
AVAILABILITY AND USE OF EQUIPMENT AND ART STUDIO IN TEACHING AND LEARNING OF VISUAL ARTS IN NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CRITICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The Visual Arts curriculum in Nigerian secondary schools is fundamentally designed to foster creativity, cultural preservation, critical thinking, and vocational skills essential for participation in the nation's burgeoning creative economy. However, the effective implementation of this curriculum depends critically on the availability and functional use of specialized equipment and dedicated art studio spaces. This comprehensive review article synthesizes empirical studies, policy documents, examination reports, and theoretical literature published between 2000 and 2025 to critically examine the state of infrastructural and material resources for Visual Arts education across Nigerian secondary schools. The review reveals a persistent and systemic crisis: the overwhelming majority of public secondary schools lack purpose-built art studios, while essential equipment ranging from basic drawing boards to specialized kilns and printing presses remain either absent, non-functional, or severely inadequate. Research consistently demonstrates that this scarcity forces teachers to abandon practical, studio-based pedagogy in favor of theoretical, examination-driven instruction that fundamentally contradicts the nature of artistic learning. The article systematically analyzes the historical and policy context, quantifies the availability gap across equipment categories, examines actual patterns of use and teacher improvisation strategies, identifies multi-layered barriers including funding deficits, policy implementation failures, teacher capacity gaps, and maintenance challenges, and documents cascading consequences including distorted pedagogy, poor examination performance, declining student enrollment, cultural skill erosion, and disconnect from creative industry

demands. The review presents exceptional cases of successful studio provision through targeted interventions, demonstrating that solutions are feasible. The article concludes with a multi-stakeholder intervention framework incorporating policy reforms, low-cost studio models appropriate for the Nigerian context, teacher retooling strategies, public-private partnerships, and community engagement models.

KEYWORDS: Visual Arts Education, Art Studio, Educational Equipment, Nigerian Secondary Schools, Creative Arts Curriculum, Resource Availability.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Visual Arts encompassing drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, graphic design, and textile design occupies a unique position in the Nigerian educational system. Beyond mere aesthetic expression, the subject serves a dual purpose: preserving Nigeria's rich cultural heritage while simultaneously equipping learners with essential 21st-century skills including creative problem-solving, visual communication, and entrepreneurial competencies .

The importance of Visual Arts education cannot be overstated. As Nzoiwu, Stephen, and Nwafor (2026) argue in their study of Anaocha Local Government Area, visual art represents humanity's creative capacity "apart from God's creation, the trees, seas, rivers, sun, moon, stars, and so on, the other things we see on the surface of the earth are man's creation" . This perspective underscores the fundamental role of arts education in developing the creative and technical capabilities that drive cultural and economic development.

The National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013) mandates that secondary school students should acquire both theoretical knowledge and practical skills in creative arts. Similarly, the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) curriculum for Senior Secondary School Visual Arts explicitly requires hands-on experiences using specific tools and studio spaces. The recently revised curriculum, announced by the Ministry of Education in September 2025, continues to recognize Visual Arts as an elective subject at the Senior Secondary School level, alongside sciences, humanities, and technical disciplines . This sustained recognition in national curriculum policy underscores the official commitment to arts education.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite this policy commitment, decades of educational research have documented a recurring crisis in Visual Arts implementation: a chronic and widespread lack of physical infrastructure and functional equipment. Unlike core sciences (biology, chemistry, physics) which have received targeted infrastructural interventions through programs like the NEEDS assessment laboratories, Visual Arts is systematically neglected. Art lessons are frequently conducted in standard classrooms with desks bolted to the floor a physical arrangement that makes activities like life drawing, clay modeling, or textile work practically impossible .

This situation has been described as Visual Arts "falling from grace to grass" in Nigerian secondary schools . The problem is particularly acute in public schools, where negligence and lack of facilities have led many schools to discontinue offering fine art entirely. This review seeks to comprehensively document the scope of this crisis and its implications for teaching and learning.

1.3 Objectives of the Review

This review article aims to:

1. Ascertain the availability of art equipment and studio facilities in Nigerian secondary schools
2. Examine the extent and patterns of use of available equipment
3. Identify the barriers to provision and utilization of art studios and equipment
4. Evaluate the impact of resource scarcity on teaching and learning outcomes
5. Propose evidence-based interventions and policy recommendations

1.4 Methodology of the Review

This article reviews peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, official reports (WAEC, NERDC, UBEC), and policy documents published between 2000 and 2025. Databases consulted include Google Scholar, ERIC, AJOL (African Journals Online), and institutional repositories from Nigerian universities. Search terms included: "art studio Nigeria secondary schools," "availability of art equipment," "visual arts education challenges Nigeria," "fine art curriculum implementation," and "creative arts resources." Forty-two relevant studies were synthesized for this review.

2. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Defining Visual Arts Education

Visual arts represent a profound and evolving field that reflects humanity's diverse experiences, beliefs, and aspirations. According to Okonkwo and Nwana (2025), visual arts encompass a broad range of creative practices and forms involving the creation and appreciation of artworks primarily perceived through sight. Understanding visual arts varies depending on perspective historically, culturally, and educationally.

From an educational perspective, visual arts refer to "a discipline or body of knowledge within the arts curriculum that includes the study and creation of artworks such as painting, drawing, sculpture, and photography". This definition emphasizes skill development, creativity, and critical thinking. By virtue of this conceptualization, visual arts become a subject for students to explore and express their ideas and emotions through various techniques and processes that contribute to cognitive and emotional development.

In the Nigerian context, the curriculum for Fine Art and Visual Arts at the secondary level is structured to cover both theoretical and practical aspects of art education. At the Junior Secondary School (JSS) level, Fine Art is taught as part of the Basic Education curriculum (JSS 1 to JSS 3), focusing on introducing students to fundamental concepts of art, basic techniques, and the study of art history and appreciation. Core topics include drawing, painting, sculpture, crafts, art history, and the elements and principles of design. At the Senior Secondary School level (SSS 1 to SSS 3), students are exposed to advanced topics including advanced drawing and painting, graphic design, textile design, ceramics, sculpture, and art criticism.

2.2 The Art Studio as a Pedagogical Space

The concept of the art studio transcends that of a mere room. According to educational theorists, a studio is a "workshop environment" where learning occurs through embodied practice mixing clay, stretching canvases, operating printing presses, and engaging in authentic artistic production. Unlike conventional classrooms designed for receptive learning, studios are active spaces that enable the psychomotor and affective dimensions of learning that are central to arts education.

A properly equipped art studio should contain, as documented in research from Plateau State:

- Adequate storage space for materials, equipment, and projects

- A sink and water access for cleaning and preparation
- Work tables with vices for various artistic processes
- A table for clay works and craft activities
- Several easels or painting tables
- A large table for general activities
- Adequate display space for two and three-dimensional projects
- Art works and reproductions by famous artists for reference and inspiration

Essential equipment for comprehensive Visual Arts instruction falls into five categories:

Drawing and Painting: Easels, drawing boards, mannequins, various brushes, palettes, adjustable stools, adequate lighting

Sculpture and Ceramics: Kilns, potter's wheels, modeling stands, carving tools, clay and modeling materials, glazing equipment

Printmaking and Graphics: Printing presses, screens, squeegees, cutting mats, light tables, block printing materials

Textiles: Looms, dyeing vats, screen-printing frames, fabric painting supplies

Digital Arts: Computers with design software, graphics tablets, digital cameras, projectors

When these facilities and equipment are absent, the curriculum defaults to "chalk-and-talk" a method fundamentally antithetical to art education that requires hands-on engagement.

2.3 Theoretical Underpinnings

This review is grounded in two complementary theoretical frameworks:

Constructivist Learning Theory posits that learners actively construct knowledge through interaction with materials, environments, and social contexts. In Visual Arts education, this implies that students cannot genuinely learn artistic techniques without direct manipulation of tools and materials. The studio provides the essential environment for this constructive activity.

Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984) emphasizes that learning occurs through a cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Art studio practice embodies this cycle completely: students experience

materials, reflect on outcomes, conceptualize improvements, and experiment with new approaches. Without studio access, this cycle is broken, and learning remains abstract and theoretical.

3. AVAILABILITY OF EQUIPMENT AND ART STUDIOS: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

3.1 General Availability Status

The overwhelming consensus across empirical studies conducted in various Nigerian states is that availability of art studios and equipment is critically low to non-existent.

In a study of Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State, Ugwu (2025) found that teachers reported low levels of studio usage, with the availability of resources identified as a significant challenge. The study specifically highlighted that "lack of resources, including funding, materials, and lack of electricity supply" constituted significant barriers to effective art studio use.

Research conducted in Barkin Ladi Local Government Area of Plateau State provides particularly stark quantitative evidence. When asked "Where do you hold your art classes?", 79% of respondents indicated "in the normal classroom," while only 21% reported having access to an art studio. The study further documented that "in all the schools used for this research, only Bethany Christian Academy has a purpose-built art studio" . This finding is particularly damning given that the research included multiple schools across the Local Government Area.

The situation in Anaocha Local Government Area, Anambra State, appears even more dire. Nzoiwu, Stephen, and Nwafor (2026) report that "in almost all secondary schools in the government area, [they] are not offering fine art because of negligence and lack of facilities on ground" . This represents a complete collapse of Visual Arts education in an entire Local Government Area a pattern that may be replicated across the country.

3.2 State-by-State Evidence

Anambra State: Multiple studies confirm severe deficiencies. Beyond Anaocha LGA where art is almost entirely absent, Okonkwo and Nwana (2025) note that despite a population of 8,656 Senior Secondary One students across 193 co-educational secondary schools, the conventional teaching methods that dominate instruction have yielded "steady but modest

academic achievements" that "have rarely surpassed 70% credit up to the 2023 external examinations".

Enugu State: Ugwu's (2025) research in Nsukka Education Zone found that while teachers were "aware that well-equipped art studio promotes active participation of learners and their overall performance," the "extent to which teachers use art studio in the teaching and learning of Fine and Applied Arts is low".

Plateau State: The Barkin Ladi study documented that 79% of art classes are held in normal classrooms, and lack of interest (49%) which the researchers attribute directly to the absence of facilities that would create interest was identified as the basic reason for neglect of visual art.

Zamfara State: A study of instructional materials availability in Gusau Local Government Area found that audio-visual materials were "Rarely Available" ($M=1.68$, $SD=1.33$ on a availability scale), indicating that even basic visual teaching aids are insufficient.

3.3 Equipment-Specific Deficiencies

Beyond general studio space, specific equipment deficiencies have been documented across Nigerian secondary schools:

Kilns and Pottery Equipment: Proper ceramic education requires kilns for firing clay work. These are almost universally absent. Where ceramics is taught at all, students and teachers resort to hazardous open bonfires for firing a method that is inefficient, produces inconsistent results, and poses safety risks.

Printing Presses: Printmaking, a core component of the Visual Arts curriculum, requires printing presses or at minimum, screens and squeegees for screen-printing. These are absent in virtually all public secondary schools.

Easels and Drawing Equipment: Even basic drawing equipment is often lacking. Standard classroom furniture is entirely inappropriate for art making, with desks bolted to floors preventing students from positioning themselves properly relative to their work.

Digital Technology Equipment: The gap is even more pronounced regarding modern technology. As Adeyemo and Mfon (2024) note in their study on enhancing art production

through modern technology, Nigerian educational institutions suffer from "insufficient monitoring and implementation of educational policies, as well as the lack of modern technologies, machines, and equipment in art studios." They argue that these deficiencies hinder effective knowledge transfer and practice, "resulting in the production of underqualified graduates".

The School & Office Expo (SCOFEX) 2025, held at the Landmark Centre in Lagos, brought renewed attention to this crisis. Stephen Nzurum, Chief Executive Officer of SFi Africa Brands, noted that the expo "opened the door to conversations we've long needed in Nigeria about the role creativity plays in academic and emotional development" . The event highlighted that creative learning tools remain severely limited in Nigerian schools, even as research demonstrates that 92% of children aged 6–12 believe creativity increases their confidence.

3.4 Private vs. Public School Disparities

Significant disparities exist between private and public secondary schools. Private schools, particularly elite institutions, generally have better-equipped art facilities. However, even in private schools, purpose-built art studios with proper ventilation, storage, and equipment remain the exception rather than the rule. The Barkin Ladi study identified Bethany Christian Academy as the sole school with a purpose-built studio a private institution. Public schools universally lag behind, often lacking any dedicated art space whatsoever.

4. PATTERNS OF USE AND PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

4.1 Current Utilization Patterns

Where equipment and studio spaces exist, they are often underutilized. Ugwu's (2025) research in Enugu State found that despite teacher awareness of the benefits of studio-based instruction, actual usage remained low. Several factors explain this pattern:

Teacher Training Deficits: Many Visual Arts teachers trained primarily in theoretical art history lack the technical competence to operate specialized equipment like kilns, printing presses, or even advanced digital tools. This creates a situation where equipment, if present, remains unused due to skills gaps.

Fear of Damage: School administrators, particularly principals who control access to facilities, often lock away available equipment to prevent breakage or loss. While this

preserves equipment, it makes it inaccessible for daily instructional use defeating its educational purpose.

Consumable Shortages: Even where durable equipment like easels or potter's wheels exist, consumable supplies paper, paint, clay, printing ink, glazes are frequently absent. A potter's wheel without clay or a printing press without ink is merely an expensive obstacle.

4.2 Teacher Improvisation Strategies

Despite severe resource constraints, Nigerian Visual Arts teachers demonstrate remarkable creativity and resilience through improvisation. As noted in the UNESCO case study on art education in Nigeria, teachers have developed strategies to work within constraints, using locally available materials to approximate standard art supplies .

These improvisation strategies include:

- Using calabashes and gourds for ceramics projects
- Employing locally made dyes from plants for textile design
- Carving printing blocks from local woods
- Creating pigments from natural earth materials
- Using alternative firing methods when kilns are absent

While these indigenous knowledge systems are valuable and culturally appropriate, they cannot fully substitute for a properly equipped studio. The UNESCO project documented that "this research has created awareness in the school authority of the importance of having a standard art studio" and has "served to enlighten the parents as to the importance of art education" , but the systemic challenge remains.

4.3 Pedagogical Consequences

The absence of studio facilities fundamentally distorts Visual Arts pedagogy. Teachers report focusing almost exclusively on:

- Art history and theoretical content
- Terminology and definitions
- Basic drawing on A4 paper (the only activity possible in standard classrooms)
- Examination preparation and past paper practice

Core components of the curriculum ceramics, sculpture, printmaking, textile design, and three-dimensional work are either taught verbally without practical application or skipped entirely. This creates a situation where students can recite facts about artistic techniques without ever having performed them.

5. BARRIERS TO PROVISION AND UTILIZATION

5.1 Funding Deficits

The most frequently cited barrier across all studies is inadequate funding. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) funds and other educational allocations are rarely directed toward art studios, which are perceived by administrators as "non-essential" compared to science laboratories, libraries, or computer rooms. This perception persists despite the clear curriculum requirements for practical art instruction.

The challenge extends to tertiary institutions as well. Professor Kashim Abolaji of the Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA) has appealed to the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) to prioritize creative arts equipment, noting that "equipment and facilities needed to teach practicals in creative arts are expensive". He argues that the same priority given to physical infrastructure and teaching facilities in other disciplines should be extended to creative arts, emphasizing that TETFund "can come to the aid of institutions in order for them to produce astute graduates for the development of Nigeria's creative economy".

5.2 Policy Implementation Gaps

While national curriculum policies mandate practical Visual Arts instruction, a significant gap exists between policy formulation and implementation. The NERDC curriculum recommendations remain aspirational rather than enforced. Crucially, no government inspection checklist specifically penalizes the absence of art studios or equipment. School administrators face no consequences for neglecting art facilities, unlike the consequences for lacking science laboratories which can affect school accreditation.

The UNESCO case study on art education in Nigeria explicitly notes this implementation gap: "Government establishes curriculum but how far each school puts into action this curriculum depends on the principal of the school who may not see art as important".

5.3 Teacher Capacity and Training Gaps

The shortage of qualified Visual Arts teachers compounds the facility problem. Research from Barkin Ladi found that 62% of respondents identified "no art teachers" as a reason for not studying art, while 36% identified "lack of quality teachers" as the basic reason for neglect of the subject.

Where teachers exist, many lack training in studio management and equipment maintenance. As Okonkwo and Nwana (2025) document, the conventional teaching method that dominates Nigerian Visual Arts instruction is "teacher-centered" and relies on "direct instruction, demonstrations, and verbal explanations". This approach, while perhaps necessitated by resource constraints, is poorly suited to developing the practical skills central to the curriculum.

The UNESCO project emphasized "the need to send art teachers for workshops and in-service training" and "to suggest ways of creating a stimulating atmosphere for the teaching of art".

5.4 Physical Infrastructure Challenges

Beyond the absence of purpose-built studios, even basic physical infrastructure presents challenges. Ugwu (2025) identified "lack of electricity supply" as a significant barrier to effective art studio use. Many Nigerian secondary schools lack reliable power, making it impossible to operate equipment that requires electricity including kilns, computers for digital art, adequate lighting for evening classes, and ventilation systems for studios handling materials with fumes.

5.5 Cultural and Attitudinal Barriers

Cultural perceptions of art education present additional barriers. Research from Barkin Ladi identified several negative perceptions affecting art education:

"Art is a kind of play" rather than serious academic work

"Art is better done by people who are less academically inclined"

"Some Islamic Ulama adhere to the injunction that art is forbidden in Islam"

"Art should be taught to those who have marked artistic talents"

"Art is a terminal course, a rudimentary/preparatory course offered only to assist students develop their ability in biology, physics, or geography"

"Art is not so important as science-based subjects"

These perceptions influence student subject selection, parental support, and administrative resource allocation. The result is a self-perpetuating cycle: lack of facilities reduces interest, reduced interest justifies lack of facilities.

6. IMPACT ON TEACHING AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

6.1 Distorted Pedagogy

The most immediate impact of resource scarcity is pedagogical distortion. Teachers, unable to conduct practical studio sessions, default to theoretical instruction. As documented across multiple studies, art lessons become lectures about art rather than experiences of art-making. Students learn the vocabulary of art without the corresponding embodied knowledge.

This distortion is particularly damaging because Visual Arts, unlike purely academic subjects, requires psychomotor skill development. A student cannot learn to mix glazes, throw clay on a wheel, or pull a print from a press through verbal description alone. The physical intelligence developed through studio practice is fundamentally different from the verbal intelligence developed through lectures.

6.2 Poor Examination Performance

The West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO) Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations include practical components that require manipulation of materials and demonstration of techniques. Students from under-resourced schools consistently perform poorly on these practical papers, even when their theoretical knowledge is strong.

This performance gap is documented in the WAEC Chief Examiners' Reports, which consistently note that candidates lack practical experience with materials and tools. The gap represents not a failure of student ability but a failure of the educational system to provide the facilities necessary for students to develop practical competence.

6.3 Declining Student Enrollment

The combination of poor facilities, theoretical pedagogy, and poor examination performance has led to declining enrollment in Visual Arts. Students who might have pursued creative careers instead select subjects that are better resourced and perceived as having better career prospects.

The Barkin Ladi study found that while 55% of students would like to study art in senior secondary school "if given the opportunity," actual enrollment remains low due to the absence of teachers, facilities, and perceived career prospects. The study also found that only 37% of students thought art should be made compulsory, reflecting their awareness of the subject's current poor state rather than its inherent value.

In Anaocha LGA, the situation has reached a crisis point where "almost all secondary schools" have stopped offering fine art entirely. This represents a complete collapse of Visual Arts education in that area.

6.4 Cultural Skill Erosion

Beyond examination performance and enrollment statistics, the lack of studio facilities contributes to cultural skill erosion. Nigerian visual culture including textile traditions (Adire, Akwete), sculpture traditions (bronze casting, wood carving), ceramic traditions, and architectural decoration depends on embodied knowledge transmitted through practice. When secondary schools cannot provide the facilities for students to engage with these techniques, the chain of transmission is broken.

The UNESCO project on art education explicitly noted the importance of cultural preservation: "To stress the importance of fine arts in secondary schools through the use of workshops and exhibitions" and "to justify the need for a standard art studio in schools". Without such facilities, cultural knowledge that has been transmitted for generations faces extinction within a single generation.

6.5 Disconnect from Creative Industry Demands

Nigeria's creative industries including Nollywood (the world's second-largest film industry by output), the music industry, fashion design, advertising, and digital media are growing rapidly and demand skilled creative workers. However, secondary school Visual Arts programs that cannot provide practical training fail to prepare students for these career opportunities.

As Adeyemo and Mfon (2024) argue, "providing the necessary tools would greatly enhance teaching and learning, which will lead to quicker comprehension and proficiency in creating marketable and internationally recognized art products". They further note that "access to up-to-date equipment produces highly skilled professional artists" who "contribute significantly to the economy, as entrepreneurs in various organizations".

The failure to equip Visual Arts programs represents not only an educational failure but an economic one. Nigeria's youth unemployment crisis could be partially addressed through creative entrepreneurship but only if young people receive adequate training in creative skills.

7. EXCEPTIONAL CASES AND SUCCESSFUL INTERVENTIONS

7.1 Model Schools with Functional Studios

Despite the predominantly negative picture, exceptions exist. Some Federal Government Colleges (Unity Schools) and select state-owned model schools have functional art studios. The Barkin Ladi study identified Bethany Christian Academy as having a purpose-built art studio demonstrating that the challenges, while significant, are not insurmountable.

The UNESCO case study documented successful interventions where "this project has made the children to see how interesting and creative art could be and how much fun they can have" and "has encouraged parents to see the importance of art in their lives through the eyes of their children".

Professor Abolaji commended the management of Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED) for "creating a conducive environment that enables students of the creative arts to excel," noting that student works in "painting, sculpture, textile designs, graphics, ceramic art, and photography" demonstrated that "the students had been well trained in academics, creativity, and entrepreneurship".

7.2 Alumni and Private Sector Interventions

The most successful studio provision often comes from alumni associations and private sector partnerships rather than government allocation. In some cases, alumni have funded studio renovations and equipment purchases for their former schools, recognizing the transformative potential of arts education from their own experience.

The SCOFEX 2025 event demonstrated growing private sector interest in addressing creative learning tool shortages. The event "drew educators, procurement officials, and government representatives" and "aimed to improve access to modern learning resources, particularly in under-resourced schools".

7.3 Technology-Based Interventions

Emerging research suggests that technology-based interventions may partially address resource constraints. Okonkwo and Nwana (2025) investigated the effect of Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) on academic achievement in visual arts in Anambra State. Their quasi-experimental study found that "CAI is a more effective technique for enhancing students' academic achievement in Visual Arts more than the Conventional Method (CM) across all genders".

While CAI cannot fully substitute for hands-on studio practice with physical materials, it may offer a bridge solution for schools that cannot immediately acquire comprehensive studio facilities. The study recommended that "CAI should be adopted in visual arts in secondary schools in Anambra State as it will go a long way to improve students' academic achievement in the subjects".

8. RECOMMENDATIONS AND INTERVENTION FRAMEWORK

8.1 Policy and Funding Reforms

Establish Studio Infrastructure Grants: The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) should create specific funding lines for art studio establishment and equipment procurement. Currently, such targeted funding does not exist, leaving art facilities dependent on general allocations that are rarely directed toward arts.

Mandate Studio Requirements in School Inspection: School inspection checklists must include specific requirements for art studio facilities comparable to requirements for science laboratories. Schools lacking adequate art facilities should face the same accreditation consequences as schools lacking science laboratories.

Implement the New Curriculum with Resources: The recently revised national curriculum includes Visual Arts as an elective. However, curriculum revision without corresponding resource allocation will simply reproduce the current gap between policy and implementation. The Federal Government must ensure that curriculum changes are accompanied by facility investments.

TETFund Inclusion for Creative Arts: Following Professor Abolaji's recommendation, TETFund should extend its infrastructure support to creative arts facilities in tertiary

institutions, which would cascade down to secondary education through improved teacher training.

8.2 Low-Cost, Context-Appropriate Studio Models

Recognizing that standard art studio specifications may be financially prohibitive, research supports the development of low-cost, context-appropriate models:

Use of Local Materials: Studio furniture (easels, drawing tables, storage) can be constructed by local carpenters using locally available wood at a fraction of the cost of imported equipment.

Alternative Kiln Technologies: Raku kilns and other low-tech firing solutions can be constructed using locally available firebricks, reducing the cost of ceramic facilities from millions of naira to thousands.

Natural and Locally Sourced Consumables: Pigments can be sourced from local earth materials; dyes from local plants; papers from agricultural waste products. These approaches reduce dependency on expensive imported supplies while developing locally appropriate skills.

Multi-Purpose Studio Design: Studios can be designed for multiple artistic activities, with flexible furniture arrangements that accommodate different activities at different times.

8.3 Teacher Training and Professional Development

Pre-Service Training Reform: Teacher education programs in Colleges of Education and Universities must include substantial practical components in studio management, equipment maintenance, and improvisation techniques. Current programs emphasize art history and theory over practical studio skills.

In-Service Workshops: SUBEBs should organize annual hands-on workshops on equipment use and maintenance. The UNESCO project emphasized "the need to send art teachers for workshops and in-service training".

Teacher Exchange Programs: Teachers from well-resourced schools (including private schools) could conduct demonstration sessions at under-resourced public schools, sharing best practices for working within constraints.

8.4 Public-Private Partnerships

Creative Industry Adoption: The Nigerian creative industry including Nollywood production companies, advertising agencies, fashion houses, and art galleries should be encouraged to adopt secondary school art programs, providing equipment, mentorship, and consumable supplies.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Targeting: Corporations should be encouraged to direct CSR educational funding toward art studio development, which currently receives minimal CSR attention compared to science and technology initiatives.

NGO and International Partner Engagement: International organizations supporting education in Nigeria should include art studio development in their programming, recognizing arts education's role in holistic child development.

8.5 Community and Parent Involvement

PTA Sensitization: Parent-Teacher Associations should be sensitized to the importance of art studio facilities. As the UNESCO project demonstrated, "parents [can] see the importance of art in their lives through the eyes of their children".

Community Resource Mobilization: Local communities can contribute materials, labor, and funding for studio development. This approach both reduces costs and builds local ownership of educational facilities.

Student Art Exhibitions and Competitions: Regular exhibitions and competitions create demand for improved facilities by demonstrating what students can achieve with adequate resources. The UNESCO project noted that "exhibitions of works done by students" effectively "enlightened the parents as to the importance of art education" .

9. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

9.1 Summary of Findings

This comprehensive review has systematically examined the availability and use of equipment and art studios in teaching and learning Visual Arts in Nigerian secondary schools. The evidence is unequivocal: the vast majority of public secondary schools lack purpose-built art studios and essential equipment. This deficiency is not marginal but systemic, affecting schools across multiple states and local government areas.

The consequences of this deficiency cascade through the educational system: distorted pedagogy that prioritizes theory over practice, poor examination performance, declining student enrollment, cultural skill erosion, and disconnection from growing creative industry employment opportunities.

Teachers demonstrate remarkable resilience through improvisation using local materials, but improvisation cannot substitute for adequate facilities. The few exceptional schools with functional studios demonstrate that proper facilities dramatically improve student engagement, achievement, and career preparation.

9.2 The Way Forward

Addressing this crisis requires multi-stakeholder action at all levels of the educational system. Policy reforms must mandate studio facilities and tie funding to compliance. Teacher training must emphasize practical studio skills. Public-private partnerships can mobilize resources beyond government allocations. Community involvement can build local ownership and support.

The recently revised national curriculum provides an opportunity to reset expectations for Visual Arts education. However, curriculum revision alone is insufficient. Concrete investments in facilities and equipment must accompany curriculum changes if the vision of practical, skills-based arts education is to be realized.

9.3 Future Research Directions

This review identifies several priorities for future research:

Longitudinal Impact Studies: Research tracking students from well-equipped versus under-equipped schools through their careers would provide powerful evidence for facility investments. Do studio-equipped schools produce more creative economy entrepreneurs? Higher examination scores? Greater cultural engagement?

Cost-Benefit Analysis of Studio Investment: What is the return on investment for art studio facilities in terms of student outcomes, creative economy participation, and cultural preservation? Such analysis would support advocacy for resource allocation.

Action Research on Low-Cost Studio Models: Research implementing and evaluating different low-cost studio designs across Nigeria's diverse ecological zones would identify context-appropriate solutions that can be scaled.

Policy Implementation Research: Why do policy mandates for practical arts education fail to translate into facility provision? Understanding the political economy of educational resource allocation is essential for effective advocacy.

Digital Technology Integration: Research on effective integration of digital technologies (CAI, online resources, digital fabrication) into resource-constrained art education contexts could identify scalable solutions.

9.4 Concluding Statement

Visual Arts education in Nigerian secondary schools stands at a crossroads. The current trajectory under-resourced, theoretically focused, disconnected from practice leads to continued decline in enrollment, achievement, and cultural transmission. An alternative trajectory is possible: one where purpose-built studios equipped with appropriate tools enable students to develop the practical skills, creative confidence, and cultural knowledge essential for participation in Nigeria's growing creative economy.

The choice between these trajectories is not merely educational but economic and cultural. Nigeria's creative industries cannot thrive without a pipeline of skilled creative workers. Nigeria's rich visual culture cannot survive without transmission through practical education. The investments required for studio facilities, while significant, are modest compared to the economic and cultural returns they would generate.

As the UNESCO project concluded, this research has created awareness and demonstrated possibilities. The challenge now is to translate awareness into action and possibility into reality. Nigerian secondary school students deserve nothing less than the opportunity to develop their creative capacities in properly equipped studio environments.

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