), i.e., in terms of opting for OOU as their first choice to study. If the admission rate falls, the community will feel the effects as well. This is certain as students seek accommodation and patronise local goods. Concurrently, students of visual arts and design at OOU engage in vocational work, which Ibogun as a community benefits from and has helped bring development to the community. In

contrast, if students do not seek Fine and Applied Arts (as a course on the Ibogun campus) due to the constraints and hitches earlier discussed, then the admission rate will drop. This is another area where the community would feel the impact of such a reduction.

In many cases, poor working conditions do affect quality manpower. Potential employees of academic prowess who can work may be discouraged from picking up employment with organisations with bad roads, a lack of facilities, and other infrastructural problems. This is even bad for a higher citadel of learning. It can hinder a university from securing academic personnel (of excellence) that will likely boost the image of the school both locally and internationally, especially as the tenets of the university system are built on teaching, research, and community service (Prof. Tunji Samuel Ibiyemi, personal communication, July 15th, 2021). In another perspective, stress encountered or the inability of students to get raw materials or items needed to work (such as clay in the case of ceramics students) can affect such students' productivity. The clay is a major natural resource used by the ceramist; hence, if the situation is not well managed, the students may end up with poor results and eventually not be gainfully employed. Ordinarily, the unemployment rate in Nigeria is alarming (Olurounbi, 2021), making it a canker worm already eating deep into the Nigerian economy and degrading it. Likewise, a higher school of learning that offers visual arts and design but does not have quality studios to teach trending designs (digitally and non-digitally) will definitely produce half-baked graduates. Also, when such an institution is shortstaffed, the few people available will experience physical and mental stress due to excess workload and thereby perform poorly. In return, all these issues will surely have an effect on their graduates, who will not be able to solve visual arts and design problems. Positively, making an impact creatively will also be difficult, and eventually no firm will invest in or employ a low-profile visual arts and design graduate. The institution that produced weak visual designers is also not exempted because the rating of their visual arts and design programmes (in the accreditation exercise) and graduates' performance either globally or locally will always amount to a low grade. This is not a good stand for any education sector established for human and national development.

Theoretical Framework

Experiential Learning Theory

This is a theory that anchors on human experience, putting into consideration the active impact of experiences such as emotions, cognition, and environmental factors in the learning process, which would also aid the positive change of human behaviour and knowledge. Though the theory is an offshoot of social and constructivist ideologies, its major concentration on 'experience' makes it more complete and relevant in educational development. The main motive of the theory is to promote understanding via diverse means, which is basically the essence of the 'experience'. Hence, learning is the process by which knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. "It is the art of learning from one's own physical experiences in real life" (Bartleby, 2021). This is an area where visual arts and design are unique; they afford the opportunity to learn physically through practicals, thereby creating a transformational experience. David Kolb and Carl Rogers (an American psychologist) are major proponents of the theory; while the former established four main phases of learning, the latter, in the 1980s, focused on experiential methods. He (Carl) claimed that naturally human beings are learners, so the tendency to acquire knowledge and its retention is high when they are practically involved in the learning process (such as in the visual arts and design). According to the International Bureau of Education, an institute of UNESCO (2022), he further put it straight: (1) "learning can only be facilitated; we cannot teach another person directly", (2) "learners become more rigid under threat", (3) "significant learning occurs in an environment where threat to the learner is reduced to a minimum", and (4) "learning is most likely to occur and last when it is self-initiated". Resultantly, the four cycles in the learning process developed by the American education theorist Kolb and published in 1984 are: (1). Concrete learning (2) Reflective observation (3) Abstract conceptualization and, lastly, active experimentation (Western Governors University, 2020a) These phases, being cyclical in nature, help students polish their hard and soft skills and gain new knowledge. Interestingly, the four cycles are experienced in visual art and design and serve as a form of their attributes. It is a field where ideas are conceptualised and visualised, and observation is key to being able to get essential details while being actively involved in the practical (learning) engagement. However, Becton (2022) summed up that no stage of the cycle is singly effective for learning; if, for example, "the reflective observation stage is skipped, the learner could continue to make the same mistakes," yet the experiential learning cycle can help foster steady progress in knowledge acquisition. The experiential theory also originates from psychotherapy and the humanistic approach to psychology.

Humanistic Learning Theory

This theory focuses more on the students, stating that there should be a balance between emotional and intellectual factors for learning to be effective. "The student is the authority on how they learn, and all of their needs should be met in order for them to learn well" (Western Governors University, 2020b). Without mincing words, this is the crux of the humanistic theory as applicable to learning, from which visual arts and design as a field of study are not exempted. Some studies have practically proven that education based on this theory excels in making students uniquely gain knowledge and groom them as beings. The theory is anchored on humanistic psychology championed by American psychologists Abraham Harold Maslow (1908–1970) and Carl Rogers (1902–1987) (Bravolol, 2022; McLeod, 2014). Maslow created a model in which the pyramidal model is also based on humanism, emphasising human needs and motives, from basic biological and physiological needs to a peak of self-actualization, in an ascending order accordingly. Human basic and first needs are air, water, food, shelter, clothes, etc., followed by needs for safety (job security, sound health, resources, etc.), among others. The first needs, which are the basic ones, must be satisfied before needs at the upper level can be attended to (see Figure 2). Cognitive and aesthetic needs are grouped together for reasoning and creativity. These two, in the view of Maslow, are needed in academics and among artists and designers (GoodTherapy, 2015). Self-fulfillment, or the ability to reach the peak of one's desires and goals, is completely different from transcendence; thus, they are both separate. They are also at the top of the pyramid, signifying the last core needs (see Figure 2). When needs are not met at different stages, it can result into series of problems such as, mental health issues, psychological trauma/ safety challenges, depression/ anxiety etc.

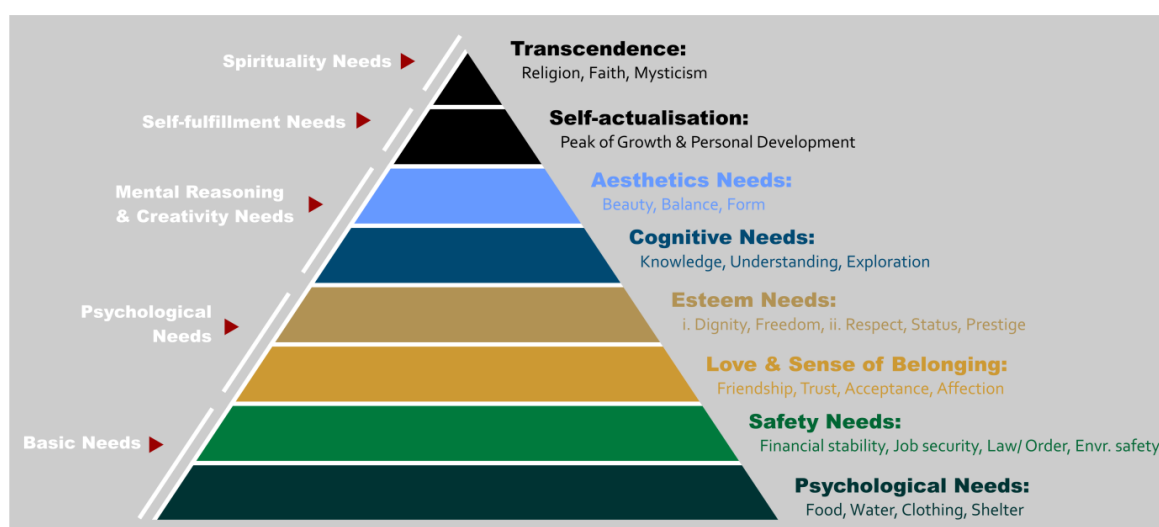


Figure 2 Maslow's Expanded Hierarchy of Needs (Pyramidal/ Motivational Model)

Carl complemented Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, affirming that "for a person to 'grow', they need an environment that provides them with genuineness (openness and self-disclosure), acceptance (being seen with unconditional positive regard), and empathy (being listened to and understood)" (McLeod, 2014). In this assertion, such an environment can be the school, which is a place to help in achieving self-actualization, a crucial need of every human, most importantly after other needs are catered for. Despite the fact that self-actualization is meeting all needs and one has become the best he or she can be and is fulfilled (Maslow, 1954), the humanistic theorists, according to Western Governors University (2020b), do not believe most people attain the point of self-actualization; rather, people are always searching for it; the closer they are to it, the more learning takes place. Thus, naturally, people have the desire to learn, and the learning process is of utmost importance (McLeod, 2022).

Interestingly, whatever the case may be, there is a concept of a 'full-functioning' man endorsed by Carl Rogers. In his view, such a person "is authentic and self-aware, being in touch with his feelings, emotions, and desires. He has a high degree of satisfaction with life, leaning in favour of positive thoughts, spirituality, and intrinsic values" (Byron-Cox & McClintock, 2021); with these attributes, self-actualization is assured. Maslow's pyramidal model (i.e., hierarchy of needs) was expanded around the 1960s and 1970s (see Figure 2) to capture cognitive needs (knowledge and understanding, curiosity, exploration, etc.), aesthetic needs (beauty, balance, form, etc.), and transcendence needs (mystical and experience with nature, religious faith, etc.) (McLeod, 2022). The restructuring led to a robust framework called Maslow's motivation model (see Figure 2). Meanwhile, what actually inspires people is their thirst, which is a need for development and fulfilment in life (Maslow, 1954). This then makes people search for that self-actualization via diverse means like art, literature, sports, classroom settings, or the corporate world (Kenrick, Neuberg, Griskevicius, Becker, & Schaller, 2010). Visual art and design that anchors on practicals even create flexible means and more avenues to achieving self-actualization. This is realised especially through specialisation in any of its creative options: graphics, painting, ceramics, and textile design, among others. The principles of humanistic learning hammer a lot on engagement (practicals, skills, etc.) and motivation for the attainment of self-fulfillment; when people or students are motivated, especially in what they have passion for and need addressed, they make good choices and perform excellently (Western Governors University, 2020b).

Decisive Opinion Anchored to the Theories

It would be wise to decide a way forward amid the issues identified. The idea here, being a precise foundation, is to be able to give room for reasonable suggestions. Therefore, without much ado and based on established facts, it is important to state that the Department of Fine and Applied Arts (FAA), Ibogun campus, would fare better if revamped appropriately through government intervention and committed stakeholders. It would not be bad as well if a brand identity was created for the department since this is a trend and an acceptable standard in the Nigerian creative (academic) circle. Its positive impact transcends beyond the usual traditional, local setting, as has been witnessed in other renowned Nigerian institutions. For clarification, this has bred relevance and easily fosters creative collaborations between many of the art schools. Additionally, the Nigeria National Gallery of Art (NGA) symposium 2022, held in Lafia, Nigeria, recorded the attendance of many art schools while FAAs Ibogun campus ventured without a brand name; because of this, it could not relate to or participate in one of the event segments; only schools with a brand name identity easily gained permits. If possible, FAA would require relocation to a comfortable place that will accommodate options such as 'Ceramics, where students will have access to the natural endowment of 'Clay'. Notably, when it is easily and readily accessible, students of visual arts and design will definitely be motivated to work better and do more. Alternatively, mobility can be made available to ease the problem of transportation to other regions in search of the mineral substance filled with silica and alumina. The task of developing the education sector should be a joint effort, and the government has a key role to play. In a nutshell, synergy between ICT firms, the creative/entertainment industry, and the fine and applied/industrial arts department is a must; if not, the benefits of the digital world would not be fully tapped into. This is very crucial, especially since the key mission of the Visual Art and Design Departments is to 'manufacture' graduates that are technologically and creatively sound and practically equipped for society. In conjunction, this is the era of artificial intelligence, where technology is dynamic and not static.

These cautionary and decisive views keyed into the belief of experiential learning theory, which clarifies learning to be more meaningful daily experiences and thus influences a change in an individual's knowledge, attitude, and behaviour. Engaging in visual art and design, which is practical-oriented, is another 'learning experience' that has recently become highly rooted in technology powered by artificial intelligence (AI). AI is simply the use and integration of visual design, computer science, and robust information data to solve human problems. Inferentially, it

is certain that with a team of ICT and creative experts in collaboration to instruct and teach the students of the FAA Department, their experience in visual arts, design, and information technology would be better sharpened and broadly facilitated, especially in a safe environment. The theorists hinted on threats as hindrances to learning; in this case, inadequate funding of FAA (as a course) and badly equipped learning environments (FAA as a department or studio), lack of electricity, dearth of clay with bad roads, etc. are real threats to the learning process. It therefore calls for a lasting solution, or else learning will not occur, let alone survive the test of time. Remarkably, it is when a student is filled with quality learning experiences and also safe that he or she will be able to think right and initiate innovative projects (to be assessed), which he or she can also learn from. In the same vein, Maslow's pyramidal model and Carl's assertion corroborate the experiential theory, as every human has a need, FAA instructors and students inclusive. Disappointedly, if their needs, especially in connection to the learning experience and its environment, e.g., a digital art lab with standard studios, are not resolved, it would be difficult to attain a peak of self-actualization or a peak of one's career. This is the concern of the humanistic theorists, hence the cogent reason for the government's intervention to address the rot in the education sector. Obviously, when the problems are corrected, this will also yield increased motivation for the trainees and the trainers, who will then perform at their best.

Research Method

This is a qualitative study in which the library research method was adopted for sourcing data. Books, national dailies, journal articles, internet sources, and other relevant secondary materials were consulted for explication in this expose. The secondary approach provided the essential scholarly works that were assessed before the discourse took its position. Observation and unstructured interviews (in personal communication), which are applicable in qualitative research, were equally employed to enrich the data gathering process. The study relied on a theoretical framework anchored in experiential and humanistic learning theories. The former, as used in this discourse, served as a foundation to showcase the relevance of visual arts and design as a practical field that solidifies learning experiences for human development. The latter, on the other hand, backed up the facts that human needs as regards learning, cognition, and other essentials must be met before trainers and trainees can be motivated to learn, be productive, and reach a peak of self-actualization in visual arts and design or any other field of studies or endeavours. Complementarily, the duo thereby ended up with decisive opinions to aid in the

formation of solutions to the established problems. The decisive opinions are also pedestals on which conclusions and befitting recommendations were made.

Conclusion

Fine and Applied Arts (FAA) has been in existence for almost two decades. It would be expected that being established in a multi-campus setting, it should be vibrant academically (as a course) and flourish (as a department) with bountiful infrastructure and facilities, but this is not the case. Though the management of the university is trying and making efforts, some problems are still conspicuous and worrisome. These problems do not only affect FAA but the Ibogun campus as a whole, encapsulating, most importantly, poor funding and infrastructural problems. The Ibogun community is equally feeling the pain caused by deficiency in infrastructure linked to bad roads and epileptic power supply. The crux of it all that eventually led to this study is that the FAA Ibogun campus lacks standard digital art labs and studios to teach, which is a multi-faceted challenge. These issues are not to be trivialised; they can delay educational growth and development or hinder it completely, not only in multi-campus university settings but also in any educational system. Its ripple effect is that it imposes a negative effect on the structural development of a nation (even right from the grassroots). From the foregoing, it is therefore recommended that:

- The Ogun State Government should raise allocations of the first state University because ‘Olabisi Onabanjo’ as a learning centre has contributed immensely to manpower development in Nigeria and even internationally, producing many experts in different areas of walks of life. The Federal Government of Nigeria as well should show more commitment to the education sector which obviously will help the State government in distribution of funds cum execution of quality infrastructural projects in FAA Department, the University, Ibogun community and its environs.
- OOU University managements are performing excellently in prompt payment of salaries; this is worthy of emulation. On this account, administrative leaders in all spheres and political governments must manage funds adequately for enhanced productivity.
- A well-equipped digital art lab and standard studio is advised where trending designs in both non-digital and digital (especially AI) can be taught and made. This is the 21st century and in no distant future, *“it will not be surprising to see more elements such as Artificial*

Intelligence (AI) or more advanced machine learning algorithms democratise the learning” (Sajjad, 2020). Hence, FAA Department, Ibogun campus would need to key into this reality so that student’s training and projects will be tilted towards this creative innovation (especially where applicable). This is highly recommended because AI can help address some problems in learning and teaching and allow institutions and (design) educators to do more than ever before (Sneha, 2019).

- Academic staff should be encouraged for special trainings in trending innovations via sponsored conferences, workshops and seminars. Undue stringent and unwarranted criteria (by University management) should therefore not be used as yardstick either (before being qualified for sponsored trainings).
- FAA Department, OOU should be adequately staffed with Technologists and visual art and design experts in relevant disciplines. It is worthy of noting Olurounbi (2021) who maintained that rate of job seekers will keep rising as population growth continues to outweigh output growth. Best option therefore is to strengthen Fine/ Applied Arts - a vocational discipline (irrespective of the educational settings) but especially in Ibogun campus, for robust academic experience, community growth and national development.
- The Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Ibogun Campus should have a brand name which is ‘OOU Ibogun Art School’. This will not only project the Department (as a name) but it will also improve its brand image for creative collaborations and productivity, as already recorded in other public higher citadel of learning in Nigeria offering Visual Arts and Design.
- Collaboration between the Visual Arts and Design Departments, National Institute of Information Technology (NIIT), Nigeria and Advertising Practitioner Council of Nigeria (APCON) together with other relevant training agencies is advised. The certified courses of the agencies should be incorporated into the visual arts and design curriculum. This is to better prepare the students for the digital revolution which equally affects all areas of Fine and Applied/ Industrial Arts, and also for a solid grip in the creative world.

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