

Examining Female Students' Artistic Production towards the Teaching of Visual Culture: Exploratory Study in Selected Female Colleges of Education in Ashanti Region, Ghana

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Abstract: The paper delved on how tutors of Arts education can meticulously assist learners comprehend imagery and text as regards how the virtual world is manipulated. The synopsis being emphasized that tutors of Arts education ought to appreciate that consumption remains the indispensable basis of the social order of teaching and learning in the current curriculum and visual culture in Colleges of Education in Ghana.

Through the tutelage offered to learners to better appreciate the processes and products associated with visual culture, we imbibe in these learners, clarity of how imagined and constructed the world represents, leading to a better articulation of the learners' ambitions through evolving technologies.

Qualitative research technique was adopted for the study in the form of battery of test (questionnaire) administered observation and interview guide. Simple random sampling technique was used to select two Colleges of Education in Ashanti region, thus Agogo Presbyterian Women's College of Education and St. Louis College of Education.

The article found significant association between female students' artistic production and the teaching of visual culture in the selected Colleges of Education and recommended that Arts Tutors in Colleges of Education should prioritize students' artistic production even though there are associated challenges such as low patronage of the programme, inadequate studios as well as low esteem towards Visual Arts education.

Accordingly, the authors' remarks on artistic production and visual culture was that "As long as academicians remain astute, there is the need to restrict our precious time debating on the structural deficit of curriculum and instead focus more on its meanings; we would concentrate less on state limited guidelines and more on the interconnectedness of the local and global communities ; we would be less motivated as regards the technical attributes of art and focus more on the fundamental tenets of art ;and more importantly, we would harness educational scarce resources from teaching students what we were taught and more on what they should rather know.

Keywords: Artistic production, Visual Culture, Colleges of Education.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education remains a right in Ghana as constitutionally enshrined in Article 25 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana and widely acclaimed as a means of augmenting the human capital of nations for judicious socio-economic development (Asare Danso S., 2014). Against this backdrop, Colleges of Education (herein upgraded to University Colleges of Education) have been mandated to foster the training and effective grooming of teacher trainees to facilitate the teaching and learning processes in schools (Aweso, Armstrong, Boadu, Nsakwa and Nyarko, 2020). According to European Union (2012), "when it comes to educational institutions, teaching professionals are regarded as the most important antecedents of how learners will perform which is further corroborated by the content knowledge of tutors and delivery same professionally".

The missionaries in the period of colonization established Teacher Training Colleges with the sole aim of attaining trained teachers and catechists to assist them in further propagating the gospel (Johnson and Agbeyewornu, 2016). This led to the establishment of the teacher-catechist theological seminary in the Eastern region, specifically Akropong dated 1848. The Roman Catholic Missionaries joined the crusade and in 1909 established St. Augustine College now St. Francis' College of Education at Bla in Trans-Volta Region (Johnson et al., 2016).

The need for Visual Arts Teacher education in Ghana began at Achimota School and subsequently transferred to College of Technology in Kumasi 1952 (Johnson et al., 2016). Later on, the Teacher Training unit of the School of Art and Craft at the College of Technology was again relocated to Winneba as the current Art Education Department of the University of Education Winneba (Asare, 2014). The Visuals Arts programme was later made compulsory in all the current 40 public Teacher Training Colleges after implementing the 1987 Educational Reforms. In the early of 2000, following a comprehensive review of the educational system in Ghana, the Government published a White Paper and declared that "all

Teacher Training Colleges would be upgraded into diploma-awarding institutions and be affiliated to the education oriented universities” (Government of Ghana, 2004). In 2016, draft paper was issued for conversion of Colleges of Education to University Colleges to be mentored by the traditional universities leading to the award of degrees to teacher trainees in Ghana (Government of Ghana, 2016).

If learners consciously participate in the establishment and make up of visual culture, the fundamental essence of aesthetic encounters in an integrated perspective of culture depicting how the Ghanaian social community perceive the domains of fine arts, and hence art education, within an evolving rudiments of how pedagogical activities define the tenets for how society is critically perceived, consumed and comprehended.

Despite the hypostatic role Visual Arts education offers to learners, there is widespread misconception that only students with low mental assimilation venture into the study of Visual Arts in Ghana, leading to low patronage, and inability to fully harness its potentials. The low patronage of Visual Arts Education seems to invariably affect enthusiasm and motivation by tutors in the field which further aggravates the problem. The researchers however, posit that the Archaeological orientation of Art is too broad and somewhat abstract in African cultural traditions hence its widespread misconceptions.

In this vein, the researchers ask “Is there any correlation between female students’ artistic production and the teaching of visual culture within the selected Colleges of Education? Providing answers to the above would offer pragmatic recommendations to policy makers and educational stakeholders to learn unlearn and relearn as regards Visual Arts education in Ghana.

II. REVIEW OF EXTANT LITERATURE

2.1 Artistic Production

According to Nicholas Mirzoeff (2015), artistic production, consumption and appreciation have been the bedrock of interest by many a philosopher and psychologist in recent times. According to Ben Walmsley (2020), epistemological success as regards artistic production been hampered or jeopardized by weak theorization attributable to the inability to decipher complex phenomenological questions of enquiry to simplistic lines of interest. Suffice to reiterate that like arts marketing, the areas of philosophy and psychology have historically neglected to focus on complex notions of artistic production, consumption and engagement (Walmsley, 2020). According to Walmsy (2020), the teaching and learning of art and emotions “languished pretty much within the last decade” hence “the tutelage of emotional responses to art has been curiously detached from the psychology of emotions”. This disciplinary detachment creates a significant problem for arts production and has negatively created a vacuum at the heart of its visualization (Kerry Freedman, 2000).

The authors define artistic production to mean an architectural manifestation of visible or invisible creations through unique tools to present a unique cultural or symbolic appreciation to the human soul. As has been observed by Walmsley (2020), the situation of artistic production seems to be in its declining mode in Ghana. This is evidenced by the attitudinal culture of low patronage of the existing zoo and cultural centre within the hub of the garden city of Ghana(Kumasi). The authors vehemently posit that, regardless, artistic production cannot be entirely wiped from the Ghanaian educational system as it has become a way of life. During Church or Mosque events, fliers or posters are designed. During elections, politicians put up billboards of images and achievements etc. All these depict artistic production of a sort.

2.2 Visual Culture

Anaïs Nin, Seduction of the Minatour once opined that “we don't see things as they are, we view them as we are.”. Visual culture thus encompasses the artistic techniques and skills of identifying and appreciating artistic production. Visual culture remains an evolving field within the curricular of developing countries hence the new, emerging shift from art education curricula to include visuals examined by visual culture should be thoroughly reflected (Walmsley, 2020). It is widely an acceptable norm that culture is a way of life and visual culture is indifferent as it inhibits within us, articulated and practiced in our routine demonstrations (Zamar and Segura ,2020)

Duncum (2001) in an attempt to assess how the present status of visual culture is imbibed into art education suggested that visual culture remained an art educational paradigm and offers evidence like reports of classroom exercise; debate from protagonist and antagonist as well as dialogic and critical pedagogy.

The authors conclusive remarks on the visual culture is that “As long as academicians remain astute, there is the need to restrict our precious time debating on the structural deficit of curriculum and instead focus more on its meanings; we would concentrate less on state limited guidelines and more on the interconnectedness of the local and global communities ; we would be less motivated as regards the technical attributes of art and focus more on the fundamental tenets of art ;and more importantly, we would harness educational scarce resources from teaching students what we were taught and more on what they should rather know.

III. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey of qualitative design was used for the study to obtain information concerning current challenges of Colleges of Education concerning Visual Arts programme.

3.1 Population, Sampling and Techniques

According to Fraenkel and Wallen, (2000) “a population is a group to which the results of the study are intended to apply”. The accessible population for this research included Principals, Tutors and Students of Colleges of Education in St.

College of Education and Agogo Presbyterian Women’s College of Education. A total of hundred (150) respondents were contacted for the research through a purposive sampling technique.

3.2 Research Instruments

The mechanism for data collection was focused groups interviews; questionnaire and observation which captured the challenges faced by Colleges of Education Visual Arts Education especially in equipping them with the requisite skills to enable them teach the subject at the basic level of education in Ghana.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data obtained from the battery of tests (questionnaires) were presented and analyzed through frequency tables. Additionally, explanations were attached to the tables for clarity. As a “sine qua non”, frequency counts and valid per cents were obtained and perused using Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS, 26.0). The battery of test took the form of, the Likert categories of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree were used.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Bio Data of Respondents

As deduced from table 4.1, 90% of the respondents were females and 10% males. This is largely attributed to the fact that the selected Colleges of Education are female dominated tertiary institutions and the 10% males could be the male tutors in these institutions. Of the respondents, 75% were either students or tutors from Agogo Presbyterian Women’s College of Education and 25% from St. Louis College of Education. Find synopsis in table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1

Question	Response scheme	Frequency	
Gender of respondent	Male Female	15 135 N. 150	10% males 90% females
College of respondent	Agogo Presbyterian Women’s COE(APWCE) St. Louis COE(SLC)	112 38 N. 150	75% 25%

Source: Authors construct,(2020)

4.2 Artistic Production and Visual Culture of Art Education in Colleges of Education

4.2.1 Artistic production facilitates visual culture and enhances learner’s pragmatic skills

A whopping of 71% of the respondents strongly agreed to the aforementioned proposition whilst 24% agreed and 5% disagreed. The authors found that creative exercises depicting aesthetic and utilitarian response were regarded as ‘art’. Artistic production enabled female students to embrace visual culture and to act as good facilitators in the art taught so as to

enhance creativity and innovative ways of teaching the Arts subjects efficiently at the basic level of education. The findings are in tandem with Duncun (2001) who posited that visual culture constituted an art educational paradigm and provides evidence like reports of classroom exercise; debate from protagonist and antagonist as well as dialogic and critical pedagogy.

4.2.2 Artistic production facilitates acquisition of cognitive, psychomotor and affective skills

With respect to the above, 69% of the respondents strongly agreed that artistic production and visual culture in the teaching of Arts equipped learners with the three dimensions of education such as Cognitive skills (education of the head), Psychomotor skills (education of the hand) and Affective skills (education of the heart), 6% agreed and 25% disagreed with the preposition. The finding is congruent with Wamsley (2020). A strong proposition is made by the authors that arts in Africa are embedded in our places of religious worship, classrooms, shrines to mention but a few. Knowledge on the three domains enables the teacher trainees to appreciate the fundamental concepts and pragmatic skills of Visual Arts and further offers career for the teacher trainees. Summary is found in table 4.2 below:

Table 4.2: Response Rate

Question	Response scheme	Frequency	Percentage
Artistic production facilitates visual culture and enhances learner’s pragmatic skills?	Strongly agreed	106	71%
	b. Agreed	36	24%
	c. Disagreed	8	5%
		N=150	100
Artistic production facilitates acquisition of cognitive, psychomotor and affective skills?	Strongly agreed	103	69%
	b. Agreed	9	6%
	c. Disagreed	38	25%
		N=150	100

Source: Authors’ construct, (2020)

4.3 Implications of the Findings as Regards Visual Arts Education in Colleges of Education

The findings of the study have daring consequences with respect to Visual Arts Education in Colleges of Education; inadequate studios or laboratories for demonstration exercises tremendously impeded artistic production and visual culture tutelage. The situation is even being worsened by the increased intake in Colleges of Education in the 2020/2021 academic year which requires extra accommodation leading to the conversion of classrooms to halls of residence.

Similarly, inadequate teaching staff remains a threat on artistic production and visual culture. For instance, data picked from the 2020 budget shows that Agogo Presbyterian Women's College of Education has only two (2) Arts tutors currently at post whilst St. Louis College of Education has about 5 Arts tutors. St. Louis College of Education seems to major more in other related Arts courses like sculpture than Agogo Presbyterian Women's College of Education. This is partly attributable to the fact that each College of Education has a mandate to run specialized programmes for teacher trainees.

Lastly, assessments schemes for the Arts courses are more of theoretical instead of seeking to develop the cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills and this greatly affects the students' appreciation of the pragmatic aspect of Arts education within Colleges of Education in Ghana. The mode of assessing Colleges of Education students at the end of the semester is purely theoretical. The proportion of students who major in Art is woefully inadequate to fill the vacancies of Art teachers in Basic Schools due to the perception that art is for academic feeblest. Those that major in the art too are reluctant to teach the subject because they have shortfalls in practical experience.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

The researchers conclude that so long as academicians remain resolute in the field of Arts education, precious time should be utilized in building the core purpose of the Arts curricula in Colleges of Education than arguing on the structural deficit of the curriculum. Stakeholders are urged to concentrate less on state limited guidelines and more on the interconnectedness of the local and global communities in Arts education; less motivation as regards the technical attributes of art and focus more on the fundamental tenets of art; and more importantly, we should harness educational scarce resources from teaching students what we were taught and more on what they should rather know. In so doing, Arts education becomes attractive leading to greater interest by stakeholders to provide the needed resources for its implementation and hence, increasing its relevance in the minds of learners. Arts education, when taken seriously has the potential of creating jobs and careers for learners whilst concurrently minimizing unemployment.

Recommendation

In light with the research findings, the authors recommend that:

1. Stakeholders should ensure that every College has a well-furnished Visual Arts studio for practical demonstration and safe keeping of tools, materials and uncompleted project works.
2. Visual Arts department in Colleges that have their studios converted into classrooms should reclaim them in the medium term when halls of residence are completed.
3. Visual Arts tutors should endeavor to imbibe into learners' artistic production so as to enhance visual culture among learners for better appreciation of the subject.
4. Scholarship packages should be instituted for students willing to pursue Arts programmes in Colleges of Education so as to mitigate the current gap of shortage of Arts tutors.

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