

**Creative Behaviour and Artistic Expression of Primary School Pupils in Ikom
Education Authority of Cross River State, Nigeria**

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Abstract

The study was designed to investigate the influence of creative abilities on the artistic expressions of primary 4 pupils in Ikom Education Authority of Cross River State. Two research hypotheses were formulated for the purpose of this study. The design adopted for the study was the ex-post facto research design. The sample consisted of 366 primary 4 pupils selected through the simple random sampling technique. Two instruments used for data collection were a self-designed questionnaire titled "Creative behaviour Questionnaire (CBQ) and a test to ascertain the pupils drawing and colouring competencies. The instruments were validated by 3 research experts from Educational Psychology and Test and Measurement, all from the Department of Educational Foundations. Data collected were analysed using the one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The result of the study revealed that creative behaviour significantly influences all the dimensions of artistic expression. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that the teacher should design lessons in such a manner that will provide a child with variety of activities that will depict originality, independent learning and experimentation. It was also recommended that pupils should be introduced to materials that provide progressive warm up experiences.

Keywords: Creativity, Artistic, expressions, Drawing, Colouring.

Introduction

Art is an integral part of a successful and qualitative education. It is the conscious use of skill and creative imagination especially in the production of aesthetic objects; for example, the art of painting a loved one, the sea, sky and any other object of interest (Marriam-Webster, 2015). The development of artistic skill is a result of a curious mind bringing out exceptional and unimaginable work. Artistic study helps young people to develop intellectually, socially, and physically. It gives expression to individuals' understanding, imaginative abilities and creative thinking. Art allows people to express themselves in a more detailed manner than through verbal communication. However, creative art cannot be brought to the fore if not better expressed. Artistic expression can therefore be defined as the conscious use of one's imaginative ability to create objects intended to be contemplated or perceived as

beautiful. It is the ability to express one's internal feelings that cannot be noticed by other people in a more concrete manner. Example: pictorial expression of anger, love, fear, joy, calmness, etc.

In this study, some dimensions of artistic expressions discussed include: drawing competence, and colouring competence. Artistic learning is a natural human process that comes with curiosity and imagination. Children prefer to learn in an artistic way, where their imaginative ideas are displayed by their behaviour and action, rather than memorizing or reciting information presented to them by teachers and parents. Every child is born with artistic potentials, but these potentials will not be harnessed if care is not taken to nurture, stimulate and encourage them. Children are curious by nature; they wonder about objects, people and the world in general. They have an already developed learning skill by their inquisitive nature, which makes them ask questions, imitate, manipulate, experiment and play. The study of art provides a rich and engaging curriculum that develops pupil's ability to think, reason and understand their world. Art creates a synergy for analytical skill development and problem solving, which forms the basis for academic excellence. Therefore, children need all the attention and time for artistic encounter, so they can create and express themselves in a satisfying and realistic way, hence, boost their thoughts, feelings and desire through play.

Unfortunately, artistic expression seems to have lost its place in the hierarchy of skills that society has created. The ability to memorize textbook facts and figures seems to be more respectful skills that are related to intelligence.

In the society today, most individuals who are artistically skilled are perceived as less skilful or unimportant. In many cases, artistic talents are disregarded, undervalued, and unappreciated. Many parents discourage their children from studying subjects that are tilted towards the arts. Such subjects/courses are regarded as soft, unprofessional and without value. Many parents believe that art subjects will almost certainly not lead to employment after graduation, so they discourage their children from showing interest at primary level. Ironically, people fail to understand that artistic expressions open the minds of individuals to the sensitive and intensely human world of creativity (Fearon, 2015). Through artistic expressions, individuals are able to release emotions and feelings, express themselves and release internal thoughts. Without the arts, man will not have a way to express worries, fears, hopes, dreams, feelings and man's very essence of existence. Children's artistic expressions could be promoted if they are exposed to rewarding procedures that will harness their endless supply of artistic energy which is evident in their imaginative play and natural ability to make something out of anything. Based on the aforementioned, the researcher sought to investigate if creative behaviours have any influence on the artistic expressions of primary 4 pupils.

Creative behaviour on the other hand entails the three P's of a "person" engaging in a creative "process" which produces a creative "product", with originality as one of its key characteristics (Sharp, 2001). Relatedly, creativity is the act of transforming an imaginative idea into reality. A child can possess the ability to think on one hand, and ability to produce what he has thought of on the other hand. Ritters and Mostert (2017) carried out a study on enhancement of creative thinking skills using a cognitive-based creativity training, with a sample of 32 undergraduate university students as participant in the creativity training, which was a single session. They pointed out that creativity allows individuals remain flexible and provides them with the capacity to handle opportunities and challenges in a more rewarding way. The results further revealed that creativity increases divergent and convergent thinking and enhances a marginal creative problem solving skills.

The importance of creativity in fostering artistic expressions cannot be overemphasized. Lucas (2001) describes creativity as a state of mind where an individual's general intelligence work together, while creative behaviour is the ability to act in a manner that will solve problems, create products, and generate new questions. It is a behaviour that involves possessing the quality to express oneself in a unique way, which is why it is needful to encourage creative behaviour from an early age to foster healthy growth, self-esteem and respect for culture.

Thereupon, artistic expression can best be described as a concept for promoting social participation in varying dimensions. Rumney, Buttress and Kukas (2016) reiterated that children have a lot to say, but their inability to write down their stories has been a major hindrance, which is why the promotion of creative behaviour and artistic expression cannot be overemphasized. In this study the dimensions that were looked at include drawing and colouring competences. With respect to drawing competence, children express their emotions in their drawing of human and non-human objects, and this seems to be an artistic representation of their cognitive and emotional development. Expressive drawing helps in documentation of appearances and storytelling. Children's drawings are visual representations made with crayons, markers or pencils that are generated for pleasure, but can be used also for therapeutic purposes or development. Drawings could also be designed portrait of emotions, derived from a personal source, that cultivate imaginations, for more flexible and creative thinking and the development of mental, physical and emotional capabilities of children. Emotions or information can be presented through drawings with nuanced meaning of events, especially in areas where children may not be equipped with communication skills to explain their experiences.

Picard and Gauthier (2012) in a study on the development of expressive drawing abilities during childhood and into adolescence, used a large range (5-15years) and

sample size (N=480) to enable them provide a precise and detailed view of age related change in children's developing ability, to use the techniques of literal and metaphorical expression, either alone or in combination. They further examined the effects of special drawings such as (house, tree, or person) and the depicted emotions (happiness or sadness) on the use of each expressive technique, and found a developmental shift between childhood (5-10 years) and adolescence (11-15years) in the use of expressive techniques, from simple (literal) to more complex forms of expressions (metaphorical).

Rubeling, Keller, Yovsi, Lenk, Schwarzer and Kuhne (2010) carried out a study on children's drawing of self as an expression of cultural conceptions of the self, using a total of 570 pre-school children recruited from Cameroonian Nso-Farmer families and German middle-class families. Drawings of 76 Cameroonian and 72 German children matched for age, graphical competence developmental stage, and structural level of human figure drawing (tadpoles) transitional drawings and conventional human figure drawings, were entered into final analysis. The results based on the hypotheses revealed that the figure size as well as the head size of Cameroonian children drawings is substantially smaller compared to the drawings of German children.

In Pediatrics, it is believed that people who have shown notable skills in drawing have recorded evidence of poor development or acquired damage of the brain, which is a possible explanation for their drawing abilities. This means that an affected brain is usually relieved of several functions and may concentrate on some particular functions. Gordon (2005) opined that children draw what they know, not what they see. That means delayed language development and severe learning difficulties could make a child concentrate on drawing objects he sees, undisrupted by language and intellect.

However, many children express unexpected artistic skills; they extract essential qualities of common objects in their unusual world and memorize their salient characteristic features. Creative children listen to their feelings for inspiration, withstand critiques of their work, utilize their short comings and build a strong sense of motivation. (Ebert, Hoffmann, Ivcevic, Phan & Brackett, 2015).

Colouring is another important variable in this study. Through the application of creative capacity, a vital dimension of human intelligence is demonstrated through colouring. Creative behaviour provokes artistic creativity which appears to be the creator of arts (Prentice, 2010).

Correspondingly, children display their creative expressions through the art as the creation of art cultivates critical thinking, reflection and problem solving skills

(Shulsky & Kirkwood, 2015). Shulsky and Kirkwood (2015) pointed out that creativity enhances systematic thinking with regards to colouring. Systematic thinking, according to them, involves the colour choices, individual brushstrokes, and the choice of materials. The child acquires the materials and means of art making through the creative eye. Pope, Butler and Qualter (2012) investigated emotional understanding and colour emotional association in children aged 7-8years. The sample consisted of 40 United Kingdom school children who were administered colour assessment and emotional understanding tasks, and an expressive vocabulary test. The results revealed that children were more able to link colour to positive rather than negative emotions. This could be because children are attracted to colours from infancy, they tend to develop “learned” paired associations with meanings, and emotions with colours. This association can linger throughout life, and markedly, emotional response, thoughts and actions can be generated without the child’s conscious knowledge (Gross & Hayne, 1998). In children, there exist colour stereotype, as a result of exposure to different colours of toys and gifts by parents and other reasonable adults, who seem to consider a particular colour for boys and another for girls. These colours carry different meanings and messages. However, the interpretation of pictorial colours on art brings memories, feelings, and emotions to the forefront (Lev-wiesel & Daphna-Tekoha, 2000). The colours of toys, drawings, colouring behaviour and the language used around the environment may contribute towards a child’s understanding of emotions (Russ & Shafer, 2006). Children have a lot to say, but their inability to write down their stories is a major hindrance

Mantzios and Giannou (2018) conducted a study to investigate the need for ongoing guidance while colouring, using 88 university students assigned to an unguided mandala colouring group; pre and post experiments were conducted in the first group where participants were guided through their colouring practice. The second group made up of 72 university students were assigned to an unguided group. The results of the study showed that the group that was guided performed better in colouring. The implication is that since the students were guided, they did not have an opportunity to show originality.

Colouring is regarded as the core of integrated curriculum and correlates between theory and practice. Colouring materials and instructional methods within each stage seem unique and insightful (Lim, 2004). The child uses the creative eye to select colours for painting, which is why creativity has been revealed by Ahmadi and Besancon (2017) to be a stepping stone towards developing other competencies in classroom, leaving an indelible link between creativity and competencies. According to Ahmadi and Besancon (2017), creativity enhances individual’s ability to use written and non-written skills to share thoughts and ideas in diverse situations.

Creative and imaginative skills promote children's artistic expressions and make them create new and novel artistic work of which colouring is one of them. Therefore, the use of artistic concepts like colour theory, colour mixing for artists and brush type information should be encouraged as enriched painting experience helps in developing artistic skills.

Statement of the problem

Artistic expression cannot be easily taught from a textbook. Many classroom teachers, parents and the society ignore the value of the art in the educational process of the child. The society loudly glorifies the child's intentions and aspirations of becoming a doctor, lawyer, engineer, academic, to mention but a few, while the student who aspires to paint or draw is looked down on. It is common opinion that only the science students possess a higher level of intelligence and therefore are more valued, placing the students who study arts at the bottom of the ladder.

The researcher has observed over the years that many of the children who do not do well in the sciences are advised by their heads of departments or academic advisers to switch over to the arts, without taking into cognizance the child's area of strength and weakness. Many of these students who are forced into taking disciplines they have no flair for, end up poorly where they find themselves. Another area that is worrisome is having primary school pupils who cannot draw or colour a given picture without tracing or colouring out of the drawing book. Strangely, many students find it difficult to draw a circle or rule out a straight line, this scenario puts their imaginative ability in doubt.

Researchers have argued that artistic expressions are a function of the students' mental state. This researcher sought to investigate if creative behaviour of students can influence their artistic expression with regards to their drawing and colouring competencies.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to find out if creative behaviour influences artistic expressions of primary 4 pupils with respect to their drawing and colouring competencies.

Research hypotheses

Two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

Ho1: There is no significant influence of creative behaviours on the drawing competence of primary 4 pupils.

Ho2: There is no significant influence of creative behaviours on the colouring competence of primary 4 pupils.

Methodology

The research design for the study was the ex post facto design. The design was found appropriate because creative behaviour and artistic-expressions are existing qualities of the child that cannot be manipulated. The population of the study consists of all the 11,260 primary school pupils spread across the 62 public primary schools in Ikom Education Authority, Cross River State, Nigeria. The population is made up of 5842 males and 5418 females (Source: State Universal Basic Education Board, SUBEB, 2019).

The sample consisted of 366 primary 4 pupils chosen through simple random sampling technique. The researcher used two instruments for data collection. A questionnaire titled “Creative behaviour Questionnaire” was used. The questionnaire was designed with two sections, and made up of thirteen (13) items. Three (3) items were designed to measure demographic variables of pupils, while ten 10 items were designed to elicit responses on creative behaviour of students. The second instrument was a test on drawing and colouring competencies. The pupils were made to draw a particular object and colour same. The drawing and colouring test was scored twenty marks each, making the test a total of forty marks. The questionnaire was administered to the selected pupils by the researcher with the help of the class teacher.

The validity of the instrument was ascertained by three experts in the areas of Educational Psychology, and Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability was done using fifty students who were not used for the main study. Cronbach Alpha reliability approach yielded coefficient ranging from 0.81 for drawing competence and 0.76 for artistic behaviour, indicating that the instrument was reliable for data collection. Data collected from the 366 respondents was used for data analyses, and the One-way Analysis of Variance was used in testing each of the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

Presentation of results

Ho1: There is no significant influence of creative behaviour on drawing competence among primary 4 pupils.

The independent variable is creative behaviour while the dependent variable is drawing competence. Pupils who scored between 10 – 19 in the ten items that measured creative behaviour were categorized as having low creative behaviour while those that scored between 20 – 30 were categorized as having moderate creative behaviour and those that scored between 31 – 40 were categorized as having high creative behaviours. The mean performance of the pupils in drawing competence across the various categories of creative behaviours was compared using One-way

Analysis of Variance tested at .05 level of significance and the result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: One-way Analysis of Variance for creative behaviour and drawing competence among primary 4 pupils

| Creative behaviour | N | Mean | SD | | |
|--------------------|----------------|-------|-------------|---------|---------|
| Low | 118 | 17.14 | 3.61 | | |
| Moderate | 155 | 18.83 | 3.13 | | |
| High | 93 | 20.28 | 3.07 | | |
| Total | 366 | 18.66 | 3.48 | | |
| Source of variance | Sum of squares | df | Mean square | F-ratio | p-level |
| Between groups | 519.702 | 2 | 259.851 | 24.218* | .000 |
| Within groups | 3894.921 | 363 | 10.730 | | |
| Total | 4414.623 | 365 | | | |

*Significant at .05 alpha level; p<.05.

The result of the analysis in Table 1 revealed that the mean score obtained by the 118 respondents who had low level of creative behaviour as regards to drawing competence was 17.14 which is less than the mean score of 18.83 obtained by the 155 respondents who had moderate level of creative behaviour and this is also less than the mean score of 20.28 obtained by the 93 respondents who had high level of creative behaviour. This implies that the higher the ability level, the better the pupils' drawing competence.

The result further revealed the obtained F-ratio of 24.218 with a p-value of .000 at .05 level of significance with 2 and 363 degrees of freedom. With the obtained result, the F-ratio was said to be statistically significant and the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of creative behaviour on drawing competence among primary school pupils was rejected. Since drawing competence among primary school pupils in Ikom Education Authority was significantly influenced by creative ability, the source of the difference was determined using Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) Post Hoc Test multiple comparison analysis as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Fisher's LSD Post Hoc Test for creative ability and drawing competence among primary school pupils in Ikom Education Authority

| Creative behaviour | N | Mean | Mean difference | p-level |
|--------------------|-----|-------|-----------------|---------|
| Low | 118 | 17.14 | -1.69* | .000 |
| Moderate | 155 | 18.83 | | |
| Low | 118 | 17.14 | -3.14* | .000 |
| High | 93 | 20.28 | | |
| Moderate | 155 | 18.83 | -1.45* | .001 |
| High | 93 | 20.28 | | |

*Significant at .05 level; p<.05.

The result of the Fisher LSD Post Hoc Test analysis as presented in Table 2 revealed that the mean score obtained by the subjects who had low level of creative behaviour as regards to drawing competence differ significantly when compared with that of those who had moderate level of creative behaviour ($MD=-1.69$; $p<.05$) and those who had high level of creative behaviour ($MD=-3.14$; $p<.05$). The result finally revealed that the mean score obtained by the subjects who had moderate level of creative behaviour as regards to drawing competence differ significantly when compared with that of those who had high level of creative behaviour ($MD=-1.69$; $p<.05$). Based on these, the source of difference as regards drawing competence was basically from all the various levels of creative behaviour.

Ho2: There is no significant influence of creative behaviours on the colouring competence of primary 4 pupils.

The independent variable is creative behaviour while the dependent variable is colouring competence. Pupils who scored between 10 – 19 in the ten items that measured creative behaviour were categorized as having low creative behaviour while those that scored between 20 – 30 were categorized as having moderate creative behaviour and those that scored between 31 – 40 were categorized as having high creative behaviour. The mean performance of the pupils in colouring competence across the various categories of creative behaviour was compared using One-way Analysis of Variance tested at .05 level of significance and the result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: One-way Analysis of Variance for creative behaviour and colouring competence among primary school pupils

| Creative behaviour | N | Mean | SD | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Low | 118 | 15.96 | 4.17 | | |
| Moderate | 155 | 17.95 | 3.33 | | |
| High | 93 | 19.16 | 3.82 | | |
| Total | 366 | 17.62 | 3.94 | | |
| Source of variance | Sum of squares | df | Mean square | F-ratio | p-level |
| Between groups | 564.395 | 2 | 282.198 | 20.141* | .000 |
| Within groups | 5086.053 | 363 | 14.011 | | |
| Total | 5950.448 | 365 | | | |

*Significant at .05 alpha level; p<.05.

The result of the analysis in table 3 revealed that the mean score obtained by the 118 subjects who had low level of creative behaviour as regards to colouring competence was 15.96 which is less than the mean score of 17.95 obtained by the 155 subjects who had moderate level of creative behaviour and this is also less than the mean score of 19.16 obtained by the 93 subjects who had high level of creative behaviours. This implies that the higher the behaviour level, the better the pupils' colouring competence.

The result further revealed the obtained F-ratio of 20.141 with a p-value of .000 at .05 level of significance with 2 and 363 degrees of freedom. With the obtained result, the F-ratio was said to be statistically significant and the hypothesis which stated that creative behaviour does not significantly influence colouring competence among primary 4 pupils was rejected. Since colouring competence among primary school pupils in Ikom Education Authority was significantly influenced by creative behaviour, the source of the difference was determined using Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) Post Hoc Test multiple comparison analysis as presented on table 4.

Table 4: Fisher's LSD Post Hoc Test for creative behaviour and colouring competence among primary school pupils

| Creative behaviour | N | Mean | Mean difference | p-level |
|--------------------|-----|-------|-----------------|---------|
| Low | 118 | 15.96 | -1.99* | .000 |
| Moderate | 155 | 17.95 | | |
| Low | 118 | 15.96 | -3.20* | .000 |
| High | 93 | 19.16 | | |
| Moderate | 155 | 17.95 | -1.21* | .014 |
| High | 93 | 19.16 | | |

*Significant at .05 level; p<.05.

The result of the Fisher LSD Post Hoc Test analysis as presented on table 4 revealed that the mean score obtained by the respondents who had low level of creative behaviour as regards to colouring competence differ significantly when compared with that of those who had moderate level of creative behaviour ($MD=-1.99$; $p<.05$) and those who had high level of creative behaviour ($MD=-3.20$; $p<.05$). The result finally revealed that the mean score obtained by the respondents who had moderate level of creative behaviour as regards to colouring competence differ significantly when compared with that of those who had high level of creative behaviour ($MD=-1.21$; $p<.05$). Based on these, the source of difference as regards to colouring competence was basically from all the various levels of creative behaviour.

Discussion of the findings

The result of the study in hypothesis one has revealed that creative behaviour significantly influence drawing competence of primary 4 school pupils in Ikom Education Authority of Cross River State. The implication of this is that the higher the creative behaviour of a child, the better his drawing competence, while the lower his creative behaviour, the lower his drawing competence. The result of the present study agrees with the views of Ebert et al (2015) who revealed that children's creative behaviours are displayed as they use strategies to make meanings out of objects. They added that creative children listen to their feelings for inspiration, withstand critiques of their work, utilize their shortcomings and build a strong sense of motivation. Rubeling et al. (2010) slightly supports the present study with their creative investigation and analysis of human figure drawings which are highly creative. The outcome of the present study is assumed to have been due to the fact that a better artist is creative, which means that, the design that should be drawn and the dimension it should take is clearly borne out of the child's creative imagination.

For hypothesis two, the result of the study revealed that creative behaviour significantly influence the colouring competence of primary 4 pupils in Ikom Education Authority. This means that the higher the creative behaviour level, the better pupils' colouring competencies. The study of Ritters and Mostert (2017) supports the present study with their revelations that creativity allows individuals remain flexible and provides them with the capacity to handle opportunities and challenges in a more rewarding way. The result further revealed that creative thinking promotes artistic expression and make people create novel artistic work. Ahmadi and Besancon (2017) added that creativity enhances individuals' ability to use non-written skills to share thoughts and ideas in diverse situations. Pope et al (2012) also supports the findings of the present study when they revealed that children were more able to link colours to positive rather than negative emotions. The outcome of the present study could be because the ability to colour is provoked by the child's creative imagination. From the creative eye, the child develops the thoughts and the images of whatever he/she needs to colour.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that creative behaviour significantly influences the drawing and colouring competencies of primary 4 pupils in Ikom Education Authority. This means that high levels creative behaviour increases the colouring competencies of pupils, while low level creative behaviour reduces the drawing and colouring competencies of pupils.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was recommended that the school teacher should design lessons in such a manner that will provide a child with variety of activities that will depict originality, independent learning and experimentation. It was also recommended that pupils should be introduced to materials that provide progressive warm up experiences.

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