



IDENTIFICATION OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING AESTHETIC QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT USING ART EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This research work titled “Identification Effective Strategies for improving Aesthetic Quality of the Environment in Jalingo, Nigeria” is meant to find out what strategies are sufficiently effective to be used in improving the aesthetic quality of the social or everyday environment, particularly the urban environment. The study uses Jalingo urban environment as the study area. The researcher sampled an environment that is representative enough for the sake of generalization. From the study, it was discovered that art education can be a very viable tool for the improvement, protection and sustainability of the environment. One of the findings of the research actually reveals that artists manifest a higher level of aesthetic awareness of the environment. Another finding indicates that many non-artists do not see the difference between art and aesthetics; and do not think that art as a discipline contributes more than any other disciplines to visual literacy. Based on the findings of this study, one may therefore conclude that artistic experience enables people to make better aesthetic judgement of their environment and thereby contributing to the improvement of its quality.

KEY WORDS: *Effective Strategies. Aesthetic Quality. Art Education.*

INTRODUCTION

We are living in a period where hardly any day passes without disturbing news about danger signals of a deteriorating environment. Often times, we hear of global warming as a result of the depletion and leaking of ozone layer, which obviously is attributed to human activities. The depletion of the ozone layer exposes the earth surface to direct radiation of the sun. Scientists have implicated man as the principal cause of this depletion of the ozone layer through his activities; especially those that contribute to air pollution.

Not too far in the past, we have witnessed several terrible natural and man-influenced disasters which not only devastated the environment but caused the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives. For example, on the 26th December, 2004, a terrible tsunami popularly called Boxing Day Tsunami or Asian Tsunami swept across Indonesia and many other far-East countries, leaving on its trail, highest level of destruction in man's history (Knabb, Rhome and Brown, 2005). Out of the 11 countries affected by this tsunami, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India and Thailand were hardest hit. Similarly, in the following year, from 23rd- 30th August, 2005, the United



States of America witnessed yet another terrible hurricane named "Hurricane Katrina", that carved a wide swath of catastrophic damages and inflicted large loss of life, beginning from South Florida on category 1 on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane scale through Louisiana, Mississippi to the States of Georgia and Alabama on different scales. Considering the scope of its impact, Katrina was one of the most devastating natural disasters in the United States' history (Knabb, et al, 2005). Katrina was only one of the several hurricanes and tropical storms that had devastated America in recent years.

There were further cases of less significance, reported in other parts of the world such as volcanic eruptions and deadly gas emissions; which equally resulted in the loss of lives and pollution of the environment. Others include oil spillage, fire disasters, collapsed buildings and bridges, which have had their toll on the environment of recent. The list is endless; and the apprehension of further occurrences daily threatens the very existence of man and his neighbours –other living things.

Also, man's activities such as warfare, mining, farming, bush burning, deforestation, creation of urban slums, suburban sprawl, spewing sewage pipes, refuse dumps, flaring gas and gases from factories and automobiles have greatly contributed to the pollution and defacing of the environment. Hettinger (2005:57) lists these activities and more, referring to them as "symbols of environmental degradation and paradigms of aesthetic disvalue". Yet, there are other forms of degradation caused by man's utter disregard and insensitivity to aesthetic value of the everyday environment, which attracted the attention of this researcher. Ityoban (2009:15) refers to this type of environment as "man's social environment," which includes the home, schools, churches or mosques, offices and hotels among other fora where man interacts in. According to her, the beauty of our towns and cities are being distorted through indiscriminate posting of bills, poor refuse and waste management system, improper urban and town planning and a host of other negative attitudes towards the environment. Also, of great concern is urban degradation at individual level which includes poor hygienic attitudes, such as indiscriminate defecating, urinating and spitting in public places, wall graffiti, posters, dirt, street littering and Bahamas grass-crossing.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING THE AESTHETIC QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The following discussion is a brief survey of environmental problems and programmes for improvement across the globe and some examples of successes made.

a. The United States Environmental Programme

The United States of America set up a National Environmental Education Advisory Council (N.E.E.A.C) in a National Environmental Education Act passed in 1990 with the aim of using education and public awareness to solve the problems of environmental degradation and deterioration. The council submitted its first report to the congress in December, 1996 and in the report, a number of policy recommendations were made including:-

- i. A call for greater resources and support
- ii. More professional development and
- iii. Better access to quality programmes and information

The report also noted that important audience was not reached and that environmental education needed to become more institutionalized to be a national priority. Based on the foregoing, one would notice that the strong point for solving any environmental problem is education; important audiences must be reached by all means. The United States considers as very important both formal and non-formal education as instruments for reaching these audiences. Coyleas cited in NEEAC Report (2005:7) in his contribution 'Understanding Environmental Literacy in America: "And Making it a Reality", says:

"We are moving beyond a time when we can rely on a cadre of environmental experts to fix our environmental problems. A stronger public understanding of environmental science and related issues is a growing necessity, and comprehensive environmental education is the only answer that makes complete sense."

b. Programmes for Improving the Urban Environment in Malaga(Spain)

The city of Malaga, located in the south of Spain on the shores of the Mediterranean has won a number of national and regional prizes and awards for her programmes for improving the urban environment, dating back to as far as 1985. The Malaga example (that



is, in terms of the determination to putting it up-to-date as a modern city and the results) is worthy of emulation.

An economic boom as from 1960 helped a rapid growth, which doubled the city's population in 20 years. This created environmental problems because the rapid growth took place without control and without proper levels for infrastructures, urban facilities and green areas established in the first place. The city council, faced with the task to change the ugly scenario of a marginalized city historic centre, commissioned works for infrastructures, urban decongestion, refurbishment of dwellings, improvements in social services and facilities.

The result of the council's determination and hard work is most refreshing as it is encouraging to other cities of the world facing similar environmental problems, especially in Nigeria. However, it took sacrifice, time and resources. As of the time of the City Council's Report (1998), the degree of execution for the projects planned, stood at 68%, and with 30% of those initially planned being completely finished. The sustainability of this would mean an improvement in the landscaping and aesthetic quality of the main thoroughfares in a city, which inherited serious lack of environmental infrastructures from the financial boom, which harmed its quality of life. Though Malaga had a classic European urban development, the fast and chaotic economic and urban growth contains elements of dependent development that are so usual in developing countries. For this reason, the similarities with the processes undergone in Malaga may perhaps be of greater use on an overall city levels in Latin America, Africa or Southern Europe (Council of Malaga, 1998) (As shown in Plates 11 & 14).

c. Kyoto Gardens

The Kyoto gardens as a case study, provides a better example of the fusion between natural and fabricated senses of aesthetics. This is one of the world's best examples of how man has combined his aesthetic ingenuity with his sensitivity for the environment. Kyoto Gardens are a tourist delight, comprising of gardens, parks and temples, with their delightful and breathtaking beauty, especially species of flora and fauna gardens.

Kyoto is a province in the Kinki Region of Japan and is one of the most popular destinations for fall (autumn) foliage. There are many spots to visit in Kyoto. Some places are lit up at night from mid-November to early December for its crowded tourists (Travel Guide, n.d.). Japan, with its flair for natural beauty, has demonstrated man's ability not only to enjoy natural beauty but to add beauty to nature through beautifully arranged gardens,

parks and public squares to mention but a few. It is indeed a home to extra-ordinary natural beauties.

d. Gambia Environmental Awards Scheme

Gambia represents Africa; and as small a country, she has made an impact in the world through her popular programmes for creating environmental awareness through participation known as "The Gambia Environmental Awards Scheme" (Allen, 1997). In 1994 and early 1995, the National Environment Agency in The Gambia designed and implemented an Environmental Award Scheme. In a short period, with limited financial resources and in a climate of political uncertainty, the community captured the imagination of the country. Eight different awards categories engaged a wide range of individuals and groups. Because the competition took place at both regional and national levels, interests spread throughout the country. The competition created an organizational infrastructure throughout the country that is being used in follow-up environmental planning and projects. The meetings, media coverage, posters, and other dissemination methods that were an integral part of the awards scheme proved an effective springboard for broader discussions on environmental problems and solutions, involving many more people than those who formerly entered the competition. All this was accomplished with extremely limited financial resources and, after a July 1994 coup d' et at, in an atmosphere of political uncertainty.

The lesson for Nigeria from Gambia is that, one does not need to have plenty of public funds to succeed in any programme that has meaning for the generality of the people. To illustrate this fact, consider what R. Depp, former USAID Mission Director of "The Gambia" says concerning Gambia's Environmental Awards Scheme, as cited in Allen(1997): "Efforts such as the Environmental Awards Scheme build on Africa's rich tradition of community and village-level consultations; and through such efforts, citizens show their willingness and ability to play a meaningful role in their own sustainable development".

e. The Calabar Example

A further example of great strides in urban environmental improvement can be seen in what former Governor Donald Duke did in Cross Rivers State, particularly in Calabar, the State Capital. Answering an interview question with Newswatch Magazine, on the cleanliness and discipline in Calabar municipal, Governor Duke says: "... just because we are poor, that does not mean we have to be dirty. I said to them (cabinet) that we have to clean up this place and make it look good even if that is all that we have to do in



office...” (Newswatch Magazine May, 2005). It takes real determination and sacrifice to accomplish any task, even in the face of odds.

f. Abuja Master Plan

This is another example of a masterpiece town planning programme. In 1979, a plan was submitted by a world-renowned planning consultants named International Planning Associates (IPA) of United States of America and approved for implementation. The IPA master-plan was acclaimed for its beauty, scope and breadth of design (Abuja on Line Community, n.d.). To cut a long story short, Abuja master-plan was implemented. It is a success story despite its numerous problems. The question is, if Abuja should succeed; why not other Nigerian cities? Why can't they emulate her example (or her challenges and success)?

g. Waverley Council Environmental Programme

The last example of this discussion on strategies for improving aesthetic quality of the environment is Waverley Council Environmental Programme. Waverley is an industrial suburb of Melbourne, South-East Australia, and so, represents that continent in the order of this discussion. What interests the researcher with this programme is Waverley's ability to plan for future her environmental programmes, despite the fact that she is an industrial suburb. Waverley's state of environment report contains her ability to identify areas of pressure on the environment and propose strategies to reduce their environmental impact. These programmes cover strategies for land, water, biodiversity, air, waste, noise, heritage and social aspects of the city's life.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The design of this study is a sample survey type. According to Sambo (2005), a sample survey is a study in which a random sample is taken from a well-defined population, data is collected from the sample, a statistic is calculated from the data, and the statistic is used to estimate the true value in the population.

A sample survey is one of the wide variety of survey designs usually used in social science and educational studies, particularly those which seek to measure and establish opinions on major burning social, political and educational issues (Ali, 2006). The sample survey type used in this study is called a Sample Survey of Intangible Subject Matter.

According to Ali (2006), in a sample survey of intangibles, an attempt is made to reach a psychological or sociological construct by deriving from the data obtained, some information about the particular

psychological or sociological subject matter that is of interest to the researcher.

Psychological or sociological constructs such as political preference, buying tendencies, sex education preferences and so on are difficult constructs to attempt to survey and establish but researchers undertake them because of their immense usefulness to society.

Since this study attempts to investigate possible strategies for improving the aesthetic quality of the environment using knowledge and skills acquired through art education, the choice of this research design is not only appropriate but imperative. This design enables the researcher to use sample data collected through a well-articulated Likert-type 5-point scale questionnaire to address a psychological problem of the environment. Mean and Standard Deviation statistical tools were used to analyse the results

It is the assumption of this researcher that opinion poll on issues such as the aesthetic quality of the environment, the role of visual art and artists toward aesthetic improvement of the environment and so on, can be useful in predicting the attitude of Nigerians towards their environment, using a sample population from any city in Nigeria. In this case, a sample population of Jalingo residents was used.

Study Area

This study was conducted in Jalingo metropolis. Jalingo town is the headquarters of Taraba State in the North East region of Nigeria. Being a headquarters, it has a heterogeneous population. This comprises civil servants as well as business men representing almost all ethnic groups in Nigeria through their engagement as Federal, State and Local Government employees and/or as private businessmen or non-governmental organization agents.

Jalingo urban environment is chosen because the researcher resides there in. Also, it is chosen because of its beautiful landscape, streetscape and other features of environmental interest, which all put together satisfy the requirements of this research work.

Jalingo population is not certain, as the researcher could not lay his hands on any statistical document that spells out a precise figure. The only information that was available is the population of the entire Jalingo Local Government Area which is 139,845 inhabitants (NPC, 2007). This is of no use for this study since the focus is on Jalingo metropolis; and even within Jalingo metropolis; the researcher is only interested in a section of the population. The focus of the study is on senior civil servants, businessmen and others who are learned.



Jalingo population is predominantly civil servants and business people who both double into agricultural activities such as small scale farming, even though there are also professional farmers. Trade in foodstuff and automobile spare-parts boom in Jalingo just to mention but a few. Jalingo also boasts of four tertiary institutions such as Colleges of Education and Agriculture, a State Polytechnic and a State University. With the heterogeneous nature of this environment, the views of its sample population on this research topic should be valid.

Population of the Study

The population of the study is made of all formally trained artists, all environment-related professionals such as architects, building and civil engineers, town planners and a sample of the general public with special bias towards vocational and technical workers. These categories of people had to satisfy the conditions of being either civil servants on salary level 08 and above or retired or on their own; and must be residents of Jalingo town.

The ministries and organization where the population was drawn include the following: Ministry of Environment and Urban Development, Taraba Environmental Protection Agency (TEPA), Ministry of Works, Transport and Housing, Bureau for Land and Survey, Ministry of Education, Educational Research Centre (ERC), Post-Primary Schools Board, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Taraba State Arts Council, Taraba State Broadcasting Services, Taraba Television Corporation and other News Media, Primary Education Board/Universal Basic Education (UBE), Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Jalingo Abattoir, College of Education, College of Agriculture, State Polytechnic, Federal Ministry of Works and Housing, Federal Government Girls College, Taraba Fadama Office, Specialist Hospital, Federal Medical Centre, and Private Organizations.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

In this work, the researcher employed the Purposive Sampling Technique and Random Sampling to arrive at the sample population of 300 respondents. Purposive Sampling was used to reach a total of 56 artists and 85 environment-related professionals which included architects, building and civil engineers, and town planners. A total of 159 senior civil servants and private businessmen referred to in this study as the “general public” were drawn using the random sampling from 8 selected ministries, 13 Boards and Parastatals and private organizations within Jalingo

metropolis and environs. These included vocational and technical workers, lecturers from the 3 tertiary institutions, teachers and private business owners who are above salary level 08 or possess a wealth of experience.

The consideration for arriving at the sample size of 159 respondents from the general public is based on the reasoning that any greater figure than this may affect or even upset the result of the study when compared with the total responses of 141 artists and environment-related professionals (also referred to in this study as stakeholders of the environment).

This researcher used the purposive sampling method because he is guided to select typical sample elements according to his knowledge of the population and the research purpose, which provide him with the intended responses for his study (Odoala, 2008). Thus the researcher attempted to reach all the artists and stakeholders of the environment resident in Jalingo, while the others were randomly sampled from within the selected and relevant organizations earlier on mentioned.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection used in this study is called “Artists’ and Public Opinion on Art Education for Creating Aesthetic Environment Questionnaire” (APOAECAEQ). It is a 68-item questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert Scale and developed by the researcher. It consists of two sections (A and B). Section A of the questionnaire is a brief Bio-data which requires the respondents’ profession/qualification, area of specialization and place of work (or organization) respectively. This was meant to identify and place the various fields and interests that are involved in the study. Section B, on the other hand, contains the items to be responded to, and this in turn was subdivided into four parts according to the four purposes and research questions of the study.

The use of the 5-points Likert Scale was to determine the level of awareness of the three groups under study (the artists, stakeholders of environment and the general public) as to whether or not they agree with the four research questions. The 5-point Likert Scale was used to score the opinion of the respondents according to the following ratings:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| (a) Strongly Agree (SA) | = | 5 |
| (b) Agree (A) | = | 4 |
| (c) Undecided (U) | = | 3 |
| (d) Disagree (D) | = | 2 |
| (e) Strongly Disagree (SD) | = | 1 |



Being an attitude scale, the Likert Scale is most appropriate for this study in that it is not only easy to develop and dispense; it can also accommodate a greater number of items and yet demands lesser effort on the part of the respondents in responding. It is also easy to compute and may not, as is the case of this study, require any rigorous parametric statistics (As seen in Appendix B).

Method of Data Collection

The data of this study are responses of 300 sampled respondents from Jalingo metropolis and suburb, based on 5-point Likert Attitude Scale. They were drawn from 8 Ministries, 13 Boards and Parastatals and 12 private outfits using both purposive sampling technique and simple random sampling. The researcher, having understood well the characteristics of the population, believes that the views of this sample are representative of the general views of the entire population of Jalingo town.

All in all, about 330 copies of the questionnaire were administered as follows: Artists - 57 copies; stakeholders of environment - 93 copies; and the general public -180 copies. It took 3 weeks altogether for the administration and retrieval of the questionnaire. Some of the respondents had to be visited at an average of 3 to 4 times before finally retrieving their completed copies. Out of the 330 copies distributed, 30 copies were either lost and/or invalidated.

To forestall the problem that may arise as a result of non-response, the implication of the non-response was worked out using the following formula (Sambo, 2005):

$$R = 1 - \frac{n-r}{n}; \text{ and } NR = 1 - R$$

Where R = Response Rate
n = Sample Size, and
r = Number of Responses

To find the Response Rate (R)

$$R = 1 - \frac{330 - 300}{330}$$

$$R = 1 - \frac{30}{330}$$
$$R = 0.91$$

While NR = 1 - 0.91 = 0.09

This implies that the Response Rate is 91% while the Non – Response Rate is 9%. This is negligible, and the researcher had taken care of this non-response problem by increasing the number of copies of the questionnaire that were issued out above the sample size.

Mean and Standard deviation statistical tools were used to analyze the results as obtained from the questionnaires

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected, collated and analyzed in this research are responses from 300 sampled respondents; after administering a total of 330 copies of questionnaire. These were sorted out into the three groups under study, namely the artists (56 in number), stakeholders of environment (85) and the general public (159). Their ratings were entered into the SPSS 15 software application programme, item by item, and their mean and standard deviation scores were automatically computed, that is, from items 1- 68 of the questionnaire.

Mean and standard deviation statistical tools were used to answer the four research questions. In interpreting the mean scores, the Upper Limit of “undecided” which is 3.50 was used as cut-off point. Consequently, any mean of 3.50 and above is considered as agreeing with the statement while any mean below 3.50 is regarded as disagreeing with the statement.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Which art strategies (or activities) are most effective for improving the aesthetic quality of the environment?

**Table 1: Art Strategies for Improving the Aesthetic Quality of the Environment**

S/№	ITEM	5	4	3	2	1	— X	SD	DECISION
		SA	A	UD	DA	SD			
1	An aggressive educational programme/public awareness with emphasis on art education and environment	150	129	17	4	0	4.42	0.662	Agree
2	Repairs/renovation and maintenance of existing dilapidated structures/infrastructures by aesthetically conscious experts	177	152	20	7	4	4.24	0.785	Agree
3	Installation of artistic monuments (building/statue) of cultural, historical and social significance at strategic locations	131	135	23	10	1	4.28	0.774	Agree
4	Enforcement of environmental standards by appropriate government agencies and NGOs	159	126	11	4	0	4.47	0.635	Agree
5	Planting of trees/ creation of gardens, lawns, landscaping and recreational centres	179	112	5	4	0	4.55	0.601	Agree
6	A more aggressive sanitation programme	149	106	28	11	4	4.29	0.880	Agree
7	Government, NGO and private intervention in providing befitting residential quarters for the less privileged	108	138	25	23	6	4.06	0.964	Agree
8	Giving local and national environmental awards for best performed /most improved aesthetic towns/cities	120	135	31	10	4	4.19	0.850	Agree
Total Mean		139.13	129.13	20	9.13	2.38	4.31	0.468	Agree

From the table above, the result indicates an overall mean score of 4.31. This shows that the respondents agree that these art strategies are effective in the improvement of the aesthetic quality of the

environment. The items, which recorded the highest mean scores, are items 1, 4 and 5 with mean scores of 4.42, 4.47 and 4.55 respectively. This shows that the respondents agree that these are the most effective



strategies. While the least effective strategies are seen in items 7 and 8, with mean scores of 4.06 and 4.19 respectively. This also indicates that the respondents do not see how effective government, NGOs and/or private intervention can help to improve the aesthetic quality of the environment.

CONCLUSION

This study discovers that the 3 most effective strategies for improving the aesthetic quality of the environment include planting of trees, flowers and lawns, landscaping and creating recreational centres; enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, standards and policies; and an aggressive educational programme/public awareness campaign with emphasis on art and environmental education. Also, result of the study reveals that government, NGOs and private organizations need to do more than what they are doing presently if they want their programmes/projects toward improvement of the environment to make any impact and remain relevant among the populace of this country.

Finally, this study concludes that even though artists, stakeholders of the environment and the general public share similar opinions regarding the relevance of art/aesthetic education to the improvement of the environment and the most effective strategies for same purpose; there is a significant difference in the level of awareness of the artists and that of the other two groups under study concerning the relationship between art education and aesthetic environment; and the impact of art training upon individuals and the environment. Artists exhibited a higher level of awareness than the other two under study over the impact of art/aesthetics towards the environment.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the results of this study.

1. The Federal government should make the teaching of art compulsory in both public and private schools in Nigeria; that is, from pre-nursery to secondary levels and as an elective in tertiary schools particularly for all environment-related disciplines such as architecture, building and civil engineering, town planning, survey and estate management.
2. The art curricula at tertiary level of education should be expanded to include environmental education; and at pre-primary to secondary levels, environmental education should be introduced as a new compulsory subject. This

will go a long way to helping the populace realize the importance of the environment and thereby cultivating the love for the environment.

3. At tertiary level, the art curriculum should have a compulsory unit on environmental art with emphasis, for instance, on installation art, mosaic and other artistic constructions such as kinetic art. Students should be encouraged to experiment with a variety of materials, particularly waste materials in order to prove to the society that, with artistic creativity, nothing is a waste.
4. The National Environmental Standards, Regulation and Enforcement Agency (NESREA) and all other federal government agencies concerned with environmental protection, improvement and sustainability should include aesthetics as an aspect of their campaign programmes to create environmental consciousness.
5. All levels of government (federal, state and local) should embark on mass public awareness campaigns and also through the electronic media in order to sensitize the citizenry about the need to create and maintain not only a clean and healthy environment but a beautiful one with little or no cost.
6. Tree planting, raising and keeping of flowers, lawns, gardens and general landscaping should be encouraged by government and every city council in all residential and public places in Nigeria; particularly in the northern part. The one-man one-tree campaign begun in Nigeria some years back should be revived and re-invigorated by the Ministry of Environment and Urban Development; not just because of desert encroachment and erosion prevention but also for their aesthetic purposes (As shown in Plates 16, 28 & 38).
7. Master plans for every town, city and suburb in Nigeria should be encouraged and enforced by government and its agencies in order to bring back order and sanity and reduce the growth of urban slums and sprawls.
8. Standards for residential houses and public institutions should be emphatically enforced by a Commission for Urban/Estate Planning and Development to be established by government; and violators punished. This will discourage the present practice of non-compliance with standards and lack of



enforcement by Urban Development Boards in most of the states in Nigeria.

9. A more aggressive and meaningful sanitation programme should be put in place in every state, and the populace sensitized about the benefits of maintaining a culture of cleanliness, order and healthy environment. One approach to sanitize the people's way of thinking about their environment is to revive and re-invigorate the old system of health and sanitation inspection whereby inspectors went from house to house weekly. These inspectors should also be empowered also to checkmate the excesses of littering, defacing of buildings and billboards with unauthorized posting of bills, indiscriminate dumping of refuse, defecating, urinating and spitting in public places.
10. Healthy competitions can be encouraged by giving rewards or awards to towns, local government and states of the federation with the cleanest and most beautiful environment. This is to stir up the spirit of competition and encourage all to keep their environment clean, orderly and safe.
11. A commission or task force comprising professional artists, architects, building and civil engineers, town planners, and estate managers should be established by the federal government with state and local government offices to be responsible for repairs and renovation of all dilapidated/abandoned government projects (structures and infra-structures) littered everywhere nationwide; and to take care of all new building projects, drainages, and general landscaping of urban environment in the country. This will help to bring all these experts and professionals to share ideas and work together as an entity and thereby encouraging mutual respect among these disciplines.
12. Governments, NGOs and spirited private individuals should encourage and sponsor installation of artistic monuments/art works of cultural, historical and social significance at strategic locations in our towns and cities not only to give these towns and cities aesthetic face-lifts but to also tell the world our own story.

SUMMARY

This study is designed to find out what art strategies can be used to improve the aesthetic quality of the environment using Jalingo, the headquarters of Taraba State, as a study area. The variables considered as important in the study included art education strategy, which is the independent variable, and aesthetic quality of the environment, which is the dependable variable.

A sample survey type of design, specifically a Sample Survey of Intangible Subject Matter, was used for the study. The population comprised of 300 senior civil servants and businessmen resident in Jalingo, the headquarters of Taraba State. Purposive sampling technique was used to reach a total of 56 formally trained artists and 85 environment-related professionals; while random sampling was employed to reach 159 senior civil servants and private businessmen, known in the study as the general public. Data on level of awareness of the relationship between art education and aesthetic environment; level of awareness of the relevance of art/aesthetics towards the improvement of the quality of the environment; opinion on the impact of art training on individuals and aesthetic environment; and opinion about the most effective art strategies for improving the aesthetic quality of the environment were scored with a 5-point Likert scale, collected and collated. This 68-item questionnaire was developed by the researcher and submitted to experts for validation.

Cronbach Alpha method was used to achieve the reliability of the instrument; and reliability coefficient of 0.92 was obtained. This indicates that the instrument is internally stable. The researcher was assisted by three artists who covered the 8 ministries, 13 boards and parastatals, and 12 private outfits within the study area. Mean and standard deviation statistical tools were used to analyze the scores. All these were calculated using the SPSS 15 software application programme.

The outcome of the study revealed that a cause-effect relationship exists between art education and aesthetic environment, that is, art education can be used to affect aesthetic quality of the environment; that many people still do not know the difference between art and aesthetics; a lot more do not know that art as a discipline contributes more than other disciplines to visual literacy; that the strategy of tree planting, keeping of flowers and general landscaping is the best strategy for improving the aesthetic quality of the environment; and that artists and the stakeholders of the environment manifest a higher level of aesthetic



consciousness of the environment than the general public.

Based on the above findings, the researcher therefore recommended that there should be more aggressive educational programmes and public awareness campaigns with emphasis on art and aesthetic education in order to improve, protect and sustain the quality of the environment; that environmental education should be introduced into the school system and made mandatory for all primary to secondary levels, and as elective for the tertiary level; that, in tertiary art programmes, emphasis should be placed on environmental or installation art; and that to ensure a more aggressive drive towards the improvement of the environment, task force committees or commissions be established by the government.

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