



Immanent skills and entrepreneurial dispositions among visual artists in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

There are identified specific entrepreneurial potentials inherent in visual arts. Some temperaments of an entrepreneur are noticeable in a visual artist. What are these related dispositions? What kind of education required to excel as an art entrepreneur? The incorporation of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria's advanced learning institutions is commendable. Nevertheless, there is need for graduates to study the business of enterprising techniques. The necessity to sensitize the consciousness of visual artists is premised around the importance of self-reliance, to strive to be a job creator, rather than being an employment applicant, which contributes to economy of the society at large.

Keywords Entrepreneur, Self-reliant, Visual artist, Disposition, Entrepreneurship education

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AUTHOR'S BIO



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Introduction

Visual art as a profession is a vocational skill that provides an individual the opportunity of being an entrepreneur and the prospect of being self-reliant is wide. Digital age, technological advancement and innovation have expanded several avenues for the visual artist to explore in a dynamic dispensation full of numerous investment and opportunities for the development of the profession. The progression is wound around knowledge, creativity and skill expertise for economic growth. The visual artist is capable of applying his creative ability and experience to discover diverse opportunities in order to attain financial independence. Financial freedom is the ultimate goal of an entrepreneur. Consequently, the visual artist can be envisioned to become an entrepreneur because of common traits shared; an artist shares some attributes with an entrepreneur. Guile & Unwin (2019) consider that the inclination to design, produce, and market goods and services are motivated by individuals' possession of ideas and desires to utilise their expertise are based on consumers' demand while the digital technologies are utilised in marketing and selling their products. This individual's possession of ideas and desires (passion) are traits found in both entrepreneur and visual artist. Amsami (2014) affirms that the relationship between visual arts and entrepreneurship is demonstrated by their shared functionality. Amsami re-examines the opinion of Fasua (2006) which asserts that the willingness of an individual to pursue investment opportunities in an environment with the capability to establish and manage an enterprise is qualified to be an entrepreneur. This study is to sensitize the consciousness of visual artists of their potentials to excel in their career and contribute their quarter to the economy.

Concept of an artist and an entrepreneur

Both personalities have some related traits such that the qualities of an artist describe an entrepreneur. The commitment to studio practice, the determination to meet deadline of an art exhibition or a client, the resilience mindset to remain focus and strive consistently in difficult situations defines a goal-oriented personality. Whatever attitude possessed by an entrepreneur is observable in an artist such as the business mindset and creativity. For instance, a graphic designer is inclined to partnering with a business organization because of the connection in terms of understanding advertising and designing for advertising purpose and the graphic designer is inclined to establishing an advertising agency. Also, an entrepreneur is not necessarily an artist, however, in terms of creativity, both individuals have much to deliver. Wehmeier, McIntosh & Ashby (2005) defines a visual artist as a specialist "*who creates works of art*" and to the artist, the work of art is a product or service he has created or rendered using his creative mind, skills, materials, tools and sometimes, a team or a partner to achieve his goal. Martinsen (2011) supports the findings that the artist's personality trait can be observed in his technical approach to creating a work of art in the sense that an artist is a visionary with ingenuity who is imaginative, strategic, analytical, rational, pragmatic, organized, and resourceful in his attitude. Furthermore, his aesthetic approach to work enables him to be highly original, ambitious, committed, motivated, rebellious, focused, tenacious, independent, influential, sensitive and liberated. The visual artist is emotionally inclined to his work and idea, and highly critical of himself and others. For the entrepreneur. Garg (2022) aligns to the position that an entrepreneur is an individual who establishes a business by coordinating and assuming the risk involved in the business. An entrepreneur is cognizance of a necessity and combines human resources, material and finance required to meet that demand. An entrepreneur suggests a risk taker that utilizes an opportunity, initiates a business concept through

that opportunity, organizes and grows a team to build a business empire. Interestingly, Garg M.C. describes entrepreneurship as “*a composite skill*” with a combination of several qualities and traits such as imagination, risk-taking, and ability to utilize factors of production such as land, labour, technology and diverse intangible factors. Garg M.C. further highlights the traits of an entrepreneur to be conceptualizer, producer, manager, visionary, specialist, initiator, strategist, designer, motivator, communicator, leader, and administrator.

The comparison of a visual artist's attributes to the traits of an entrepreneur indicates their shared characteristics. Hence, the artist is inclined to becoming an entrepreneur. These similar traits do not guarantee absolute entrepreneurial success as there are necessary requirements for an artist with desire to be a successful entrepreneur which will be discussed later.

Related attributes of an entrepreneur in a visual artist

There are several traits of an entrepreneur. Nevertheless, the apparent disposition among the two personalities are identified below for the purpose of identifying certain entrepreneurship characters in a visual artist.

Creativity

One who initiates concept into existence or reality is a creator. Like an inventor, a visual artist and entrepreneur are both creators. While a visual artist create works of art or artistic concepts, an entrepreneur creates business ideas or investment plans. The visual artist is capable of channeling his creative ability into enterprising because the creative instinct applied by a visual artist in his profession can also be channeled towards attaining entrepreneurial goals. The visual artist is capable of transforming his creative thoughts into business ideas. In fact, the nature of visual art as a profession demands that any artwork a visual artist produces ends up marketed and sold. This initiative is a motivating factor for a

visual artist to reason like an entrepreneur by applying his concept to solve financial challenges. Therefore, Creativity is the ability to solve problems. Robinson & Aronica (2009) consider that to be creative, one needs to be engaged by putting the imagination in motion in order to create something new and create innovative solutions to problems. An entrepreneur solves financial challenges by establishing business in order to sustain himself and create employment for others. Hence, entrepreneurs' creative ability is utilized to solve unemployment. At the same time creativity can be applied by a visual artist to create employment for himself and others which can be art business, art related business or business outside art. Artist's creative ability is capable of achieving beyond the field of art because creativity and other intellectual abilities, when applied, function together to achieve a common goal. This is why Leonardo Da Vinci could explore the field of medicine, science and technology. The American business moguls Trump & Kiyosaki (2006) explain the rationale behind success that the human's brain left and right hemispheres are relevance to creativity. The left brain which is also known left hemisphere is generally associated with logic or linear thinking. People who are good at reading and mathematics are generally termed left-brain dominant. The right brain which is also called right hemisphere is identified to be more spatially oriented and is associated with people who are good at art and music. It is been argued that both sides, in reality, function together and not independently and it requires the functioning of the two hemispheres of the brain to achieve success. Also, Coch (2021) disputes that there is no independent “left-brain” or independent “right-brain” learners in education which is contrary to popular opinion. This implies that both hemispheres of the brain do not operate separately, rather, they function together to achieve a common goal. So, to an artist, creativity as requirement for entrepreneurship is imbedded in him in addition to other abilities (analytical, speech, reading, calculation) to excel in his endeavours.

Risk taking

The courage of an artist and an entrepreneur to take risk is a common attitude exhibited by both

personalities. The artist's experimentation with a combination of materials and techniques is directed towards obscure objective which may either end up appealing or unpleasant. In such situation, achieving a positive outcome is a success that may lead to artistic style. At the other hand, failure to achieve an appealing result can be frustrating considering time factor, huge finance and art materials spent on the artistic project. At the same time, the failure is an experience geared towards progression. A graphic designer, in an attempt to impress his client and promote a product, decides to utilize graphic illustration to replace photographic image for a billboard advertisement. The workability of such concept is obscure.

An entrepreneur, by the nature of his pursuit, is a risk taker and is bound to take risk to attain success. Failure does not define an entrepreneur, rather an entrepreneur learns from his failure and strive further. Several successful entrepreneurs most often encourage business oriented and young people to remain positive while trying. Zinn (2017) reveals that all endeavours or pursuits in life are associated with risk. Researches have revealed that several people take risks consciously, though, risk-taking might be contrary to experts' advice, regardless of their being exposed to possible problem. Taking an action or executing a course without determining the outcome is risk taking. An entrepreneur is bound to take risk in enterprise though, the outcome of opportunities under exploration is precarious. Trump & Kiyosaki (2006) emphasize that entrepreneurs are individuals who desire to attempt something different. Experimentation, to a visual artist, is risk taking. Risk taking is one attribute of a visual artist because he experiments in art practice. For the purpose of gaining ground, the visual artist crave for experimenting with art materials without fore knowledge of the result. His thirst for new discovery motivates him to explore with diverse materials contrary

to conventional art materials. Therefore, a visual artist intending to become an entrepreneur is capable of taking risk.

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Passion

An entrepreneur is consistent regardless of challenges encountered on regular basis. The motif behind this attitude is passion. In most cases, initial attempt to start business usually lead to failure and frustration. In fact, subsequent attempts can be devastating after committing his resources to the business. Vallerand (2010) as cited from Fellnhofer (2017) defines passion as a strong desire toward a self-determining activity that is loved, important while time and energy are being invested. Passion is a strong disposition of a visual artist. Passion is a motivating factor to pursue a goal. The drive to keep producing works of art in a shrinking economy is an indication that a visual artist is capable of becoming an entrepreneur. Likewise, an entrepreneur is passionate about his entrepreneurial idea and pursuit. Being focused on actualizing his goals is compared to artist's zeal to produce fascinating artworks. Robinson & Aronica (2009) believe that being in one's "element" which means a state of feeling comfortable while being engaged and performing a task at his best, requires something more passion. People who are in their

Element derive pleasure in what they do. Irrespective of business failure encountered at initial stage of his business, an entrepreneur's desire to succeed is a driving force. An art entrepreneur is passionate to succeed. As explained from Fellnhofner (2017) by Pierre Omidyar, founder and chairman of eBay, that a person who is passionate about a task and works hard will be successful. Mark Zuckerberg, founder and CEO of Facebook stated that if one simply embarks on a task being passionate about, one will not require a master plan on how the task will be accomplished. Like any other career, art is quite demanding. Commitment to art practice is required. In the course of his career, he devotes time to exploring new concepts and acquiring financial education. His unrelenting effort to succeed sustains him against all odds.

Self-reliance

Visual art by nature is a vocational skill acquisition that focuses on self-reliance, though there are opportunities opened for visual art graduates in industries and advertising agencies and some organizations where the services of visual artists are needed. Dateba & Yunius (2015) compares art to any vocational education programme with the intention of training individuals to acquire skills to be employed and become self-reliant. Furthermore, Nigeria as a developing country demands a competent knowledge of practical artistic skills to build a strong and self-reliant society. The studio art practitioners are self-reliant; the painter, sculptor, photographer, fashion designer and graphic designer enjoy the privilege of independence by the nature of their professions. While the visual artist enjoys the benefits of being independent, self-reliance is a quality associated with an entrepreneur. (Jwasshaka, Amin & Dogara, 2018) states that entrepreneurial skills provide the entrepreneur ability required for self-reliant in the society. Business oriented people desire to be independent. The zeal to attain financial independence is the priority of business oriented people. Every entrepreneur

desires independence for decision making, creativity, time, and schedule which are the privileges enjoyed. On this note, a visual artist is capable of becoming an entrepreneur.

Importance of entrepreneurship education for visual artist

With practical knowledge in art, every visual artist as entrepreneur-to-be needs to acquire entrepreneurship education which include, among others, financial education and managerial skill acquisition which is termed entrepreneurship education. Ukah & Atah (2021) define entrepreneurship education as the individual's ability to convert ideas into action and further explain that entrepreneurship education includes innovation, creativity and risk taking coupled with the ability to organize and coordinate projects with the intention of achieving objectives and mastery individual's life. This description of entrepreneurship education is the type of training given to awaken a sense of initiative in individuals and their abilities to turn ideas into reality. Tertiary institutions in Nigeria have included entrepreneurship education into school curriculum. According to Ukah & Atah, entrepreneurship education in a school curriculum ensures that each learner has a privilege to become an entrepreneur with the orientation that each student is the architect of his/ her fortune. The economic reality of today demands for self-reliance by advocating for a functional entrepreneurship programmes which are reflected in school curriculum to foster students' self-reliance after graduating from school. Jwasshaka, Amin & Dogara, (2018) emphasize that students' entrepreneurial competency is necessary for sustenance of competitive and innovative global economy.

Entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions is not fully taught because of the short duration of the programme in school. After graduation, fresh graduates need to attend further special entrepreneurship education for explicit knowledge because school cannot impact all necessary knowledge to students within the stipulated duration of tertiary education. Further entrepreneurship education after tertiary education include business school (such as Lagos business

School), seminar, training and conference. The necessary knowledge includes managerial or administrative skills to manage the organizational team and experts, financial management, accounting and other relevant education necessary for the business. Alternatives are audio-visual materials, online, books and any other means of acquiring financial education.

Trump & Kiyosaki (2006) emphasize that the need to acquire financial education is paramount as emphasized by. Here, financial education does not refer to accounting and book keeping or economics and commerce but how money works and the proper utilization of money to achieve desired result such as diverting money to assets rather than liabilities. Unconsciously, by nature of his profession, an artist invests on assets which are the works of art he produces. This is an indication of being on the right track. Over the years, experience plays vital role in business. After Entrepreneurs had acquired considerable education necessary for the establishment of their businesses, experience garnered over time include the success, failure and management of financial and human capitals. These experiences are best form of education.

Conclusion

The vocational inclination of visual art practice initiates the perception of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship permeates through art practices enables the visual artist to possess the capacity to become an entrepreneur because of some entrepreneurial attributes possessed by an artist. Subsequently, an entrepreneur and an artist share common temperaments. Further requirement needed by an artist aside the entrepreneurial skill is entrepreneurship/financial education. The contents of this programme include managerial, business administrative skills and financial education. An artist projecting towards this direction needs to create opportunities through art or explore and utilize opportunities in his environment. There is need for the visual artist to be dynamic and innovative in an evolving world of digital, technological advancement. The artist should make himself relevant in the economy by applying his talent and skill for profit, investment and to create employment. The society need creative, intelligent and viable youths to transform the economy. This goal is more achievable by Government's initiative to foster the investment of human capital as part of its economy policy.

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