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# Entrepreneurial Curricula in University of Nigeria and National Youth Service Corps (NYSC): An Investigation for Art Inclusivity

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## Abstract

*This study evaluated the existing entrepreneurship curricula for Nigerian undergraduates and graduates, focusing on the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) and the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) as representative on-school and off-school institutions. The Action Research aimed to: (i) determine whether entrepreneurship is integrated into the undergraduate and graduate programmes for Nigerian youth, (ii) compare the structure and development of art entrepreneurship in undergraduate and graduate programmes, and (iii) encourage art conferences and exhibitions among NYSC members to promote the cultural heritage of their host communities. Data were collected from 485 respondents using two instruments: (i) the UNN-NYSC Art Entrepreneurship Curricula Assessment Opinion Poll (UNN-NYSC-AECAOP) and (ii) the UNN-NYSC Art Entrepreneurship Curricula Assessment Data Graph (UNN-NYSC-AECADG). Findings revealed that, while entrepreneurship is included in the curricula of both UNN and NYSC, art entrepreneurship has not been adequately prioritized as an independent sector. Respondents across various disciplines indicated that acquiring basic art skills could enable graduates to become self-reliant in the absence of white-collar jobs. Furthermore, art was identified as a valuable tool for projecting the cultural identity of NYSC host communities.*

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurship, exhibitions, skills acquisition, curricula, exhibitions*

## Introduction

New initiatives all recognize that resource wealth can provide a means for poorer nations to decisively break poverty—by diversifying economies and funding development spending (Addison & Roe, 2018). An entrepreneur is a businessman, investor, capitalist, self-dependent, employer, and wealth creator. There are many definitions of entrepreneurship but what they have in common is the index that an entrepreneur is not a table theorist. Entrepreneurship means private venture or establishment. It can also be defined as a course of initiating economic activities as a lawful enterprise to create wealth. Entrepreneurship flows from innovation to creation; the field of chosen enterprise determines what manner of entrepreneurship each could be termed, for instance, art entrepreneurship because it is art-oriented.

Nigeria is characterized by a large, growing, and active population, with sanitation lifestyles resulting in high demand for expensive foreign goods and services. Most citizens have a negative attitude towards made-in-Nigeria goods/services and are highly religious to the point of intolerance in some states (Ihugba et al, 2013). Irrespective of the militating mindsets of the citizens there is a need to push further the drive for self-dependence among Nigerian students and graduates. One of the most challenging issues is the primordial mentality of most parents towards art, even when in some cases, their children are artistically gifted. In dissuading an artistically gifted child from studying arts-based courses, and perhaps preferring the sciences, a journey of life's failure is already begun for the child. Granted, art is

not the only discipline with entrepreneurial tendencies, but in most disciplines, artistic pluralities emerge across their theoretical and practical stages. Books published in all disciplines have book illustrations on them, to deepen learning and understating. Instructional materials used to enhance learning, analogue or digital, are largely art products, as in the case of digital instructional media that are loaded with 3D animations, images, and icons that are indices to good use of the ICT systems.

### **How the System Dwindled**

The need for inculcating entrepreneurship in education in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized. The economic structure of Nigeria and indeed, most former colonies of the Whiteman were hinged on the establishment of civil service by the expatriate colonial masters while entrenching their administrative structures. There were also trade treaties, in which our raw materials were sold to the white men and later imported back as by-products at a much higher rate. Such trade treaties, as exemplified in the case of oil palm, rubber, and cocoa, benefited the British government but by all far-reaching calculations, cheated on the actual raw material owners; the African local nations.

During the colonial era, most Nigerian companies and civil service workers were in the lower cadres as messengers, cleaners, drivers, and labourers. Others were occasionally contracted pay-off artisans. There were also typists and secretaries employed by the bloc who attended commercial schools and learned typing and secretarial basics. With time, regard and consideration for university degrees in civil service outclassed those of college and commercial school certificates, thereby making the labour market more competitive. More universities began to spring up and as time went on, postgraduate degrees started surpassing degrees in the labour market.

From the time when the expatriates were leaving Nigeria; it was only a matter of decades before the civil service and private sector establishments they entrenched started getting over-flooded, and in some cases, packing up. Administrative theft and corruption on the side of those who inherited the upper echelons of civil service were getting the better of the system, and collapse became inevitable. At some point, only establishments, schools, and hospitals owned by churches and missionary societies were credited with quality services devoid of corruption and nepotism. In recent years the more thousands of graduates are turned out every year, the more competitive the labour became, and the need for individual job creation, therefore arose.

### **Challenges Facing Entrepreneurship in Nigeria**

The Federal Government of Nigeria had, as far back as 1970 shown concern for the development of small and medium-scale industries as a means of empowering the youth. The establishment of small and medium-scale industries became the government's priority as it was fully approved for the Second National Development Plan (1970-74). The document emphasized that small-scale industries have the potential for Nigerian Industrialization. It was perceived, according to Okenwa (1999), that well-developed and viable small-scale enterprises are capable

of: (i) promoting the development of indigenous manpower as well as ownership and participation in manufacturing industries in the country, (ii) checking rural, urban migration by creating job opportunities in rural and semi-urban areas, (iii) mobilizing local resources, both human and material, and (iv) raising the standard of living of the people.

In studying the relationship between government entrepreneurial programmes on youth SME participation in Nigeria, Adebayo (2015) surveyed 250 samples using the questionnaire via an online platform across the beneficiaries of the Federal Governmental SMEs financial intervention scheme- Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWiN). The study findings showed that government intervention programmes such as financial, infrastructural, and capacity building are paramount to new venture creation among the youth. The findings further reveal a significant positive correlation between the availability of funds and new venture creation.

Entrepreneurship is not new in Nigeria. Obiajuru, (2012) submitted that entrepreneurial forces are relatively strong in Nigeria because it has become paramount in a “specially tottering economy” like Nigeria’s, that her citizens, young and old alike unemployed, under-employed, and even the employed, take on enterprising and risk-taking characteristics in order to sustain family and self, above the poverty line. According to Topham (2014) insecure, low-paid jobs are leaving record numbers of families in poverty, with two-thirds of people who found jobs in the past year taking jobs for less than the living wage.

A weak entrepreneurial climate has been a major constraint militating against the drive for self-reliance and economic autonomy and has resulted in an increasing rate of unemployment, vandalism, and other social vices among the youth in Nigeria (Adebayo, 2015). Beyond the above-stated, the main barrier standing between Nigeria and entrepreneurial development is corruption. The chase for quick money is accentuated by the way society celebrates those parading ill-gotten wealth, to the detriment of those labouring to create wealth by themselves. While the stunted growth of entrepreneurship could also be attributed to our ever-growing population, it is good to note that developed countries also grow in population. The difference is that Nigeria is a consumer nation, not a productive type; for this reason, population will always remain a reason for regrets, not wealth making. China has been able to harness its population strengths to develop its economy, and so do many other big economies. Nigeria's population should also be taken advantage of to boost entrepreneurship. Available natural resources should be harnessed to increase entrepreneurship and decrease the challenges of insecurity across the country.

### **The Thrust of Art**

The nature of art makes it possible for many definitions and descriptions of it to emerge. From the much ‘commonised’ definition; art is ‘a means of self-expression’ to many others, art, in its ramifications serves utilitarian, aesthetic, economic, intellectual, and entrepreneurial purposes. It is even safe to say that art is a teaching approach in disciplines outside of art as a discipline. In the current context, one can

define art as an entrepreneurial discipline that engenders the intellect with skills beyond aesthetics and utilitarianism.

Art is fundamental to society, a network of useful, pleasurable, challenging, and potentially transforming practices (Addison and Burgess, 2007). To capture the plurality of art, and thereby avoid extensional worries, definitions often become dangerously complex, borderline arbitrary, or circular. Such definitions, in conjunction with the concept of monism, yield application conditions for art that are uninformative, highly complex, disjunctive, wholly unrelated, or wholly interrelated. Although there may not be a universally accepted definition of art, any attempt to define the concept must take some critical issues into account (Uidhir and Magnus, 2011). Enamhe, (2007) defined art as a visual language whose statement records man's response to a multiplicity of environmental stimuli. Such stimuli can be social, political, cultural, or even religious in closed or open societies.

Buttressing the nature of art, especially within the confines of education, the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2012) could not have expressed it any better, in acknowledging that any definition of art must be in consonance with the following: (i) entities (artifacts or performances) intentionally endowed by their makers with a significant degree of aesthetic interest, often surpassing that of most everyday objects, exist in virtually every known human culture; (ii) such entities, and traditions devoted to them, might be produced by non-human species, and might exist in other possible worlds; (iii) such entities sometimes have non-aesthetic ceremonial or religious or propagandistic functions, and sometimes do not; (iv) traditionally, artworks are intentionally endowed by their makers with properties, usually perceptual, having a significant degree of aesthetic interest, often surpassing that of most everyday objects; (v) art, so understood, has a complicated history: new genres and art-forms develop, standards of taste evolve, understandings of aesthetic properties and aesthetic experience change; (vi) there are institutions in some but not all cultures which involve a focus on artifacts and performances having a high degree of aesthetic interest and lacking any practical, ceremonial, or religious use; (vii) such institutions sometimes classify entities apparently lacking aesthetic interest with entities having a high degree of aesthetic interest; (viii) many things other than artworks, for example, natural entities (sunsets, landscapes, flowers, shadows), human beings, and abstract entities (theories, proofs) are routinely described as having aesthetic properties.

## **Entrepreneurial Education and Visual Culture**

Education is the development of the human intellect, body, and emotions through the acquisition of requisite knowledge. Education constitutes all the experiences of an individual through which knowledge is acquired and the intellect enlightened. Education is what happens in the processes of schooling involving a teacher or instructor, as the case may be, and then a learner, more commonly known as a student. Alebtosu (2005) notes that when curriculum reforms are adequately done, it provides learners with the opportunities to acquire the right type of skills, values, attitudes, abilities, and competence which will equip them to live in society, and face challenges, needs, goals, and aspirations.

Entrepreneurial education is education that is geared towards skills acquisition for self-reliance. Educational and curricula planners should ensure that entrepreneurial appendages are designed in such a way that only practicable ones are included. For instance, the availability of raw and indigenous art materials in a given community may mean that related artworks are possible in execution there. If a town has a rich clay deposit, for instance, it applies that ceramic art and sculpture may thrive in institutions established in such a town. Visual culture represents all the aspects of culture expressed and represented in visual images, it also represents tangible art and its practice. Visual imagery cuts across painting sculpture, ceramics, graphic, textile, and fashion designs. Gemmel (2021) defined visual culture as an interdisciplinary notion that constitutes the visual as a precursor for knowledge and understanding. Mitchell (1996) averred that the most far-reaching shift signaled by the search for an adequate concept of visual culture is its emphasis on the social field of the visual, the everyday processes of looking at others and being looked at. This concept field of visual reciprocity is not merely a by-product of social reality but actively constitutive of it. Gemmel (2021) adds that visual culture is fluid, and continuously adapting, and as humans, we constantly find new ways to engage with, contemplate, and question the world through visual imagery.

In most schools today, during conferences and workshops, learners are taught how to make ceramics, fabric weaving, tie-and-dye, T-shirt cresting, crochet making, and hairstyling, to mention a few, for their social sustainability. Most of those learners are graduates or students from science courses who want to obtain skills for self-dependence. In tertiary institutions most students, in the bid to sustain themselves financially, have taken to photography, hairstyling, leather weaving, etc, as subsistent crafts, to make money and support their education. Most of such students are not even in the faculty of Arts.

The usefulness of visual culture in the advancement of credible entrepreneurial education cannot be overemphasized. The strength and the level of development of any nation, in the words of Adebisi (2014) are dependent on the strength and development of its human resources, and efficient human resources are made via the education systems especially, higher education systems operated by such a nation. Nweke and Nwoye (2016) noted that higher education builds and consolidates on the level of competence, knowledge, and skills usually garnered at the secondary education level.

Skills acquired in school can help young graduates set out early in life. However, such skills are better situated within the school curricula for wider inclusivity. Educational planners should put a lot of such tendencies in view while designing entrepreneur-based curricula. Entrepreneurial education that obtains in the visual arts domain must be measured with environmental possibilities.

### **Entrepreneurship at the Undergraduate Level**

In Nigeria currently, white-collar job spaces, as they are more commonly known, have mostly been filled up, except for some high-profile spaces reserved for the children of the ruling class. Even in private establishments where job spaces are reserved for family members and children of political allies, there is hardly an opportunity for the common graduate to work. The only likely opportunities

available are those in specialty areas like medicine, pharmacy, radiology, microbiology, nursing, and aeronautics. Let me explain; because no other person can be a doctor except the one that reads medicine, likewise nursing, pharmacy, and others in the health sector, employers may be forced to employ occasionally in those areas. In the real sense of the word, no other person can also be a professional artist except the one who apart from being gifted, is formally trained for the purpose. So, advertising, interior decoration, and media establishments, to mention a few, can only employ visual artists trained in those areas to ensure professional output and quality competition. However, peculiarities in the health and aesthetics sector do not make other disciplines less professional. Presently too, most clerical and communication works have been taken over by the computer, thereby forcing employers in the banking sector, for instance, to downsize.

The need for graduates to become employers of labour therefore started staring them in the faces even while they were undergraduates. The jack-of-all-trade and master-of-none mentality does not help entrepreneurship. The need for school curricula to be entrepreneurship-oriented, therefore arose, so that upon graduation the students can be self-employed if civil service opportunities don't come up. At the post-primary school level in Nigeria, the 6-3-3-4 system was introduced by the Federal Government to equip individuals for self-employment. This project, according to Ezedum and Odigbo (2011) failed because the government that initiated the project was ill-prepared from the outset to provide necessary logistics for it. The CEDR (2008) buttressed that the programme failed because of a lack of sufficient skilled instructors, the students' preferences for skill were not ascertained, and a relevant planning/delivery system was not put in place.

In 2008, Nigeria joined the Global Educational Initiative aimed at launching an advanced entrepreneurship education. It was also aimed at correcting the deficiency of the 6-3-3-4 system. One of the gains of this venture was the introduction of the 9-year basic education programme which made vocational skills a vital part of curricula. The Federal Government mandated the National Universities Commission (NUC) according to Ezedum and Odigbo (2008), to carry out a survey predicated on the fact that genuine efforts towards training graduates that are self-reliant and able to contribute positively towards a technological leap should have relevant practical aspects that appeal to a wide selection of the target population. The recommendation of this survey led to the introduction of entrepreneurship courses in Nigerian Higher institutions by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The University of Nigeria, Nsukka was among the tertiary institutions that pioneered the introduction of short-duration entrepreneurship programmes leading to the award of certificates and diplomas in various relevant skill vocations. Thus the Centre for Entrepreneurship Development Research, CEDR was created and approved by the Senate of the University in 2008.

The CEDR courses approved by the Senate of the University of Nigeria in 2009 as required ancillary courses for students of all disciplines are: CED 341- *Introduction to Entrepreneurship* and CED 342 - *Business Development and Management*. Presently, departments in various institutions across the country have picked the entrepreneurship mantra, thereby creating courses in tandem with its vision, but there is no proven knowledge of the modalities on the ground for supervision and verification. Whether the Federal Ministry of Education has been monitoring the

effective implementation of the entrepreneurship courses in the institutions is still debatable. Implementation verification is important because there are suspicious outcries that the entrepreneurial incursions made so far have nose-dived toward the theories.

### **Entrepreneurship at the Graduate Level**

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) was established in 1973 by the Government of General Yakubu Gowon. The historical background of the policy is traceable to the events that took place in Nigeria towards the last half of the 1960s. The years 1967-1970 were characterized by the Nigerian civil war. At the end of the war, the administration of General Gowon came up with new policies that would promote post-conflict peace; reconciliation, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. Consequently, the vital need for national unity led to the birth of the NYSC idea (Okafor and Ani, 2014).

According to Ajilla (2021), Nigeria went through trying times as a result of tribal sentiments in choosing leaders. This hostility led to three years of fratricidal war. Following the war, the need arose to foster national integration and unity. The National Youth Service Corps was one of the tools employed. It was a post-war strategy to curb threats, foster national integration and unity, reconstruction, nation-building, and defense strategy.

In bringing the NYSC programme to bear, to check the effort of the government at entrenching entrepreneurial learning it is good to examine the purpose of its entrenchment. According to samphina.com (2018), the National Youth Service Corps NYSC was created in a bid to reconstruct, reconcile, and rebuild the country after the Nigerian Civil War. The unfortunate antecedents in our national history gave impetus to the establishment of the National Youth Service Corps by decree No. 24 of 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1973 which stated that the NYSC is being established 'with a view to the proper encouragements and development of common ties among the youths of Nigeria and the promotion of national unity'

The structure of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in Nigeria is such that beyond social integration, entrepreneurship is encouraged. The three-week orientation camp has among other activities, daily military parade exercises and the formation of Community Development Service (CDS) groups. Okafor & Ani (2014) stated that those mobilised are trained for three weeks in the different orientation camps. At the end of the training, they would be posted to the areas of primary assignments, where they would stay and work for the remaining part of the service year. The service year ended with a passing-out parade.

Okafor and Ani (2014) stated that the traditional community development programme which was introduced in the 1976/1977 service year has helped a lot in the promotion of learning, tourism, healthcare, and agricultural development. The fifth paragraph in the vision, mission, and objectives of the NYSC reads; "Nigerian youths would acquire the spirit of self-reliance, a reliable source of economic empowerment and effective participation in nation building" (Ajilla, 202; NYSC inspectors' manual, 1998 p.7).

Some corps members are grouped into CDS formations based on the nature of the courses they read; for instance, medical doctors, nurses, medical rehabilitation, radiology, and pharmacy graduates naturally belong to health-based CDS groups. Graduates of Mass Communication would naturally belong to the Outside Broadcast (OB) group, Fine and Industrial Arts graduates usually form such CDS groups as the Magazine and publishing and other form of communication groups. Graduates of Theatre Arts and others talented in the area will form the Dance and Drama CDS group, etc.

On the relevance of CDS groups Ajilla (2021) submitted that it has been able to instill discipline and foster patriotism in Nigerian youths particularly those who build the spirit of selfless service to the community development service (CDS). But lately, the impact of the scheme seems to be dwindling and its objectives, though still relevant, have witnessed some challenges that have questioned its original essence.

### **Art Entrepreneurship for Undergraduates and Graduates**

In tertiary institutions, attempts have been made to create courses that encourage entrepreneurship. In the University of Nigeria, after the creation of the Centre for Entrepreneurship Development Research, CEDR in 2008 and the required ancillary courses; CED 341- *Introduction to Entrepreneurship* and CED 342 - *Business Development and Management* for students in all the departments in 2009, the university was set to run with the federal government order. At the department levels courses have been introduced and shuffled to meet up with entrepreneurial requirements prescribed by the NUC. The Department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka reviewed its academic programme and introduced a two-unit course titled FAA 404: *Professional Practices in Fine and Applied Arts* mandatory for all final-year students of the department. Apart from regular review of courses, the department is already systemized entrepreneurially. Even for students specializing in the theory-based sections of Art Education and Art History, some courses are borrowed from the studios to balance up.

In the NYSC, much as there are CDS groups that are not discipline-oriented, it is regrettable that there is no specific Fine and Applied Arts based CDS group, for instance; Fine Arts, Creative Arts, or Industrial Arts CDS group. As unique and entrepreneurially useful as visual art is, no such consideration has been made so far. Perhaps a pick at a few reports would ex-ray the prevailing entrepreneurial situations. Utomwen (2012) reported that at the end of the 2012 Batch B orientation course, 45,000 corps members had been trained in various agro-allied skills, 5,509 in food processing and preservation, 8,035 in culture and tourism-related skills and 5,062 in cosmetology. Information and technology had 8,119, power and energy had 2,885, and environment had 2,672. Another set of 2,837 members acquired skills in beautification, 2,075 in construction, and 2,425 in education.

A careful study of the above statistics shows that visual art is being swung around; there has been no conscious attempt to land it a distinct place of its own in skill acquisition, even where some of the graduates are fine artists. While entrepreneurship in most disciplines was taken beyond the four walls of the tertiary



institutions, it is yet to be seen what becomes of visual art, given the myriad of art educational policy makers that litter the whole country. While most of the NYSC members who performed well in their CDS groups are retained in their places of primary assignments or recommended for such approximate companies, there is no such opportunity for graduates of visual arts. I am stating here that entrepreneurship in visual art should be encouraged beyond the compulsory students' IT programmes and the prescribed mandatory and ancillary courses during undergraduate schooling.

## **The Problem**

The Nigerian labour market is getting more and more saturated with fresh graduates and old job seekers. While some private companies are leaving the country due to insecurity, irregular electricity supply, unfriendly multiple taxations, and harsh fiscal policies, the existing public service arena does not have regular openings for fresh employment. The few job chances are reserved for children of politicians and highly connected applicants, thereby making it extremely difficult for indigent graduates to secure jobs in the public service. However, the Federal Government had made it mandatory for tertiary institutions to include entrepreneurship courses in their curricula, just like the NYSC, for skills acquisition. But irrespective of the efforts so far made to instill self-sustaining skills among the youth, there still exists the lacuna of artistic skills acquisition. The lackadaisical attitude given to art entrepreneurship during the design and implementation of undergraduate and National Youth Service Corps, Community Development (NYSC, CDS) curricula necessitated this research.

## **Methods and Materials**

### **Research Design**

The research design adopted for this study was the Arts-based action research. Action research applies to both qualitative and quantitative studies. 'Action' implies field intent to solve an existing problem with a myriad of solutions. Action research, also called community-based study, participatory action research, or cooperative inquiry, reflects upon the implications of questions, philosophies, postulations, and practices, intending to understand, develop, and better conditions. Action research is a way of working in the field, utilizing multiple research techniques aimed at enhancing change and generating data for knowledge production. Action research rests on processes of collaborative knowledge development and action design involving local stakeholders as full partners in mutual learning processes (Greenwood & Levin; 2007).

Jokela and Huhmarniemi (2019) stated that Art-based action research is a research strategy that guides the progress of research in the cycles of action research and uses art as a catalyst for development work, for example, empowerment or the better design of environments. Art-based action research is always used in the development projects of art education, applied visual art, and contemporary art. The strength of Action Research, according to Meyer (2000) lies in its focus on generating solutions to practical problems and its ability to empower practitioners,

by getting them to engage with research and the subsequent development or implementation of activities.

Art can also be the subject of development or the tool for the research's data collection and analysis. 'Art-based' refers to the utilization of art in research in such a way that stakeholders and members of the organization or community can be included in the research, and tacit knowledge and experiences can be obtained from them, which are not conveyed through traditional qualitative research methods based on verbal or written language (Jokela and Huhmarniemi, 2019). The need for practical involvement of the pre-degree and post-degree participants, without sticking strictly to the existing methodical status quo warranted the adoption of the art-based action-based research for this study.

### **Research Objectives**

The study was aimed at investigating the level of entrepreneurship inclusivity for Nigerian youth before and after graduating from tertiary institutions, with the University of Nigeria UNN, representing the undergraduate, and the National Youth Service Corps, NYSC, the graduate stages, respectively. The study explored art entrepreneurship as a self-dependent venture. Its objectives were to:

- I. Determine if Nigerian undergraduate and graduate programmes incorporate entrepreneurship.
- II. Compare art entrepreneurship structures in undergraduate and graduate programmes.
- III. Encourage art conferences and exhibitions among youths to promote their host communities' culture.

### **Scope**

The study was limited to the undergraduate programmes at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) and the Community Development Service of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme. Entrepreneurship was the focal point of this study, with art entrepreneurship as the core thrust.

### **Study Instruments**

The primary instrument for the study was the UNN-NYSC Art Entrepreneurship Curricula Assessment Opinion Poll (UNN-NYSC-AECAOP), designed for opinion polls among the corps members. There were three objective statements in the UNN-NYSC-AECAOP with 6 questions under each of them, totaling 18 opinion poll questions. Responses were made under the 'Yes' and 'No' affirmative and non-affirmative options. See Appendix A.

The second instrument was the UNN-NYSC Art Entrepreneurship Curricula Assessment Data Graph (UNN-NYSC-AECADG) fashioned after the UNN-NYSC-AECAOP for data rating and percentage conversion. There were 3 UNN-NYSC-AECADG tables, each containing data for a study objective; specifically, there were UNN-NYSC-

AECADG 1, UNN-NYSC-AECADG 2 and UNN-NYSC-AECADG 3. Each of the 'Yes' and 'No' answer options was given a percentage rating equivalent to the accrued frequency per row. See Appendix B.

## Population

Four hundred and eighty-five corps members serving in Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, and Imo States of South East Nigeria were respondents. Enugu State was consciously omitted because the University of Nigeria (the sampled tertiary institution) is in Enugu State and graduates do not usually get posted within the states where they studied, except on peculiar occasions. The respondents were all graduates of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The questionnaire was administered and returned electronically. E-mail addresses of corps members were sourced by a web of personal connections using research assistants among the ex-students. 1000 questionnaires were initially posted out (250 to each of the states), 520 were returned, 35 were rejected out of the returned ones, due to incomplete information or double information, and then 485 were randomized and analysed. Responses covered their entrepreneurial curricula experiences as undergraduates, as well as serving corps members. The questionnaire distribution and inclusion eligibility ran as follows:

States (4)	Distributed (1000)	Returned (520)	Excluded (35)	Reasons for exclusion	Included, randomized and analyzed (485)
Abia	250	85	7	3(incomplete) 4(double info)	78
Anambra	250	155	15	11(incomplete) 4(double info)	140
Ebonyi	250	90	0	-	90
Imo	250	190	13	13(incomplete)	177

*Fig 1. Inclusion eligibility criteria*

*Source: RitaDoris Ubah (Research 2022)*

## Sampling

Sampling was taken care of, by the inclusion eligibility criteria, in sizing 1000 down to 485. Since a considerable number of respondents were needed to corroborate a wide spread of findings 485 was considered a controllable number.

## Procedure for data analysis

Data were analysed based on both frequency and percentage conversion, meaning that the 'Yes' and 'No' columns per row had percentage conversions of data each. The sum of each 'Yes' and 'No' bloc added up to 485 while the percentage summed to 100% maximum. The instrument structure was meant to elicit comparative data between the affirmatives, moderate, and non-affirmatives, warranting remarks and discussion in that order too. Data in the affirmative were used to gauge acceptance or rejection of objective options. If more respondents responded in the affirmative per question it meant that the objective thrust of that question was accepted.

## Findings

The study findings were captured after the pattern of the UNN-NYSC Art Entrepreneurship Curricula Assessment Opinion Poll. Following the objectives, there were: UNN-NYSC-AECADG 1, 2, and 3.

**Table 1:**

*Distribution of data on the accommodation of entrepreneurship within the undergraduate and graduate programmes for the Nigerian youth (UNN-NYSC-AECADG 1) (n=485)*

Objective statement/questions		Yes		No		Remarks
		f	%	f	%	
Accommodating entrepreneurship within the undergraduate and graduate programmes						
1	Did you study courses that were purely based on entrepreneurship and skills acquisition at UNN?	485	100	-	-	Affirmative
2	Did the courses help your creative thinking?	232	47.84	253	52.16	Moderate
3	Now in NYSC, are your CDS programmes entrepreneurship oriented?	355	73.19	130	26.80	Affirmative
4	If YES, do corps members really take the CDS groups seriously?	180	37.11	305	62.89	Non-affirmative
5	Does the government provide materials for the CDS skills acquisition programmes?	300	61.86	185	38.14	Affirmative
6	While in UNN did you provide materials for entrepreneurship programmes?	380	78.35	105	21.65	Affirmative

*Source: RitaDoris Ubah (Research 2022)*

Data in Table 1 shows that the first question revealed all respondents (100%) as having agreed that they studied courses that were purely entrepreneurship and skills-acquisition based in UNN. However, 232 (47.84%) admitted that the courses helped their creative thinking while 253 (52.16%) did not. This translates to a nearly equal share of thoughts, with those in the non-affirmative surpassing. On whether the NYSC CDS programmes are entrepreneurship-oriented a massive 355 (73.19%) agreed but 105 (21.65%) did not. But 180 (37.11%) respondents agreed that corps members really take the programmes seriously whereas 305 (62.89%) rejected the notion. On government providing materials 300 (61.86%) responded in the affirmative but 185 (38.14%) said No. 380 (78.35%) corps members agreed that while they were in UNN they provided materials for their entrepreneurship courses, only 105 (21.65%) did not agree.

**Table 2:**

*Distribution of data on the levels of art entrepreneurship between the undergraduate and graduate programmes (UNN-NYSC-AECADG 2) (n=485)*

Objective statement/questions		Yes		No		Remarks
		f	%	f	%	
Levels of art entrepreneurship between the undergraduate and graduate programmes						
7	Were there purely art-based entrepreneurship courses in UNN?	-	-	485	100%	Non-affirmative
8	Do you think that even if one is not a trained artist he or she should have such skills as hairdressing, weaving, printing, tie and dye, or bead making?	450	92.78	35	7.22	Affirmative
9	In your state of service is there a CDS group dedicated to visual art practice?	-	-	485	100%	Non-affirmative
10	Do you think that art entrepreneurship at the NYSC should advance beyond that of the tertiary education level?	485	100%	-	-	Affirmative
11	Do graduate artists find it easy to get places of primary assignment in your state of service?	48	9.9	437	90.1	Non-affirmative
12	Looking back, has entrepreneurship between your undergraduate days and now provided you with enough self-sustaining skills?	440	90.72	45	9.28	Affirmative

*Source: RitaDoris Ubah (Research 2022)*

From Table 2 data spread the seventh question, with all 485 (100%) respondents in the non-affirmative shows that the entrepreneurship courses in UNN were not purely art-based. On the eighth, whether one should be skilled in designated areas even if he or she is not a trained artist 450 (92.78%) agreed while only 35 (7.22) replied in the non-affirmative. All 485 (100%) reported that in their states of service, there were no CDS groups dedicated to visual art practice, likewise all 485 (100%) agreed that entrepreneurship at the NYSC should advance beyond that of the tertiary education level. On whether graduate artists find it easy to get places in primary assignments 437 (90.1%) said No while only 48 (9.9%) said Yes. On whether entrepreneurship has provided enough self-sustaining skills from undergraduate days 440 (90.72%) agreed but 45 (9.28%) said No.

**Table 3:**

*Data Distribution on the promotion of art conferences and exhibitions among corps members toward the cultural projection of their host communities*

(UNN-NYSC-AECADG 3) (n=485)

Objective statement/questions		Yes		No		Remarks
		f	%	f	%	
Art in the cultural projection of host communities						
13	Does the government of your state of service show commitment to art development among the youth?	282	58.14	203	41.86	Moderate
14	Does NYSC encourage serving artists by giving them vest printing, signpost, portraiture, and other commissions?	-	-	485	100%	Non-affirmative
15	In your state of service does the State Council for Art and Culture embrace visual arts the way they do performing arts?	100	20.62	385	79.38	Non-affirmative
16	As a corps member do you patronize your colleagues who are artists by buying handmade products from them?	55	11.34	430	88.66	Non-affirmative
17	Can you say that art is a vital tool for projecting the culture of your host community to the outer world?	320	65.98	165	34.02	Affirmative
18	Can entrepreneurship help you to start on your own in case you don't find a job soon after the youth service?	485	100%	-	-	Affirmative

Source: RitaDoris Ubah (Research 2022)

Table 3 data shows first, that the level of government commitment to art development among the youth was slightly above average with 282 (58.14%) consenting while 203 (41.86%) replied in the non-affirmative, however, all 485 (100%) affirmed that the NYSC does not encourage serving artists by giving them basic art commissions do undertake. On whether the States Council for Art and Culture embraces visual arts the way they embrace performing arts only 100 (20.62%) agreed but 385 (79.38%) replied in the negative. On corps members patronising their colleagues who are artists only 55 (11.34%) agreed whereas 430 (88.66%) rebuffed. 320 (65.98%) asserted that art is a vital tool for projecting the culture of their host communities but 165 (34.02%) did not agree. All 485 (100%) agreed that entrepreneurship could help them start on their own if they do not find jobs soon after their service year.

## Discussion and Summary of Findings

In discussing the study findings presentation is made in statements answering the 18 questions as itemized below:

1. There is an effort on the ground to entrench entrepreneurship in UNN.
2. There was a near-equal share of opinions on whether the entrepreneurship courses at UNN helped the creative thinking of the respondents, with those in the non-affirmative, surpassing.
3. It was also discovered that there was general entrepreneurship in the programmes of the NYSC.
4. There is a lackadaisical attitude to the NYSC entrepreneurship programmes by the corps members themselves.
5. The government provides materials for entrepreneurship programmes, at least to a maximum rate.
6. For the greater part of the time materials were provided by the students at UNN during entrepreneurship courses.
7. Entrepreneurship courses at UNN were not purely art-based.
8. Graduates should be skilled in the designated artistic areas, even if they are not trained artists.
9. In the sampled states of the National Youth Service, there were no CDS groups solely dedicated to visual art practice; this means that the NYSC should embrace visual art as a CDS group for art-entrepreneurial youth development.
10. Entrepreneurship at the NYSC level should advance beyond that of the tertiary education level.
11. Graduate artists don't find it easy to get places for primary assignments after their NYSC orientation camp exercises.
12. Entrepreneurship generally, has not provided enough self-sustaining skills for the fresh graduates.
13. The level of government commitment to art development among the youth was minimal with a slightly above-average rating.
14. The NYSC does not encourage serving artists by giving them basic art commissions to undertake.
15. Performing arts was better appreciated and encouraged by the NYSC than the visual arts.
16. On a scale of good ratings, it was adjudged that corps members don't even patronise their colleagues who are visual artists.
17. Art is to a great extent, a vital tool for projecting the culture of NYSC host communities.
18. With skills acquired from entrepreneurship, young graduates can start on their own, if they don't find jobs soon after their service year.

## Recommendations

When young people are being prepared with entrepreneurship for self-sustenance target should be made of life-long benefits. Art is responsible for producing nearly all that is needed in the utilitarian and aesthetic society; therefore young people deserve to acquire some form of art entrepreneurship to be able to fit into the labour market after school. The areas of necessity that art provides include: fashion, clothing, architecture, interior decoration, farm implements, city mapping, tourism, auto designs, animation, environmental iconography, ceramics, book illustration, and public advertisement. Given the prevailing circumstances the following recommendations were made:

1. Under the broad entrepreneurship programmes, art entrepreneurship courses should be created and made compulsory in tertiary institutions for all students in their final years of study.
2. Since art entrepreneurship is highly driven by art media and materials the tertiary education management bodies should not stop at making curricula prescriptions for art entrepreneurial inclusivity, they should also harness all means possible to ensure that materials are made available to the students.
3. Care should be taken so that the entrepreneurship courses introduced in tertiary institutions don't end up as full theory courses. It's already heading in that direction because university authorities often complain of a lack of resources to support the students with materials.
4. Art-based CDS groups should be formed at the NYSC programme across the federation. The current situation where Art graduates constitute membership of the NYSC state football teams, theatre, and other CDS groups is not acceptable.
5. The authorities of the NYSC should create state, zonal, and national art competitions or exhibitions, in which prizes are won, just like the sports and drama competitions.
6. The idea of flooding art graduates into primary and secondary schools as their Places of Primary Assignment (PPA) for teaching is good but not the best for a practically involving course like Fine and Applied Arts. Artists should teach art, anyway.
7. Serving corps members should be encouraged to enter art conferences and competitions in their host States where certificates of participation are awarded. Certificates and awards won by graduates of Fine and Applied Arts during their NYSC programmes show that most of those awards were won in drama, sports, debate, and even scientific experiments; not in cartoon making, sketching, portraiture, advertising, ceramics, vest printing, weaving, interior decoration and other subsumes of the visual arts. If it comes to presenting those certificates anywhere in the labour market the issue of non-relevance to visual art will emerge.

While it is understandable that artists are usually also talented in other areas, science inclusive, the existing structure in the country should be targeted at building visual art and its entrepreneurship in such a way that graduates of art will not be caged by requirements in other disciplines.

## **Conclusion**

The study has shown that while efforts are being made to integrate entrepreneurship into both tertiary education and the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programmes, art entrepreneurship is significantly underrepresented. The findings highlight the need for greater government commitment, institutional support, and targeted policies to incorporate art-based entrepreneurship into educational and youth programmes. The lack of dedicated platforms for visual arts, particularly within the NYSC, further underscores the marginalization of art disciplines in entrepreneurial development.

Art entrepreneurship offers immense potential for economic growth, cultural preservation, and self-reliance among Nigerian youth. With skills in areas such as



fashion, advertising, interior decoration, ceramics, and animation, graduates could independently thrive in the labour market, reduce unemployment, and contribute to societal development. However, the success of this initiative depends on the inclusion of practical, well-supported art-focused programmes and the creation of enabling environments both at tertiary institutions and during the NYSC service year.

By addressing the identified challenges and implementing the study's recommendations, art entrepreneurship can serve as a transformative tool for empowering young graduates, fostering creativity, and driving economic and cultural progress in Nigeria.

### Ethical Considerations

All the authorities within the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) that were supposed to be in the know, before and during the study were consulted and they gave their backing. Since the study nature was on the field, the authorities also witnessed greater parts of the investigations.

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