

## EVALUATION OF ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF ARTISTIC VOCATION IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

Art in sustainable national development have been orchestrated by scholars for many years, yet the impact of the practice as vocation remains very minimal. The study is limited to artists who have taken the practice as a vocation within the Ogbomoso Township of Oyo State, Nigeria. Qualitative and Quantitative approaches were adopted to analyze the data. Descriptive statistical tools used include frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation and weighted Mean scores (WMS). The total population of the registered vocational artists within the study area is one hundred and fifteen (115) from which a total number of eighty (80) respondents were randomly selected for the study and data were collected through the use of a structured questionnaire Findings revealed that artistic practice was the major occupation and that the practice has contributed majorly to the household sustainability in the areas of finance and improved social status; however, they were confronted with low-quality materials and equipment. It concludes that the artistic practice is dominated by men, and that women should be encouraged into the artistic vocation so as to ensure gender equality.

**KEYWORDS:** Economic Viability, Artistic Practice, Local Painter, Ogbomoso

### INTRODUCTION

Artistic practices are important to nation economies (The NGA Center for Best Practices, 2008). Arts provide direct economic benefits to the nation and immediate communities. The practices enable jobs creation, attract investments, generate tax revenues, and stimulate local economies through consumer purchases. These practices also provide an array of other benefits, such as infusing other sectors with creative insight for their products and services and preparing workers to participate in the contemporary workforce. In addition, because they enhance the quality of life, the arts are an important complement to community development, enriching local amenities and attracting young professionals to the practice. The vocational practice has been an age-long method used in training young people in the crafts. During the pre-colonial periods, apprenticeship was the mode of training. It is a common feature of the traditional setting to see people engage in a vocation such as farming, fishing, hunting, carving, carpentry, sculpting, painting, building, decorating, smiting, dyeing, and so on (Usuala, 1999). The artistic vocation has been a source of economic survival of many of the practitioners in Nigeria with a concentration on income generation to cater for the immediate needs of their family.

In Nigeria, various artists cater for the immediate needs of the local market through the display of different craftworks such as leather works, pottery, textile, painting, graphic, sculpture, and other creative works that are capable of driving the economy of the locality. These sets of artists within different locality in Nigeria are those this paper describes as the local artist. Local artist in the context of this study refers to the artistic practices by the side of the road; these people

acquired their training through apprentice and formal training from art institutions in Nigeria. They are often called 'road side artist' all because they are situated by the side of the road. These artists engage in general artistic practices ranging from painting, graphic, textile, ceramics and others. They usually concentrated majorly in paintings and graphics works with specific subject matter ranging from portraits making, figural expression and abstract painting, while in graphic they engage in any form of printing activities. Their impact in the society has been enormous as they contribute to the socio-cultural and economic status of the city. The people visit them in their shops for any artistic engagement. Most of their activities are limited to the local market without an opportunity to national and international exhibitions. They have their registered professional association that controls their activities (Ogbomoso Professional Art Publicity), while some are not registered members of the association. The responsibility of the association is to serve as their trade union in case there is a dispute within their professional practices; also monetary contribution is made to boost their economic sustainability.

Most of the extant studies in Nigeria art have not been the focus on the socio-economic viability of Nigeria artists, Oluremi Bamisaye noted in the forward of the book written by Kalilu (2010) titled: *Vocational Education and the Challenges of the Nigerian Economy*. She noted that the place of Art and artistic development with respect to their economic value has a great impact on the national economy. The study, though very rich in content and illustrations but did touch the focus of this paper. However, the book has consequently bridged certain gaps and leveraged the imbalance created by the dearth of studies in these aspects of the art history of Nigeria. As a subset of this literature, studies of visual arts have tended to focus on the financial performance of art as an investment asset (Pesando, 1991). However, there is a host of other interesting economic problems associated with the art market.

### **Economic Viability of Artistic Vocation in Nigeria**

Economic viability is when a project proves to be economically feasible, innovative and sustainable in terms of investing financial resources into the project. It is in a broad sense necessary to enable wider adoption of sustainable practices in Nigeria. The activities of the arts and culture sector and local economic vitality connected in many ways as they contribute to the development of a skilled workforce. The contribution of the art to the economic viability of a city is equally important and intriguing. Arts as an enterprise and professional practice designed diligently within the framework of national development policies that will showcase the potential that will add value to the micro and macro economy potentials in Nigeria. Government at every level in Nigeria has not shown concern about this area to boost the national economy. The contribution of arts to Nigeria's development can easily be lost in historical details; nonetheless it is important to point out that these roles though mostly masked in clandestine modules are huge, outstanding and quite enormous. Art generally connotes performing, literary and visual art and are been practiced as a vocation for the sustainable economy in Nigeria.

In performance praxis, it means the medley of the three dominant areas of the arts, namely; the arts of Drama, Dance, and Music. It encapsulates the totality of life including hopes, aspirations and the apparent chaos and confusion which adhere to life. It is often used as a mnemonic agent to enhance perpetuation of ideas and policies in people's minds. In Nigeria, Drama, Dance, and Music has become good sources of income to national development and also play significant roles in the cultural life of the people, but it has not received the needed attention it deserves. A lot of people engage in this vocational practice and they survive through it by staging plays, concerts and home video industry which generate high-level incomes to the individual and to the Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 2014, president

Goodluck Jonathan invested so much money into Nollywood industry which has manifested in the Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the industry contributed 1.4% to Nigeria GDP (Chidumga, 2016).

Literary art is understood in a multiplicity of ways. It is a body of written or oral works, such as novels, poetry, or drama that use words to stimulate the imagination and confront the reader with a unique vision of life. A good literary work demonstrates craft and artistry and has the capacity to raise income and improve the economy of an individually and Nation at large. In Nigeria, both young and old people survive through one form of literary work or the other in form of publication of novels and poetries. This vocation has contributed in no small measure to the income generation and sustainable development of the Nigeria economy.

The visual arts are art forms such as ceramics, drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, design, crafts, photography, filmmaking and architecture. This practice has been an age long vocation that has supported income generation in Nigeria. Some artists of this kind acquire the training through formal education while some are through apprentice training. Those formally trained artists with a high level of exposure display their products in the gallery, museum, and exhibition venue with the primary aim of showcasing their talent and cultural heritage. This category of artist generates income through commission works and sale of their products. Those informally trained artists or those that situate beside the road are those this study describes as the local artist or road side artist, they make their income through artistic servicing of their community in the area of signboard writing, painting, screen-printing and others. The economic viability of this practice lies in the ability of the artist to sustain their socio-economic status within the needs of the society. This has helped over the years to achieve the Millennium Development Goals of alleviating poverty in Nigeria society.

This study is highly expedient in order to highlight the economic potential, relevance, and sustainability within the society. However, this study examines the economic viability of local artists in Ogbomoso, Oyo state, Nigeria, with the aim of determining its sustainability, challenges, perception and impact of the artistic practice of social development in Nigeria.

## METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, and South-western Nigeria. The term Ogbomoso is used to refer to Ogbomoso Township and its environs. Ogbomoso township is located approximately around latitude  $8^{\circ}15'$  north of the equator and around latitude  $4^{\circ}15'$  east of the Greenwich. It is among the largest cities in Nigeria (Adedibu, 2002). The population was approximately 299,535 in 2006 census (National Population census, 2006). The majority of the people are members of the Yoruba ethnic group. Ogbomoso metropolis is comprised of five local government, namely Ogbomoso North, Ogbomoso south, Ogo-Oluwa, Surulere and Orire local government. Ogbomoso Township has witnessed great social development and economic activities in recent time through individual and community efforts. The principal occupation of the people in the area is farming, trading, teaching, and artisans. A Larger number of people of the town rely on one vocation or the other to cater for their family needs. This vocation is achieved through one form of apprentice training or the other which is passed from one generation to the other. This practice is not limited to people of Ogbomoso area but all over Nigeria. This study, however, is limited to the artistic practice of local artists within Ogbomoso Township and its environs of Oyo state, Nigeria.



**Figure 1: Map Showing Oyo State of Nigeria Map Showing the Study Area in Source: Source:en.wikipedia.org Source: ibadanmedia.com**

The economic sustainability among the local artists in Nigeria was measured using a simple random sampling technique to collect data from the respondents based on the stated objectives of the study. The respondents were the registered local artists who have taken the profession as a vocation within Ogbomoso metropolis of Oyo state, Nigeria. The selection of the study area is necessary because of the strategic location of the area and the population that has encouraged a high level of economic activities of the people of the area. Qualitative and Quantitative approaches were adopted to analyze the data and the data for the study were taken at nominal and ordinal level. Descriptive statistical tools used include frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation and weighted Mean scores (WMS). The total population of the registered local artists within the study areas is one hundred and fifteen (115) (Association Directorate, 2016). A total number of one hundred (100) questionnaires were distributed out of which eighty (80) were returned for analysis. This study, therefore, determined the economic viability and the downturn in the business of local artist in Nigeria, with particular reference to Ogbomoso community.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Socio – Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by age. It was revealed that most (47.5%) of the respondents were between 20-29 years. The mean age of the respondents was calculated as 36 year, this shows that most of them were still in their productive age which could help in boosting artistic practice profession. It is also indicated in table 1 that all (100.0%) the respondents sampled for this research work were male. This implies that men dominated artistic profession in the study area (Ogbomoso metropolis). There is, therefore, need to encourage women into the artistic profession so as to ensure gender equality in the study area. The distribution of respondents by marital status revealed that 60.0 percent of the respondents were married while 40.0 percent were single, which is an indication that most of the respondents were married and that they are more likely to be committed to their profession so as to sustain their households' responsibilities. 65 percent of the respondents practiced Christianity as a religion while 35 percent of the respondents were associated with Islamic religion. This result indicates that the two major religions (Christianity and Islam) exist peacefully in the study area, which implies that there is no religious barrier to artistic practice profession in the study area. All (100.0%) the sampled respondents were members of Yoruba socio-cultural ethnic group. This finding may be connected with the fact that the research was carried out in Ogbomoso which is one of the ancient towns in Yoruba ethnic group terrain (territory).

However, 53.8 percent of the respondents had completed secondary education while about 46.2 percent of the

respondents had finished tertiary education, which means most of the respondents had basic educational qualification which enables effective practice in the profession. This could afford a prospective artist in Ogbomosho an opportunity for effective reading and writing capacity for the betterment of their profession. The practice was also observed to be the major (primary) occupation of the respondents. This implies that the vocation could be relied on comfortably for household's economic sustainability. 62.5 percent of the respondents had between 1-5 members in their household while 37.5 percent had above 5 members in their households. It was therefore observed that most of the respondents had between 1-5 household sizes which imply that the number of the members is still within the normal range. The mean years of experience was calculated to be 12 years. This is an indication that many of the respondents had long years of experience in the practice, which is also an indication that the profession is sustainable and reliable.

The result also showed that 26.2 percent of the respondents earned above ₦200, 000 as their annual income, 18.8 percent of the respondents generated between ₦10, 000 – ₦49, 000 and ₦100, 000 - ₦149, 000 as their annual income respectively. Moreover, 8.7 percent of the respondents earned between ₦50, 000 – ₦99, 000 annual incomes while only 7.5 percent earned less than ₦10, 000 annual incomes from their primary occupation in the study area. This indicates that annual income generated by the respondents are sustainable considering the fact that majority of them are the low-income earner. This is also shows that majority of the respondents live below 1\$ per day as recommended living standard by UNICEF (Human Development Report, 2006) which is an indication that they are below the international standard of extreme poverty. 43.8 percent of the respondent had between 6-10 customers per month, 18.7 percent had between 1-5 customers per month as well as between 16-20 customers per month. Moreover, 13.8 percent of the respondents had between 11-15 customers per month while about 5.0 percent of the respondents had above 20 customers per month. This shows that generally the appreciation and patronage of art within the locality is low compared to other trades in the environment.

It was revealed that majority of the respondents (47.5%) had both family and hired trainees under them. This is an indication that most of the respondents create an avenue for their family members to get involved in their profession. Also on table 1, the major source of information identified in the study area was mobile phone (61.2%) which implies that mobile phone was the most widely utilized source of information for their creative potentials in the study area.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Socio – Economic Characteristics

Age Range (Years)	Frequency	Percentage
20-29	38	47.5
30-39	13	16.2
40-49	29	36.3
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	80	100.0
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married	48	60.0
Single	32	40.0
<b>Religion</b>		
Christianity	52	65.0
Islam	28	35.0
<b>Ethnic group</b>		
Yoruba	80	100.0
<b>Educational level</b>		
Secondary education completed	43	53.8
	37	46.2
<b>Primary occupation</b>		
Artwork	80	100.0
<b>Household size</b>		
1-5	50	62.5
6-10	30	37.5
<b>Years of experience</b>		
1-5	27	33.8
6-10	28	35.0
<b>Annual income (₦)</b>		
<10,000	6	7.5
10,000-49,000	15	18.8
50,000-99,000	7	8.7
100,000-149,000	15	18.8
150,000-199,000	16	20.0
<b>Average customers per month</b>		
1-5	15	18.7
6-10	35	43.8
11-15	11	13.8
16-20	15	18.7
<b>Number of trainees</b>		
None (self)	1	1.3
Family	27	33.7
Hired	14	17.5
<b>Number of trainees</b>		
None (self)	1	1.3
Family	27	33.7
Hired	14	17.5
<b>Regular sources of information</b>		
Mobile phone	41	61.2
Personal interaction	13	16.3
Radio/television	8	10.0
Magazine	18	22.5

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2016

### Sustainability of the Artistic Practices

The major reason why most of the practitioners engage in the practice was observed to be accidental (41.3%) while some are because of high-income benefit and peer group influence. This implies that unforeseen circumstances often motivate individual to go into a particular profession. The branches of artistic profession identified in the study area include general art (62.5%), graphic (31.3%), textile (5.0%) and painting (1.3%). The result, therefore, indicates that most of the respondents were into the general art which encompasses all aspects of the artistic profession. This may be to generate more income and another benefit to themselves. 50.0 percent of the respondent claimed that they secured sufficient income from artistic profession. This implies that majority of the respondents are having sustainable income through the practice.

However, 73.8 percent of the respondents utilized imported tools for artwork, 10.0 percent used local tools while 16.3 percent utilized the combination of local and imported tools for their artwork. It was therefore revealed that imported tools were mostly utilized for artwork in the study area. The high rate of using imported tools may be in the bid of matching up with the international standard especially due to technological advancement in the world. 68.8 percent of the respondents agreed that engagement in artistic practices often moderately meet their financial commitment at home, 16.3 percent of the respondents were of the view that engagement in artistic practice play low roles in meeting commitment at home while 15.0 percent claimed that it played a significant (high) role in meeting financial commitment at home. This is an indication that the majority of the respondents are comfortable with the daily, weekly and annual income generated through the practice and they live within it. However, in pure economic terms, and also has been recommended by UNESCO as standard living, the average yearly income of the respondents are still above poverty line. Typically it is measured when the income falls below some minimal level of the international standard of less than 1\$ a day (Human Development Report, 2006). The average annual income of the respondents is 200,000 thousand naira, which means the majority are living above poverty line.

**Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Sustainability of Artistic Practices**

Reasons for Engaging in Artistic Practice	Frequency	Percentage
High income benefits	24	30.0
Peer group influence	8	10.0
Accidental	33	41.3
<b>Branches</b>		
Painting	1	1.3
Graphic	25	31.3
Textile	4	5.0
Ceramics	0	0.0
General Art	50	62.5
<b>Level of income from artistic practice profession</b>		
Sufficient	40	50.0
Not sufficient	40	50.0
<b>Level of customers / patronage / week</b>		
Highly encouraging	15	18.8
Encouraging	29	36.2



<b>Social class of customers</b>		
High social class	8	10.0
Middle social class	72	90.0
<b>Types of equipment / tools used for artwork</b>		
Local	8	10.0
Imported	59	73.8
Both	13	16.3
<b>Educational status of trainees/apprentice</b>		
Primary education	22	27.5
Secondary education	44	55.0
<b>Financial commitment at home</b>		
Highly	12	15.0
Moderately	55	68.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2016

### Challenges to Artistic Practices

Table 3 presents that most of the respondents (60.0%) agreed that manual skill of artistic production consumes more time. Other challenges to artistic practices include low patronage situation (25.0%), scarcity of materials / equipment needed in the art practice (46.3%), insufficient apprentice and labourers (36.3%), poor turnout apprentice for training (28.8%) and difficulty in securing information on modern stylistic trend in art (13.8%). The major challenge indicates that the respondents have been doing most of their production manually which has been slowing mass production quality of their work. This has greatly reduced their production capacity and time and it has really reduced their income generation.

**Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Challenges**

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Materials/equipment not available	37	100.0
Information on modern stylistic trend in art not accessible	11	75.0
Patronage not encouraging	20	25.0
Low patronage affects apprenticeship training	23	28.8
Manual skill of Artistic production consumes more time	48	60.0
Apprentice and labourers are not sufficient	29	36.3

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2016

### Perception of Artistic Practice as a Vocation

Table 4 presents the distribution of respondents by their perception of artistic practice as a vocation. Most of the respondents agreed that artistic practice requires natural talent and was ranked highest with a Weighted Mean Score (WMS) of 4.58. This was closely followed by artistic practice potentially improve the aesthetic value of the society (WMS



= 4.50). Others in the rank order include artistic practice promotes self-reliance (WMS = 4.45), men were perceived to be more dominant than women in artistic profession (WMS = 4.40), the practice serves as a source of employment opportunity (WMS = 4.38), income from artistic practice is encouraging (WMS = 4.36), artistic practice complements their popularity (WMS = 4.34), artistic practice is a complex profession (WMS = 4.28), artistic practice is not a lucrative profession (WMS = 3.93) and a practice for drop out. The perception of most of the respondents is that artistic practice requires natural talent since artwork requires personal skills, creativity, and intuition. This result shows that artistic practice is more of talented practice than what can be learned. Though, there are significant areas where artists must learn about certain technique and material usage for current innovative production.

**Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Perception**

Statements	SA	A	UD	D	SD	WMS	RANK
Artistic practice is for drop out	1(1.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	45(56.3)	34(42.5)	1.16	10 <sup>th</sup>
Men are more dominant than women in artistic profession	60(75.0)	6(9.5)	0(0.0)	14(17.5)	0(0.0)	4.4	4 <sup>th</sup>
Income from artistic practice is encouraging	43(53.8)	30(37.5)	0(0.0)	7(8.8)	0(0.0)	4.36	6 <sup>th</sup>
Artistic practice is not a lucrative profession	18(22.5)	50(62.5)	0(0.0)	12(15.0)	0(0.0)	3.93	9 <sup>th</sup>
Artistic practice improve the aesthetic value of our environment	40(50.0)	40(50.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	4.50	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Artistic practice require natural talent	46(57.5)	34(44.5)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	4.58	1 <sup>st</sup>
Artistic practice is a complex profession	24(30.0)	55(68.8)	1(1.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	4.34	8 <sup>th</sup>
Artistic practice complements their popularity	27(33.8)	58(66.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	4.38	7 <sup>th</sup>
The practice serves as a source of employment opportunity	30(37.5)	50(62.5)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	4.38	5 <sup>th</sup>
Artistic practice promotes self-reliance	36(45.0)	44(55.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	4.45	3 <sup>rd</sup>

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2016

### Impact of Artistic Practices on Social Development

There is little or no variation in the pattern of respondents towards the impact of the vacation on social development. As shown in Table 5, results revealed that artistic practice creates an opportunity to relate with highly influential people in the society through commission works and also expose the artist to many people within and outside their localities. Other impacts include, increment in the wealth through income generated from artistic practice (82.5%), increased personal skills, knowledge and attitude through training and workshops (82.5%), promotion of educational qualification of household members through income generated from artistic practice (81.3%), improvement in household standard of living (75.0%), and better mobility status (72.5%). The result inferred that artistic practice has contributed immensely to the social development of the respondents and households' sustainability especially in the area of finance, food, and social status.

**Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by Impact of Artistic Practices on Social Development**

Impact	Frequency	Percentage
Granted me Opportunity	80	100.0
Improved Living Standard	60	75.0
Promoted Educational	65	81.3
Exposure outside locality	80	100.0
Increased wealth	66	82.5
Increased skill, knowledge	66	82.5
Better mobile status	56	72.5

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2016

\*Multiple responses

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Nigerian economy has waited too long for the needed diversification and improvement of the natural resources and harnessing the inherent talents of the citizens, in order to put into proper utilization for sustainable development. The Arts are nature's heritage, a gift, and talent that have made the people unique and sophisticated. The artistic vocation has contributed immensely to household sustainability in the areas of finance and improved social status and has also created opportunity to relate with highly influential people and a higher exposure to the artists outside their localities. The vocational artists in Nigeria society should be exposed to modern materials and equipment so as to compete favorably with their counterpart in another part of the world. The study recommends that women should be encouraged into the artistic vocation so as to ensure gender equality. The contribution of artistic practice in Nigeria can no doubt be a strong factor in the modern economy.

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