



Access to Fine Arts Education and its Influence on Cultural Capital and Academic Engagement in Marginalized Communities of South-west Nigeria

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Abstract. Nigeria's educational system is struggling with uneven distribution of educational resources, infrastructure, and structured extra-curricular opportunities across various field of study which is subjective across distinct regions and social class of her inhabitants. These have reflected in students' academic mind-set, experience, and attitude towards learning. Contextually, the education in south-western states such as Lagos and Ogun political zones demonstrate a systemic bias towards science-based subjects over art, commerce and other intellectual creative agencies. The priorities on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects over art and commerce is what create a "curricular hierarchy" where students living and schooling in underserved communities are mentally steered away from creative disciplines that are capable of yielding positives outcomes in their lives. The study investigates two (n=2) public senior secondary schools each, found in marginalized communities of Lagos and Ogun states across Ojo and Agbara Local Government Areas (LGA). Data collection was conducted using qualitative "dyadic" interviews involving paired senior secondary school fine art teachers and students i.e. one (n=1) teacher to one (n=1) student was selected as pairs for the interview, through purposive sampling of the teacher's academic qualification and the student's academic track record in the subject. Thematic codes were generated and analysed to identify recurring patterns between the systemic pressures and aspiration towards incorporating structured Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) into the traditional methods of teaching fine arts. The findings indicate that culturally sustaining pedagogy can improve student engagement. Hence, the study concludes that to redress these disparities, Nigerian Educational and Research Development Council (NERDC) should consider restructuring the curriculum contents by reallocating Eurocentric art

history towards our indigenous knowledge. Furthermore, it is imperative that the ministry of education ensures to formalize the policy benchmarks mandating, dedicated to funding of public-school art studios in order to eliminate gaps in resources, and also ensure that that the system integrates intrinsic Art-preneurial Economics (AP-EC) to provide youths with profitable vocational skills. Lastly, deploy mandatory Teacher Professional Development (TPD) that focuses on Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP).

Keywords: Fine Arts Education, Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy, Cultural Capital, Marginalized Communities, Educational Inequality, South-west Nigeria.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Education remains a fundamental instrument for social and economic development, yet several significant disproportions persist in the promise of Nigeria's 6-3-3-4 educational system, as access to quality education across diverse geographic, socio-economic, and cultural zones remains uneven. Across the world, it is obvious that inequalities in the provisions for education shapes students' attitudes and experiences towards learning, which is a major reflector in their academic outcomes — this is particularly common in developing countries where resources are constrained and highly pronounced.

Nigeria's educational system is an obvious example of a country struggling with these disparities due to the huge uneven distribution of educational resources, infrastructure, and structured extra-curricular opportunities that lies between urban and marginalized communities. These has reflected in

students living in underserved areas of the country, as they often experience limited access to well-structured or rounded educational programs, which in turn affects their academic engagement and overall self-development. This issue is particularly evident within the industrial corridors of South-West Nigeria, specifically in Lagos and Ogun States, where educational systems frequently prioritize science-based disciplines over arts-related subjects. This is likely driven by the region's status as a manufacturing, mega and technological hub, which causes public secondary school curricula to frequently prioritize STEM subjects (Olaniyan, 2022). These priorities create a "curricular hierarchy" where students in marginalised community are discouraged from pursuing creative disciplines that are capable of producing positive educational and socio-economic outcomes in their lives (UNESCO, 2022; Eze *et al.*, 2023).

Moreover, these inequalities are responsible for reinforcing existing social stratifications, thereby hindering the ability of Nigeria's educational system to promote an inclusive and equitable learning environment. In this vein, fine art education which is a critical branch of academics is often undervalued in terms of holistic teaching and learning. Fine arts, which include visual arts, drawing, and creative expression — play a crucial role in the promotion of creativity, critical thinking, and expression among students. Several scholars have argued that exposure to Fine Arts Education helps students develop social interaction skills and broader educational competencies (Eisner, 2002; Gardner, 2011). (Elliot Eisner, 2002; Howard Gardner, 2011). However, (UNESCO, 2022) indicate that in many public secondary schools in "marginalized" communities in southwest Nigeria, the access to structured fine arts instruction remains limited due to inadequate funding, shortage of qualified teachers, and policy neglect. Hence, this restricted access reduces opportunities for students to develop creative competencies.

The relevance of fine art education can be further understood through a term known as "cultural capital", a concept that was developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1986), which explains how non-economic resources such as knowledge, skills, cultural awareness, and educational exposure influences social mobility and academic success among people. Cultural capital exists in various forms, which include embodied dispositions (e.g., communication skills and aesthetic appreciation), objectified forms (e.g., access to cultural materials), and institutionalized forms (e.g., educational qualifications). Contextually, in education; adequate access to fine arts instruction can serve as a critical avenue through which students acquire these forms of cultural capital. However, the engagement of

students with artistic practices not only enhances their creative competencies but also strengthens their confidence, participation, and interaction within formal educational settings.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the existing concerns and growing body of literature on art education merged with student development, it is for a fact that existing studies primarily focus on the cognitive and creative benefits of arts education. Most of these studies are conducted within structured educational systems in developed countries. Conversely, limited attention has been given to how access to art education programs is capable of shaping students' cultural identity, academic engagement, and social development in marginalized contexts or settings, most especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2022). In Nigeria, while some general studies on education have examined academic inequality and distribution of resources, there remains a significant gap in empirical research that specifically links fine arts education to sociological outcomes in terms of human resources, management, formation of cultural development, students' motivation and engagement in unexposed communities, most especially south-western parts of Nigeria (Adeyemi, 2024).

However, while quantitative data can statistically provide the mapping of resource deficit and the prioritization of STEM over fine arts whilst other creative and intuitive activities in southwest Nigerian schools and institutions, it is for a fact that numbers alone cannot capture the overall internal shifts in a student's identity (Cameron *et al.*, 2024). Ideally, a qualitative approach is required to breakdown the critical factors influencing the shift towards quality fine art education, and likewise understanding how students found in these marginalised communities perceive their own creative agency within a curriculum that often renders their talents invisible. The essence, of this approach moves beyond mere 'counting' to 'meaning making' i.e., exploring the lived experiences of educators and learners as they navigate the 6-3-3-4 system hierarchies. Therefore, there is a need for context-specific empirical research that examines the relationship between access to Fine Arts Education, cultural capital, and academic engagement among students in marginalized communities in South-West Nigeria.

1.3 Study Aims and Objectives

The study aims to empirically assess how Fine Arts Education contributes to students' creative development, cultural awareness, and academic

engagement in marginalized communities of South-west, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- Examine access to Fine Arts Education in marginalized communities.
- Assess the influence of Fine Arts Education on students' cultural capital.
- Investigate the relationship between Fine Arts Education and academic engagement.
- Explore challenges affecting access to Fine Arts Education and suggest solution.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Connected Arts Education, Cultural Development, and Student Engagement

Peppler *et al.* (2022) introduced the concept of 'connected arts learning'— thus, it this simply means that fine art education could be extended beyond mere technical skill acquisition to encompass overall, and civic dimensions of learning. However, their study schematically demonstrates how learning environments and stakeholders' can merge students' personal interests with academic contents and future career pathways. Figure 1 illustrates the Connected Learning Model proposed by Ito et al. (2020)

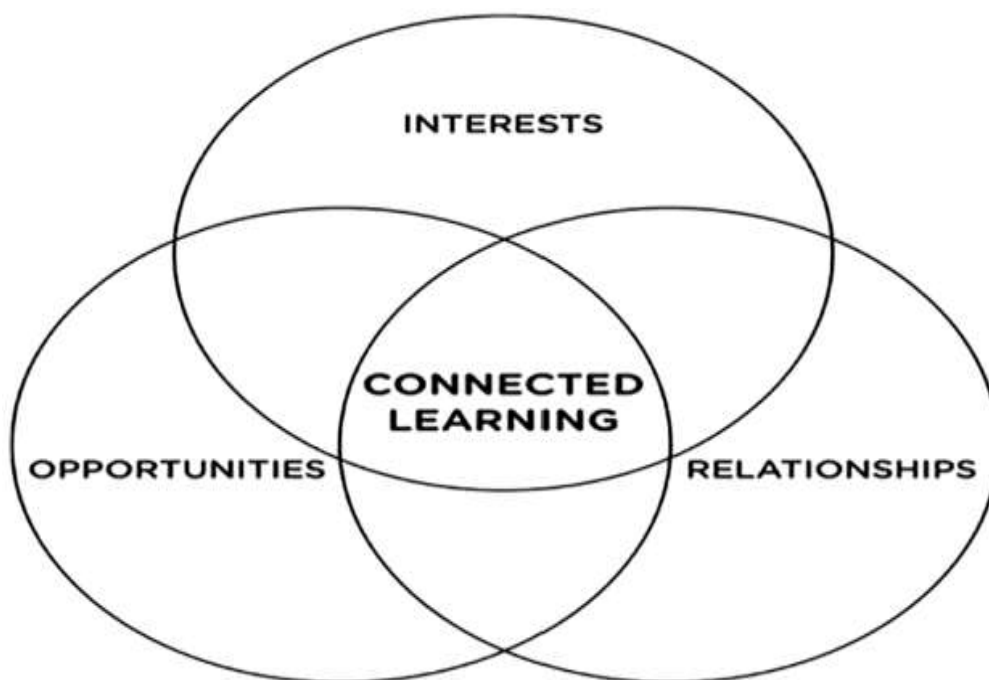


Figure 1 — Model of Connected Learning

Source: Figure republished from [Ito, Arum, et al. \(2020\)](#), licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Unported 3.0 License (CC BY 3.0).

The model demonstrates the interaction among students' interests, academic experiences, and community participation. However, a connected learning approach can be culturally responsive as it emphasizes the need to support students and youths from non-dominant backgrounds by linking their self-interests to academic, civic, and career outcomes within an integrated system that connects home, school, culture, and community (see Figure 2). Rather than adopting uniform, one-size-fits-all approaches, this perspective advocates for learning environments that has the designed intention to reflect students' specific interests and identities, and experiences, while promoting meaningful community engagement. In this perspective, it is imperative that culturally responsive programs move away from Eurocentric or colonial assumptions and instead anti-racist pedagogies or approaches that promote positive ethnic identity and critical consciousness among learners (Cammarota, 2007; Hipolito-Delgado & Zion, 2015; Terriquez, 2015).

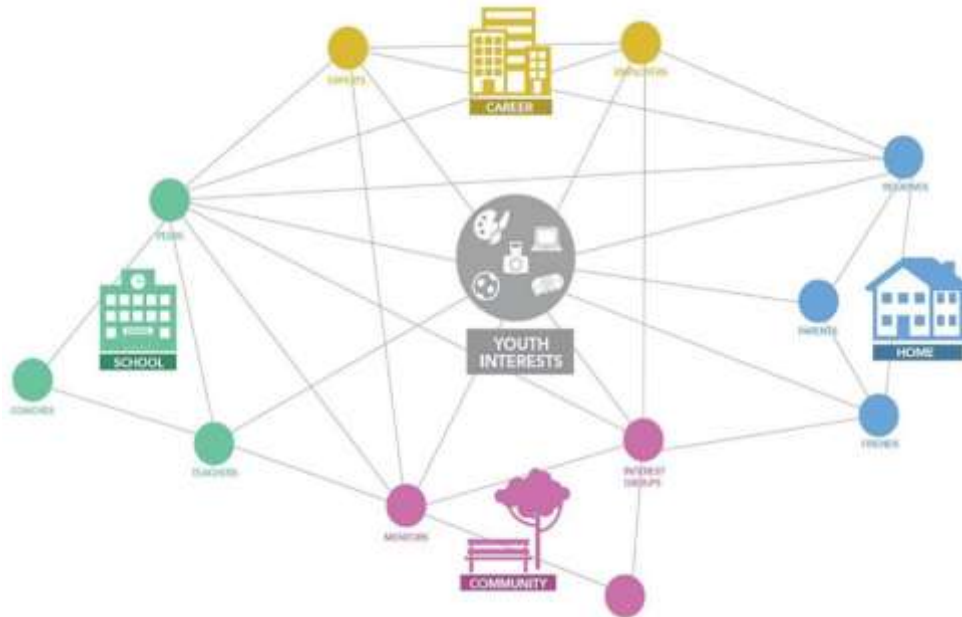


Figure 2 — Youth Interests Support Connections Across Settings

Source. Figure adapted from [Ito, Arum, et al. \(2020\)](#), licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Unported 3.0 License (CC BY 3.0). Image credit: Nat Soti.

Moreover, more recent studies made emphasis on the cultural dimensions of art education. Zufriady *et al.* (2024) conducted a review on the role art education is capable of playing to sustain cultural values and identity across diverse ethnic groups and subgroups — the study highlighted that it can be cultivated through the transmission of indigenous knowledge and cultural practices into art pedagogy and policy. However, the review also reveals the methodological constraints within existing literatures, hereby emphasizing a predominance of qualitative approaches and a lack of thorough quantitative evidence that connects art education to measurable standardized or accepted outcomes such as academic performance or engagement.

2.2 Art Integration and pedagogical Transformation

The integration of art involves using artistic method as part of teaching-learning process to impact innovation and creative mind-set out of students both inside and outside the classroom. This is considered as a cognitive instructional process or approach designed to contribute to the creation of socially and emotionally supportive learning spaces that encourage student willingness, participation and interaction with academic activities (Anderson *et al.*, 2020; Pitts *et al.*, 2018). However, when creativity is placed at the centre of instruction i.e. teaching and learning, it explicitly allows art function as an effective pedagogical tool for enhancing student learning outcomes (Anderson, 2018). Through art integration, students are able to engage with academic content from multiple perspectives simultaneously, thereby improving not

only their comprehension but their retention of subjects beyond the arts, including sciences (Hardiman *et al.*, 2014). In addition, art-integrated instructional strategies have been shown to support learners with limited language proficiency and for students will lower academic skills by providing them with alternative pathways for demonstrating their self-understanding and mastery of academic concepts.

According to Sarah *et al.* (2024) — higher education largely prioritizes theoretical-base over vocational outcomes for students, which makes the place of art practices within learning environment more complicated, because courses under the disciplines of creative, performative, and human Kinetics requires more of action i.e. practice over theoretical learning. However, this continually raises questioning on the marginalisation of creative arts practice in higher education in developed countries such as Australia, hereby pressuring institutions into delivering superficial learning experiences that are disconnected from the relationship between place, people, histories, and purpose which are necessary for sustainable, effective, and impactful creative arts educators, technical workers for the training in ethical art training and practice (Meyrick, 2018; Wilson, 2018). Therefore, art stakeholders and practitioners pursue professional art practice in the university for numerous reasons, not all of which are about aiming at a peak academic career but impactful community, engaged in creative practice that yield transformational and experiential moment for students or random individuals interested in art practice regardless of their intended career.

2.3 Inequality in Access to Quality Art Education

Presently in marginalised environments, it is for a fact that the issues of social inequality in access to quality education persist due to lack of fundamental resources, this is most especially concerned in art education and other disciplines that practice creativity alongside cognitive extracurricular activities. As Burkhard *et al.* (2024) reveals, one of the major significant factor that influences the access to quality art education are parents with the sovereign of cultural or economical capital, that is to say — students with more advantaged backgrounds have greater opportunities to participate in creative, performative, and cultural activities such as artistic, musical, and sports activities. Nevertheless, this opinion is a wide-range reflection of Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) theory, who contends that as time evolves, contemporary educational system is designed to constantly reproduce existing differences or inequalities in the society at large, by endowing cultural knowledge in different forms of social class which often favours the dominant privileged class or set of people. Contextually, it simply explains that within the discipline of art education, this dynamic is particularly visible, because other than parent encouragement or self-motivation — to effectively participate in artistic activities in marginalised or underdeveloped learning environment, it frequently and largely depends on access to more of personal financial resources than institutional infrastructure. Consequently, students from marginalized communities often experience restricted access to arts-based opportunities, limiting their ability to develop forms of cultural capital that may positively influence educational engagement and achievement.

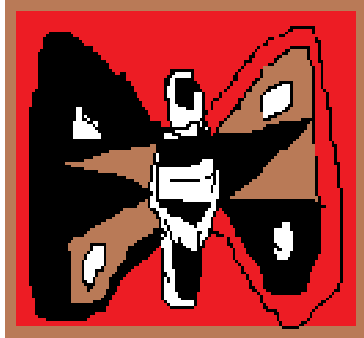
2.4 Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP) through Yoruba Iconography

Cameron *et al.* (2024) made emphases on cultural sustainability and culturally responsive teaching methods that combines a teacher's competency in indigenous contexts with contemporary classroom teaching strategies that aid students to connect with their background both culturally and linguistically to attain positive academic outcomes. Hansen *et al.*, (2018) note that the implementation of this teaching method relies on two key foundation which are: (i) systematic lesson planning and (ii) relevant cultural information that can fit into modern day pedagogy. As there still exist a solid connection between culture and learning, teachers should be tasked with the role to maximize students' knowledge and willingness to learn their culture (Ford *et al.* 2014). However, culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) is built upon the work of Ladson-Billings' — noting that “culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) should focus on linguistic, literacy, myths, spirituality, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling” (Paris, 2012)

Thus, following the aspirations for culturally sustaining praxis as seen in Cameron *et al.* (2024) study — art education in southwest Nigeria should function as a site for reinterpreting iconography in formal pedagogical standard. According to Kafaru *et al.* (2025), the integration of indigenous symbols such as *Egungun* costumes, *Ifa* divination patterns, and Yoruba motifs into contemporary teaching methods allows students to engage in ‘practice-led dialogues’ between tradition and modernism in fine arts. This approach ensures that Nigeria's pedagogical curriculum does not become a tool for cultural extinction but rather a platform for sustaining indigenous visual languages.

Table 1: Abiodun Kafaru's Interpretation of Some Yoruba Forms

Indigenous Coastal Yoruba Social Life & Cultural Space	Artistic Signs, Symbols, Patterns & Motifs	Origin, Source & Context	Meaning / Use	Artistic Iconographic Depiction
<i>Eyo Adamu</i> Head 	Spirituality, Power, leadership, colour, status in Eyo masquerade	<i>Eyo-Adamu Orisha</i> Highest-ranking Eyo masquerade in Lagos State. <i>Eyo</i> socio-cultural masquerade performance	Ritual, Social, private & Public contexts; Represents strength & spirituality	

<i>Orita Meta</i> Six Junction	Lines, shapes, mysteries of life; indicates the unknown to the non-initiates	Myth, history, ritual and indicates sacrifice	The image is a symbol of spiritual cleansing and mysteries of life. This is an illustration of where six major roads cross each other. The Yoruba believe that spirit dwells in and exists at this intersection.	
<i>Igba Oye</i> Chieftaincy pot 	Colour, form; religious cyclical continuity of family tradition	Ritual pot expresses sociocultural mysteries of lifecycle	<i>Igba Oye</i> Symbol of rituals and ordination among initiates and Chieftaincy within family and the cult initiations.	
<i>Labalaba</i> Butterfly 	Motif; colour shape; and space	<i>Adire</i>; fabric design; social functions and practices	History and nature. Depicts local insects and it allows a simple geometric	

<i>Aso Agbara</i> Charmed Wear- Yoruba fabric worn by the hunters and Akogun	Shape, pattern and lines	History spiritual power and strength among the worshipers of <i>Ogun</i> , <i>Akan</i> and ritual power.	<i>Aso Agbara</i> Represents or reflects the power of hunters and <i>Akogun</i>	
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Source: Kafaru et al. (2025). *Reinterpreting Yoruba Iconography through Contemporary Painting: Practice Led Dialogues between Tradition and Modernism in Arts*. Pp.113. Journal of Educational Review Vol 16. No 2.

However, as Kafaru *et al.* (2025) postulates — the neglect of cultural forms in contemporary African arts studies has been argued to be as a result of the preoccupation by African art scholars, writers, critics, and historians with traditional art forms, or the so-called “indigenous” art and “authenticity” of African culture in the sight of the world. This neglect has also been the product of the widespread misconception that contemporary African art practices is a distorted or mere copy of western culture, and therefore lacks authenticity, originality, and depth. Furthermore, the study suggests that “the integration of these cultural concepts in modern day pedagogy serves not merely as an aesthetic form of venture but as an essential medium that must be integrated into the basic art pedagogy for cultural preservation, critical thinking, spiritual and emotional expressions of Yoruba land”.

2.5 The Imperative for Teacher Professional Development in Culturally Sustaining Arts

To integrate these contemporary teaching methodologies in marginalised communities, most especially in southwest Nigeria — it requires more than just updated textbooks; however, it demands a foundational restructuring in teachers’ professional development. As highlighted in Cameron *et al.* (2024), there is critical need for educators to engage in training that moves beyond basic vocational practices in fine arts. Ideally, the training should build a stronger area of inquiry, curriculum, and instructional practices that incorporate both art integration and culturally responsive and sustainable pedagogical practices (Dana, 2022). Similarly, the idea of proposing reflective professional development should have the prospect and potential to shift teachers’ mind-set, beliefs, and ideas towards “anti-racism” in order to sustain culturally responsive teaching. In addition, the integration of art as a collaborative academic engagement process can serve as pedagogical conduct that aims to use culture and racial identity within the arts as an authentic connection to academic contents (Gay, 2010).

Furthermore, educators such as art teachers in marginalised communities specifically lack high-quality resources in arts integration that meet the standard of urban art teachers — equally the Nigeria educational curriculum designed for fine art education lacks resources that explicitly link with learning about positive cultural and racial identity. In that sense, high-quality and meaning training, and proper restructuring of the curriculum can help teachers scaffold curricula in this area of pedagogy (Pauly *et al.*, 2019).

Table 2: Four Competencies for culturally responsive educators used in analyses of teacher syllabus and lesson plan document

Competency	Indicators
Recognize and redress bias in the system	Course contents provides for a balance study of culture
	Classroom learning activities promotes appreciation for diverse cultures
	Curriculum includes information and opportunities to explore the past/present experiences and contributions of people from varied cultural backgrounds
Draw on students’ culture to shape curriculum and instruction	Issues and perspectives of minor groups are included
	Curriculum engages with narratives other than the dominant narrative
	Biased information and/or stereotypes, if present, are addressed
Promote respect for students’ differences	Students are given space to express what is important to them (i.e. what they love and where they come from)
	An attempt has been made to ‘localize’ the curriculum
	The work & artists who are centered is relevant to students’ experience

Bring real-world issues into the classroom	Teacher provides opportunities for students to share their perspectives and listen to others with respect and open mindedness
	Teachers invite students to share their perspectives and questions about real-world issues that matter to them
	Teachers integrate opportunities to discuss and think about real-world issues into classroom content

Source: Cameron et al. (2024). *Mirrors and windows: "a case study of educators' culturally responsive teaching aspirations and syllabi transformation in the arts*. Teaching and Teacher Education 148 (2024) 104714

Table 2 as seen in Cameron *et al.* (2024) study is an analyses study of contemporary teachers' first efforts to decolonize an existing vague syllabus and lesson plan to develop competent culturally inclined and responsive educators. However, their research was made to understand the concept and equally factor out framework regarding the development culturally sustaining pedagogy whereby citing Muñiz (2019) who stated the following competencies: (i) to reflect on one's cultural lens; (ii) to recognize and redress bias in the system; (iii) to draw on students' culture to shape curriculum and instruction; (iv) to bring real-world issues into the classroom (v); to model high expectations for all students; (vi) to promote respect for student differences (vii); to collaborate with families and local the local or marginalised communities; and (viii) to communicate in linguistically and culturally responsive ways. Furthermore, Cameron *et al.*, (2024) stated that this framework can progressively and analytically frame to learn how teacher competency can emerge and evolve in the task of revising instructional and curricular materials.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted an exploratory qualitative case study design informed by the culturally responsive outline of Cameron et al. (2024) and the indigenous iconographic perspectives of Kafaru et al. (2025).

3.2 Population and Site Selection

The study investigates two (n=2) public senior secondary schools each, found in marginalized communities of Lagos and Ogun states across Ojo and Agbara Local Government Areas (LGA). Data collection was conducted using qualitative "dyadic" interviews involving paired senior secondary school fine art teachers and students i.e. one (n=1) teacher to one (n=1) student was selected as pairs for the interview, through purposive sampling of the teacher's academic qualification and the student's academic track record in the subject. The selections are as follows:

For Educators: Purposive sampling was used to select secondary school teachers who navigate the tensions of the 6-3-3-4 system.

For Students: Learners were selected based on their track record engagement with visual arts as a secondary or "marginal" subject and academic performance in the subject.

Dyadic Interview: Dyadic interview is a type of qualitative interview whereby two participants are interviewed at the same time (Houssart & Evens, 2011; Morgan *et al.*, 2013; Wilson *et al.*, 2016, Cameron *et al.*, 2024). It is commonly used in research work if the case study is concerned with the relationship or interaction between two people. The purpose of dyadic interview is to: observe how two people interact, compare their opinions or experiences, understand shared experiences and differences, and it generates deeper discussion than an individual interview (Kvalsvik & Øgaard, 2021).

Interview Protocol: In the progress of this research, we were able to extract the Fine arts teaching outlines of senior secondary education, and linked them with the concepts of culturally responsive pedagogy as seen in section 3.3. The interview focused on areas which include:

- Access to Fine Arts resources
- Experiences with Fine Arts learning
- STEM prioritization
- Cultural identity
- Student engagement
- Academic experiences

Participants were asked to describe their cultural heritage, their reason for choosing to become a Fine Arts teacher, their interest in teaching Fine Arts education as a student, and their views of social justice as Fine Arts is concerned with other fields of study such as science and technology. The reason we specifically used Cameron *et al.* (2024) mode of specification in interacting with the participants was to try and promote a sense of positive cultural identity among students in the classroom. In addition, the study also examined teachers' motivation toward promoting creative and vocational learning.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

Following the completion of the dyadic interviews we conducted with the teachers and students, all verbal investigations and responses were recorded on audio recordings which was transcribed. The

transcripts were thoroughly read repeatedly to ensure we extract deep familiarity with participants' responses and to support accurate interpretation of meaning. The data analysis process initially followed a structured four-stage coding procedure (see Fig 3), to ensure that there is clarity while linking interview questions with participant

responses ensuring a clear linkage between interview questions, participant responses in which we eventually classified and define them into associative categories and we analyzed our observations accordingly with their research application.

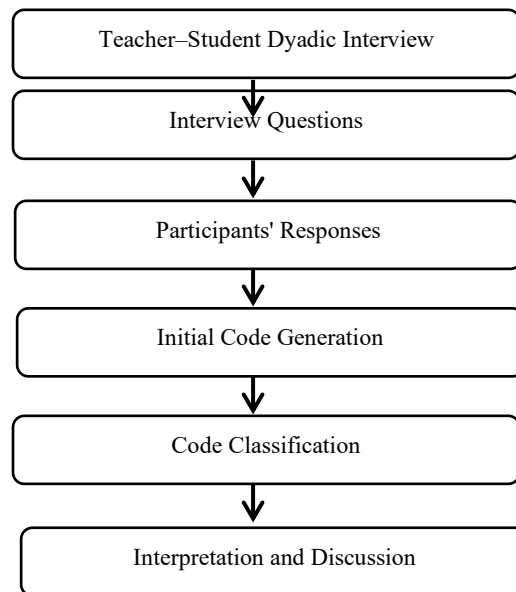


Figure 3: Flow Chart of Data Analyses Procedure

Figure 3 illustrates the stages involved in the qualitative data analysis process, beginning with teacher–student dyadic interviews and ending with interpretation and discussion of findings

Table 3a: Teacher Interview Outline

Question Focus	Sample Response	Initial Code Formulation
Availability of Fine Arts resources	There are insufficient art materials.	Fine Arts Education – Resource Availability
Challenges in teaching Fine Arts	We lack studios and equipment.	Resource Deficiency in Education
Administrative support	School management focuses more on science subjects.	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Prioritization
Student response to Fine Arts	Students show interest during practical activities.	Student Interest in Fine Arts
Cultural integration	Yoruba symbols improve understanding.	Cultural Identity Integration
Academic engagement	Students become more active during art lessons.	Student Academic Engagement in Fine Arts
Recommendations	More Fine Arts facilities are required.	Fine Arts Education Improvement Strategies

Table 3b: Student Interview Outline

Question Focus	Sample Response	Initial Code Formulation
Access to materials	Art materials are difficult to obtain.	Material Accessibility in Fine Arts Education
Learning experience	Practical sessions are enjoyable.	Practical Learning Experience in Fine Arts
Teaching methods	Teachers use demonstrations.	Teaching Methods in Fine Arts Education
Cultural understanding	Local cultural examples help me learn.	Cultural Application in Learning
School participation	I like to attend classes more.	Students Engagement with Fine Arts Education
Confidence level	I feel more confident when presenting work.	Self-Confidence Development in Students
Recommendations	We need more art activities.	Fine Arts Education Suggestions for Improvement in the curriculum

Table 3a and 3b shows how the codes were initially developed directly from participants' responses, with each code linked to a specific interview question. This ensured that coding remained grounded in the original data and maintained alignment with the research instrument.

Table 3c: Classification of the Codes

Theme	Categories
Systemic Challenges in Fine Arts Education	Educational Resource Access
Cultural Capital Development	Cultural Identity and Awareness
Academic Engagement Through Fine Arts	Student Academic Engagement
Transformative Role of Fine Arts Education	Student Development Outcomes
Strategies for Improving Fine Arts Education	Improvement Strategies

Table 3c shows how the categories were further synthesized into overarching themes that represent the central meanings derived from the dataset. However, Table 4-7 were classified into similar categorized accordingly to the pedagogical approach to redress the gaps of access to quality education in Fine Arts Education with their research application. The essence is to relate participants' narratives to relevant literature that explains how access to Fine Arts Education influences cultural capital development and academic engagement among students, particularly in marginalized communities of South-West Nigeria.

Table 4: Cluster I — The Systemic Baseline

S/N	Abbreviated Code	Code	Research Application / Analysis
1	FAE	Fine Arts Education	Evaluating the delivery of NERDC visual arts in marginalized schools.
2	STEM-P	STEM Prioritization	Analysing the systemic bias that favours Science over the Humanities.
3	EDU-IQ	Educational Inequality	Identifying the qualitative gap between urban and marginalized communities.
4	RES-D	Resource Deficit	Exploring deficiencies in art facilities and instructional resources.
5	CUR-B	Curriculum Bias	Measuring the 60% Western-centric dominance in the current syllabus.

Table 4 presents thematic codes developed during data analysis; this empirical data establishes a severe Resource Deficit (RES-D) across the sampled schools. The analysis suggests that the 6-3-3-4 Science Bias I.e. Stem Prioritization STEM-P acts as a gatekeeper, effectively locking Fine Art Education (FAE) out of the primary academic budget. Participants noted that the Curriculum Bias (CUR-B) forces them to prioritize "Global Art" that feels foreign to the students' lived experience. This creates a disconnection whereby Fine Arts Education (FAE) is viewed as a "soft elective," fuelling Educational Inequality (EDU-IQ).

Table 5: Cluster II — The Cultural Mirror (Identity & Heritage)

S/N	Abbreviation	Code	Research Application / Analysis
1	CUL-ID	Cultural Identity	How students see their Yoruba/coastal heritage reflected in the syllabus.
2	IND-K	Indigenous Knowledge	Integrating traditional wisdom and craft techniques into formal lessons.
3	Y-ICON	Yoruba Iconography	Using <i>Adire</i> , <i>Ifa</i> , and <i>Egungun</i> motifs as primary teaching tools.
4	CUL-D	Cultural Development	Measuring the growth of cultural preservation through art-making.
5	CSP	Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy	Teaching methods that actively keep local traditions alive in the classroom.

Table 5 explains the most profound finding lies in the "Praxis of Reclamation." Educators reported that when they shift towards Culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP), the classroom environment undergoes a transformation. By centering Yoruba Iconography (Y-ICON) such as the geometry of *Eyo*, *Egungun*, *Adire*, and *Ifa* motifs — students experience a surge in Cultural Identity (CUL-ID). This is Indigenous Knowledge (IND-K) in motion. It transforms the syllabus from a Western "Window" into a local "Mirror," validating the student's heritage as academically significant.

Table 6: Cluster III — The Student Window (Engagement & Outcome)

S/N	Abbreviation	Code	Research Application / Analysis
1	STU-E	Student Engagement	The behavioural intensity and emotional investment of students towards learning in Fine arts.
2	STU-M	Student Motivation	The mind-set and academic spark that occurs when students see their own lives in the curriculum.
3	ACA-P	Academic Participation	The involvement of arts students in school-wide academic dialogues.
4	AC-SELF	Academic Self-Efficacy	The boost in student confidence that transfers to other school subjects.
5	CUL-CAP	Cultural Capital	The social "currency" students gain when local knowledge is validated.

Table 6 analyses the outcome of the pedagogical shift. The data indicates that Student Motivation (STU-M) is directly tied to representation in the curriculum. Higher Student Engagement (STU-E) was recorded when lessons moved from generic subjects to Creative Expression (CRE-X) based on local coastal narratives. This builds Academic Self Efficacy (AC-SELF). Students who excel in a culturally-validated art studio carry that confidence into other subjects, effectively building Cultural Capital (CUL-CAP).

Table 7: Cluster IV — The Transformative Praxis (The Solution)

S/N	Abbreviation	Code	Research Application / Analysis
1	MARG-C	Marginalized Communities	The specific focus on schools found in underserved areas of the Agbara and Ojo LGAs.
2	CRE-X	Creative Expression	The synthesis of local culture into original, contemporary visual works.
3	CRE-COM	Creative Competencies	Professional skills that bridge the gap between school and the creative industry.
4	ART-I	Art Integration	Strategies for using visual arts to explain history, math, or social studies.
5	ACC-Q	Access to Quality Education	Ensuring students living or schooling in marginalised communities receive a balanced, and quality access to learning.

Table 7 demonstrates that Access to Quality Education (ACC-Q) in Southwest Nigeria must include vocational agency. The integration of Creative Competencies (CRE-COM) and Art-preneurship allows students to see a "Window" to creative economy particularly in Lagos State. In Marginalised Communities (MARG-C), the arts when integrated via Art Integration ART-I — act as a vital hedge against Educational Inequality (EDU-IQ), providing a pathway to both identity and industry.

4. Discussion and Analysis

4.1 Thematic Synthesis: The Tension Between STEM-P AND Y-ICON

The most critical finding of this research is the conflict that exist between the systemic pressure and the aspirations towards incorporating cultural responsive pedagogy into the traditional teaching methods of fine art in secondary schools — with the motivation of exploring how educators can possibly navigate the 6-3-3-4 Science Bias (STEM-P) to implement cultural context such as Yoruba Iconography (Y-ICON) found in the south-western part of Nigeria. The data collected under the Resource Deficit (RES-D) code suggests that the physical environment of the public schools selected in Agbara and Ojo Local Government Areas, actively works against accessing quality creative and technical courses that largely build on practical, in which Fine Arts Education (FAE) is not exempted — this is because the system prioritizes core vocational-technical and science-based subjects. One participant noted that “art activities are conducted in shared classroom spaces. Also, the study identifies an imperative "Pedagogical Workaround": as it was observed that some of the educators are using local clays or natural dyes from coastal plants to circumvent the lack of imported materials. This significantly exposes that RES-D does not completely result in a halt of education; rather, it forces a shift toward Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP) out of necessity.

Thus, the analysis of Y-ICON code reveals that Yoruba visual symbols are not merely "decorations" but cognitive tools. During the dyadic interviews, teachers explained that using *Adire* motifs to teach geometric principles or *Egungun* visual narratives to teach social history can create a "Mirror" that

improves Student Engagement (STU-E). When the curriculum moves away from Curriculum Bias (CUR-B), students stop seeing art as a foreign subject. This shift directly influences Academic Participation (ACA-P) across other humanities subjects, as students feel more academically inclined.

4.2 The Art-preneurial Perspective: From Marginalization to Agency

In Marginalized Communities (MARG-C), the goal of education is often tied to survival. However, the study found that mastery of Creative Competencies (CRE-COM) will eventually provide students self-reliance also a unique form of cultural capital that will help in the industrial world. For instance, Nigeria is a country where most parent aspires and enforces their children to become a "science-literate" which is common around the world, but there are lesser or no opportunity of applying their knowledge or making it through in the industry due to lack and lesser concerns about infrastructures and technological innovations, but being culturally and creatively literate" is a rare asset in a country like Nigeria and other neighbourhood African countries. Actually, it is for a fact that the creative industries have given hard working and talented children that exists in marginalised communities the opportunities to achieve their dreams in professional fields such as music, sports, theatre, cultural and creative arts, and dance. Hence, if interested students can focus on Art-entrepreneurship Economics (AP-EC) skills i.e. learning to monetize their Creative Expression (CRE-X), particularly in a world where the economy seems fuzzy — this transforms the creative industry which fine arts is inclusive from a marginal pursuit into a tool for Access to Quality Education (ACC-Q).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The findings obtained from the exploratory qualitative analysis of this paper shows that Nigeria's 6-3-3-4 school system focuses too heavily on science-based subjects, and more theoretical aspect of all subjects than practical. However, this STEM prioritization is the reason behind curriculum bias — which is due to lack of educational resources and infrastructures which backs the claims of

resource deficit in creative industries. As a result of these issues, this study shows that fine arts education is pushed aside in the poor industrial and coastal areas of Lagos and Ogun States. Moreover, by upgrading the standard research methods into the suggested enhanced mixed-methods framework, this paper proves that cutting arts budgets would create worse educational inequality and stops unprivileged students from getting access to quality education.

Contextually, when a teacher uses Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP) that focuses on indigenous themes and concepts such as Yoruba iconography as seen in Table 1 of this paper — however, they bring vitality of indigenous knowledge into the classroom that transcends to build stronger cultural identity. So therefore, when students see their own culture valued and not demeaned, it makes them motivated and their student engagement increase significantly. This excitement extends into other classes, whereby improving general academic participation and boosting academic self-efficacy.

Finally, it is safe to say that practical skill, talents, creative expression, and creative competencies found in marginalised communities act as a valuable cultural capital. Incorporating art classes with entrepreneurial knowledge such Art-preneurial economics would project school into the real-world system of yielding economic benefits.

5.2 Recommendations

The following are imperative to redress the gaps of Fine Arts Education pedagogy in Nigeria:

Proper Restructuring of the Syllabus: The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) must remove Western curriculum bias and ensure that they significantly shift the focus from European art history only; to a merge of global concepts with our cultural identity and indigenous knowledge.

Build and Fund Art Studios: The Federal and State Ministries of Education must reduce excessive prioritization of STEM disciplines. They need to pass laws that encourage implementation across public schools to build and supply proper art studios alongside science labs. This will end the chronic deficit of resources in the system.

Integrate Entrepreneurial Skills to Art Classes: School leaders can also ensure that educators connect to art-preneurial economics by moving from just drawing on paper and focusing on real cognitive competencies like digital design and fabric printings, this is due to the fact that the world has

significantly tilted to incorporating artificial intelligence in varied works of disciplines. This gives young people practical business skills they can use to make a living right beyond education.

Train Teachers Properly: State school boards (SUBEB) across Lagos and Ogun States can also set up mandatory teacher professional development programs across diverse disciplines in education. These workshops should ensure that teachers know how to use the right instruments and teaching tools. This will guarantee students access to quality education.

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