

Curriculum Design and its Relationship to Marketing of the Visual Arts

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Graduates of the University of the West Indies (UWI, Trinidad and Tobago), in the Department of Creative and Festival Arts, are often left with limited options in which to make a living from their creative work. The purpose of this case study was to examine the perceptions of stakeholders in the Arts in order to increase the understanding of the ways in which the Visual Arts programme may contribute to reform efforts so that graduates can engage in visual production both domestically and globally. Data were collected from students, graduates, lecturers, artists, and investors through a maximal variation sampling method. The multiple sources of evidence were in the form of interviews, document analysis, and visual materials, from which themes, patterns, and relationships emerged. The results indicated a negative relationship between students' understanding of the market and their decision to engage in the market activity.

Keywords: Cultural industries, cultural policy, curriculum, market, Art, stakeholders.

Introduction

This study focuses on the developments in higher education in the Arts at UWI, Trinidad and Tobago with a specific reference to its Visual Arts programme. Two problems emerged from the study: the educators' ability to craft curricula to meet the growing demands of a competitive global culture, and the implementation of effective policy so that curriculum change can lead to greater participation in the global market place.

The Department of Creative and Festival Arts is located within the Humanities and Education Department at University of the West Indies (UWI, Trinidad and Tobago). It offers three undergraduate degrees, two postgraduate diplomas, and five certificates. In 1986, Creative and Festival Arts was established to provide a quality education in the Arts that entails training and practice that is both rewarding to the artist and a benefit to the community. The reward entails the ability for artists to receive training within their own cultural community and articulate a visual language that the society can understand. The department prides itself on engaging in discussions and practices that make it internationally competitive. This competitive status is important for students and society as a whole, because the university is part of the international academic community. This global agenda necessitates that the department produces competent individuals who are able to compete in a world economic market in the 21st century (Jules, 2010).

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The problem addressed by this study is the perceived disconnect between the Visual Arts curriculum offered by UWI and the demands of the market place as seen by stakeholders in the Arts. This evidence is articulated in the available research on the issue, the statistical data compiled by UNESCO on employment of artists in Trinidad and Tobago, and the position of employers surveyed in the market. The larger context of this disconnect may be tied to policy decisions on the part of the government, which, though keenly aware of the value of its cultural assets, has not fully explored all the economic potential (Nurse & Nicholls, 2011). Additionally, within the educational tradition, Art is not given as much emphasis as other subjects. This reality has affected the infrastructure of educational institutions, signaling a need to improve art education at the tertiary level by providing highly trained staff and professional development of arts intermediaries (Murray, 2009).

Graduates from the Department of Creative and Festival Arts have many challenges as they embark on creative careers in the arts (Nurse, 2006). UWI admission is based on a meritorious system that was instituted at inception. This policy was a consequence of a limited availability of instructors and so the subject areas were divided into divisions called faculties (Campbell, 1997). This system still remains today and such polarities among disciplines do not allow for any real experimentation and exploration of alternative ideas (Nettleford, 2006). Such inflexibility presents significant challenges for the university as it prepares to integrate itself in the global community. The core curriculum of the visual arts contains both theoretical and practical courses. Students engage in studio practice - painting, drawing, and design - as well as history of art from the Caribbean perspective. There is no emphasis on interdisciplinary studies and the curriculum is specialized with no focus on market knowledge and art practice. Hence, the educational training in the arts when evaluated within the context of the market is weak and experts in various artistic disciplines such as curatorial experience and critical analysis of work by critics are lacking (Minshall, 2010; Nurse, 2006).

Review of the Literature

A Global Perspective - Role of Effective Curriculum in Higher Education in the Arts

Gaztambide-Fernandez (2008) described the role of the artist in society as a construct of the public imagination, and that such a perception presents challenges for curriculum formation in the contemporary society. A gap in the literature was identified by Gaztambide-Fernandez (2008) who believed that a robust approach to curriculum formation in the arts was important so that students would see themselves as producers of cultural goods. A theory on curriculum is needed where the activity of learning for students should be an effort to embrace their cultural heritage and see themselves as cultural workers within their environment. This approach places the curriculum within the context of contemporary society and so challenges its more traditional approaches. An established theoretical curriculum model is important to meet the needs of an ever changing world. Patesan and Bumbuc (2010) explored curriculum in higher education as crucial in not only addressing the social ills within society, but also in preparing competent and functional citizens. They contended that by changing the perception about learning, higher educational institutions produce more innovative curricula. Furthermore, when problem-based courses are integrated into programmes, learning becomes more experiential, corporative, and inquiry-based (Justice, Rice, Roy, & Hudspith, 2009). This approach is relevant when addressing the complexities that characterise our contemporary existence. Richmond (2009) examined the content of the Art curriculum beyond postmodernism and posited no uniformed idea of Art education can exist. Students of Art should engage unapologetically in any contemporary

philosophical aesthetics and art practice. However, as noted by Patesan and Bumbuc (2010), students must be conscious of their immediate social realities. For Richmond (2009), students functioning within this postmodern setting are keenly aware of the nuances of artistic engagement and freely question assumptions about their creative work.

Zimmerman (2009) argued that it is essential to reshape how curriculum is viewed and to institute a new vision for the future. In addition to stating the importance of creativity as central to reforming curriculum in Art education, Zimmerman (2009) noted a need for a more direct focus on creative exploration where the individual needs of the student are central and cultural practices are informed. The absence of substantial scholarship is evident when discussing the concept of creativity in the domain of art education. At the annual convention organized by the National Arts Education Association, curriculum modification was discussed infrequently (Livingston, 2010). Institutions should explore the idea of creativity and challenge traditional pedagogies. Failure to find alternative pedagogical practices in contemporary educational settings can result in creative inertia (Livingston, 2010). Freedman (2010) observed the historical shift in the idea of student creativity now presented in art education with a deliberate attempt to remove creativity from the language in educational policy. The creative process is defined as a reflective activity where students are guided towards a discovery of their own creative interests (Freedman, 2010). Creativity moves beyond the technical acquisition of skills to create art to encompass a wider array of skills, such as the potential for cultural leaders to present new ideas to society.

Cunliffe (2008) explored the tension that exists between the understanding of knowledge and creativity. Whereas Zimmerman (2009) argued for the need to identify and explore the idea of creativity, Cunliffe (2008) examined the dichotomy that prevails in which less knowledge leads to more effective creative practices. A paradigm shift is needed when examining this relationship between knowledge and creativity so that the understanding of both elements is seen as a cognitive process having the power to regulate one's own creative practice as a form of self-assessment. Art schools face a daunting task when establishing a curriculum that challenges the societal perception of artists while equipping their graduates with practical skills to survive in the contemporary world. Neher (2010) reviewed the economic returns on the investment for Art graduates in the United States. Economic conditions have a tremendous impact on the success of artists, determining their job prospects or their survival as independent artists in the economic society. Neher (2010) saw the stark reality facing graduates of a dwindling collectors' base, stemming from the downturn in the economy. Despite these adverse findings, the need to shape curriculum in order to sustain graduates is part of the larger global discussion. After studying visual cultural education in the United Kingdom, Steers (2007) concluded that curriculum in the arts must give graduates a sense of purpose and relevance while awakening their social conscious and sense of history. The shortcomings of assessment practices are rigid and a more flexible model is needed with emphasis on development and progress over time.

McDonald and Van Der Horst (2007) made the argument for the importance of curriculum and assessment in higher education when they examined higher art education in South Africa. They foresaw the growing demands that globalisation would place on world cultures. The need to preserve history by integrating indigenous forms of culture with the practical demands of a global curriculum is imperative. Educational management must be the priority in order to achieve an effective educational system. Education aims to produce citizens who will become engaged in their communities within the globalized economic system. Smith (2009) agreed with this assessment as articulated by McDonald and Van Der Horst (2007) and

introduced the concept of transformative pedagogy. Within this framework, managers of art education design curricula that create a context where sociopolitical issues are central to the lives of students. Making curriculum relevant not only for society and its heritage, but for the individual student engaged in the experience of learning, is an indication of sound educational practice. Bamford's (2010) research established that any experience of the arts for students must relate to their specific needs and be carefully constructed.

Art Entrepreneurship

Art Entrepreneurship is an emerging field in most institutions of higher learning. The common structure is the alliance between Arts and Business schools in building Art Entrepreneurship programmes. The programme of study focuses on the development of innovative ideas that promote intellectual development and entrepreneurial behavior within the context of the arts (Arts Entrepreneurship, 2010). Entrepreneurship education must move beyond business school models to equip students for the changing dynamics of the labor markets (Shinnar, Pruett, & Toney, 2009). Beckman (2007) revealed the need to incorporate Art Entrepreneurship into the curriculum in colleges within the United States. The research demonstrated a lack of consensus regarding how the subject matter should be taught. Beckman's findings pointed to differences in teaching philosophy and ideology, and in some cases, a generational divide among faculty members. In an investigation of entrepreneurship, Shinnar et al. (2009) found that faculty perceived students as less entrepreneurial than the students' own self-perception. The researchers attributed this difference to students' optimism and the faculty projecting their values and expectations on them. Emerging artists are thrust into a volatile market that is difficult to navigate (Wilmering, 2008). A transformed view of artistic practice and the intricacies of market knowledge indicate the importance for educational institutions to respond to the demands of the market into which graduates will enter. It is widely accepted that a design education prepares talented designers to engage in the economic and cultural development of society (Szeto, 2010). Despite these notions, the number of U. S. institutions requiring a course in the business of Art is relatively low and the data show that most artists outside the major market sell their work on their own (O'Neil, 2008).

Corris (2009) highlighted the paradoxical relationship between the economy and creativity suggesting that practicing artists and graduates newly entering the art market possess sufficient cunning to understand the changing dynamics of market forces and to survive in an ambivalent market economy. This position resonates strongly with Beckman's (2007) final observation of Art Entrepreneurship education regarding the need to consolidate philosophical and ideological differences in order to provide students with the succinct understanding of the concept of entrepreneurship. This knowledge is crucial in order to function in the present market economy. D'Intino, Ross, Byrd, and Weaver (2010) described the implementation of a general education course on Entrepreneurship for undergraduate studies. The course was designed to develop creative and innovative skills and equip learners with appropriate entrepreneurial behaviors. The researchers observed that a course in entrepreneurial studies was relevant as students were opting to establish themselves as entrepreneurs in the form of self-employment.

Brkic (2009) provided an overview looking at curricula in Arts Management at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. An appeal was made for curricula to provide administrators not only with an understanding of managerial concepts and economic knowledge, but with a direct focus on the Arts. Like Beckman (2007) and Shinnar et al. (2009), who identified the different ideological views regarding Art Entrepreneurship, Brkic (2009) pointed to the need to

define the field where Art is placed within its social context and understood as a creative and innovative process. The individual entrepreneur in the Visual Arts integrates the artist with the Art manager. This synthesis has important implication for the understanding of Arts Entrepreneurship as management in the Arts is not exclusively the case of management, but posits Arts as its primary focus. Brkic (2009) further advocated for Art Management programmes to be more interdisciplinary and engage different intellectual analysis of the subject matter. Ultimately, Brkic (2009) found that the teaching of Arts Management must be done within the same environment as the teaching of students of Art.

Art, Aesthetics, and Market Value

The emergence of marketing of art, led to the formation of a theoretical concept that ignored the fundamental needs of the sector; this included its philosophical and aesthetic underpinnings (Fillis, 2006). When examining the theory and practice of Art, there is a general consensus within the creative industrial sector that the market structure is ill prepared for the creativity of the artist and production of authentic work (Nikodijevic, 2010). Panero (2009) reviewed the characteristics of the Art market and observed its inability to appreciate the range of artistic quality. Nikodijevic (2010) saw Art and money as a speculative relationship in which money creates a dichotomy between the self-sufficient enterprise of the Art world and the ongoing questions that accompany the investment in art and the expected returns on that investment. This anxiety is further felt among policy makers who must allocate funding towards the Arts given the reality of a dubious art market (Klamer & Petrova, 2007).

Fillis (2006) extended the argument of the demarcation between philosophical idealism and the realities of market demand. Many working in the creative sector see reputation as a more significant factor where recognition supersedes economic gains. Art is driven entirely by taste and therefore has less to do with performance. As gatekeepers, buyers and sellers together assess the value based on their idea of what constitutes “good” art and “bad” art and this informs the market (Currid, 2007). Nikodijevic (2010) explained this behavior in the market place as the effect of an aesthetic syndrome; the world of creativity fears attaching monetary value to its product. Whereas price represents the quantitative dimensions signifying profitable gains, a work of Art and its value is a qualitative element with specific characteristics that defines its aesthetic worth. Observers of such market behavior appealed to market researchers to identify a shift in the art market paradigm because the theoretical and methodological precepts that have worked for other marketing domains may not be applicable to the creative industry (“Producing and Consuming Arts,” 2009). Yogev (2009) believed that any impact on the social definition of artistic quality and worth must entail an active engagement in the market. The level of uncertainty remains high in the market place regarding the value of cultural goods.

Harrison (2009) explored this issue of creativity, aesthetics, and the rationality characteristic of the market. Creative products function outside the domains of the market and do not adhere to the same rules as other consumer products. Schonfeld and Reinstaller (2007) identified this distinction between consumption products and artistic work. Consumption products are not objectively evaluated; instead, art and cultural goods are socially constructed and their value, as pointed out by Yogev (2009), is determined by opinions of insiders (critics, museum curators, and artists) of the art world. For Harrison (2009), this process of evaluating art can be problematic in the traditional market environment. When Art becomes a commodity, it creates ambiguity in the market place. The subjective nature of Art is not beholden to the same

evaluative schema predicated on economic theory as it is seen as being outside the rational framework of the market.

Herrero (2010) looked at the sociology between art and economics and how art may be calculated in the market place. The work of art is marketed through catalogues, in the case of paintings, and the catalogues become an important promotional tool. The paintings in the catalogue and their price offer buyers the opportunity to experience the work and ascertain its market value. The catalogue serves as an important marketing device relegating the artwork into the sphere of an economic good without the interaction of humans determining its value. Herrero (2010) saw this approach as an opportunity to merge cultural and economic capital so that the aesthetic experience is not reduced when negotiating price. The creative market enterprise is able to function freely, maintaining the integrity of the cultural goods.

This idea of pricing is important in the market place when examining the investment in art as a consumer good. The investment in art is an alternative during economic hardship (Kraeussl & Logher, 2010). The investigators see this move as logical because the art market is perceived as a place for the production of luxury goods and artworks are purchased during more economically prosperous times. Investors see this as the opportunity to diversify their portfolios, but this decision to invest in art is the result of the availability of price data where databases, indices, and market reports become the tools to pursue analysis by investors, who can then evaluate their financial performance in the market.

Despite this behaviour among investors, Kraeussl and Logher's (2010) findings demonstrate how ineffective this investment can be because artworks are seen as distinct from other assets such as stocks, bonds, and real estate. The investment in art serves mainly for the enjoyment of aesthetic pleasure and social status and does not translate easily into interests received by stocks and bonds. Mandel (2009) agreed with this distinction between the investment of art and other equities of investment. The real value of art is determined by the owner of the art piece and the returns that come with its acquisition as a signal of wealth of ownership. Determining the value of art and price remains a bit arbitrary and can be puzzling. The highest price for work is paid when the artist is deceased; however, large amount have been paid for the works of living artists (Goetzmann, Renneboog, & Spaenjers, 2011).

Support for the Arts and Implications for the Economy and Policy Makers

Many countries allocate a substantial amount of funding for the support of the Arts and corporate funding for the Arts can yield benefits such as building corporate image (Erbschloe, 2009). Chong and Bogan (2010) explored public funding for the Arts in the Canadian contemporary art market. The researchers identified the various institutions receiving public funding for the Arts. Overall, there has been a push by governmental agencies for institutions receiving funding to seek private sponsorship in the forms of grants through businesses and corporations. Private sponsorship comes with its own risk. The monies allocated for sponsorship by private organizations are cyclical and dependent upon economic conditions; in times of financial hardship, funds are diminished (Erbschloe, 2009). Dewey (2008) argued the need to engage in comparative policy research so as to embark on an understanding of the concept from an international perspective. This is important when formulating a context in which to examine the construction of local policy. For Dewey (2008), an increasingly global universe has led to the formation of shared ideas surrounding policy development in the arts.

Creative and Cultural Industries

It has been well established, that within this global market environment, artistic goods can play a significant role in economic development is great (UNESCO, 2008b). Throsby (2008) examined the concept of cultural industries and its application to a traditional industrial model. There is an ongoing debate when seeking to define the culture industry and this speaks to the larger issue of the industry's complexity. The seemingly varied definitions among culture, creativity, and industry account for the confusion and warrant a consistent understanding of the concepts. The researcher pointed to the fact that the definition may be tied to political motivation when making policy decisions for the sector. Cultural goods and services may be judged outside the purview of traditional application of other goods and services because these goods' values are determined based on the worth that society attributes to them rather than any condition of their use and function for consumption. Similarly, creative goods may be defined as efficient technological products that may be labeled as creative endeavors. Throsby suggested that culture industries be a subset to the wider creative industry in order to satisfy the industrial theoretical model. Dell'era (2010) looked at the synthesis of both models, linking cultural goods to the creative industrial product sector. More recently, there have been attempts to link art and business in order to enhance corporate performance. Dell'era (2010) observed the impetus among corporations to collaborate with artists on projects because it is assumed that this collaboration may help appeal to the emotional sensibilities of consumers.

Throsby (2008), however, believed that there remained a clear distinction between goods for commercial value and cultural goods that are imbued with a value that cannot be articulated in measureable terms. Pratt (2008), in discussing cultural industries and the production process, saw the dualism between culture and economy. A more conclusive definition of cultural industries, beyond the general notion that the entire industrial sector is now being defined within the context of culture, is needed. The researcher further underscored the tendency of observers to describe culture in general terms, specifically in noneconomic language, when instituting public policy. A distinction is necessary between an understanding of culture for instrumental purposes and culture aimed at developing the industry. Seaman (2009) evaluated the developments of cultural economics and noted the daunting challenges and similarities of researchers pioneering in other fields of economics.

Despite these various understandings of the concept of cultural industries, the contribution of the sector to the development of the overall national economy is manifested in the many studies on the issue. The culture industry has the ability to create employment opportunities and boost regional development (Leriche & Daviet, 2010). The role that culture now plays in the economic life of society is a settled argument and it is no longer seen as an activity exclusively relegated to the social life of community. This ideological shift in the synthesis between culture and economy signals a change in the history of capitalism.

Regional Perspective - Visual Arts and the Market Economy in Trinidad and Tobago

The effects of globalisation, specifically as it relates to developing nations and the educational initiatives, have been given priority by regional governments. The role of human capital development as an engine of future economic growth has long been proven. Cohen and Soto (2007) showed that when correcting for measurement error, human capital contributes more to economic growth than physical capital. A highly productive trained workforce is an important production factor that is complementary to technological capital and is fundamental to the adequate functioning of the knowledge economy (Hunter & Lee, 2009). One of the most

important roles for higher education is to prepare its outgoing students for entry into the workplace. The present state of the global economic system has made this connection more poignant.

The expansion of higher education in the Caribbean has seen the emergence of national and private international institutions that have challenged the very existence of UWI as the main provider of tertiary education (Ali, 2007). The relationship between curricula and instruction and the knowledge, skills, and abilities of workers was the topic of many government meetings. In April 2010, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) organised the Caribbean Conference on Higher Education. The objective of the conference was to foster greater collaboration among regional states and to explore ideas that would solidify educational systems. The region is faced with the demands of an emerging global economy for which participation requires that all nations are competitive and that they establish a relevant voice in the global market place (Wint, 2010).

The region's educational objectives must include the awareness of economics and the role of developing human resources. Schrouder (2008), in examining educational efficiency in the Caribbean, drew a parallel between education and economics, arguing that one of the mandates of education must be devoted to increasing the productivity of labor, which invariably improves a nation's ability to earn income. Many nations in the Caribbean suffer from high income inequality and the economic volatility of the nation affects employment and income (Bourne, 2009). The Gini coefficient is a statistic that measures the extent of income inequality among citizens in a nation (World Bank, 2011). A value of one implies extreme inequality; a value of zero implies no income inequality (World Bank, 2011). Coupled with relatively low per capita incomes, the World Bank ranks many of the Caribbean nations as either low- or low middle-income (World Bank, 2011).

In this global environment, knowledge and the accessibility of information have formulated a paradigm in which creativity and artistic goods can be used to promote economic growth and development (UNESCO, 2008a). It is an inarguable fact that Caribbean cultural products have established themselves firmly within the global market; however, this achievement has come with little policy support at the regional and local levels of government (Burke, 2007). Nettleford (2006), examining the Cultural Studies program at UWI, foresaw that the data retrieved from such an initiative could be an important step towards framing a model for social and economic development while informing policy decisions. The importance of culture and, by extension, the arts as a conduit of economic and social development should resonate strongly within the region because the Caribbean has long marketed itself as a cultural center. Policy makers in higher education must formulate curricular in the arts in order to train nationals to create art sophisticated enough to produce marketable cultural products (Nurse, 2006). To use the Arts as a possible avenue towards social and economic development, a paradigm shift must occur in attitudes towards the arts and its curriculum. UWI, charged with the responsibility of developing human resources in the region, has the added task of providing future graduates with an understanding of their cultural history and social heritage (Nettleford, 2006).

In today's changing economic global environment, employers increasingly expect new graduates to have key knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform in the market place. The business community has concerns with respect to the viability of subjects taught in equipping students to be productive in the job market (Caribbean Knowledge and Learning Network [CKLN], 2006). Employers are interested in workers who can adapt to the changing global

environment that demands flexibility (CKLN, 2006). Consequently, tertiary education may effectively respond to the labor market signals, producing a highly skilled and innovative labor force that is dynamic and relevant to the social and economic needs of society (The Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education [MSTTE], 2010). Technological changes within individual business sectors have resulted in the demand for employees who can effectively interface with the emerging technology (National Training Agency [NTA], 2012). Through modifying its curriculum and policies, UWI can meet these challenges (Gordon, 2007).

There is an urgency to train journalists, critics, and historians to document the history of art and inspire greater public debate on the arts (Murray, 2009). Survey results indicate that 74% of employers believe that the university does a fairly good job when preparing graduates for the workplace, with 22% disagreeing (CKLN, 2006). The findings suggest that there is disconnect between universities and employers involving what is required in today's labor market (CKLN, 2006). New emerging markets demand a new caliber of stakeholders as employees are expected to be multi-skilled and competent in their respective fields (NTA, 2012). UWI must therefore inform its teaching practices in response to the new demands of society, economy, and the business environment (Gordon, 2007).

A new and innovative approach to curriculum that values creativity and adaptability of workers while adopting an international model in learning and best practices is imperative for the country to become a leading knowledge-based economy (MSTTE, 2010). Given these data, with a small adjustment to the Visual Arts curriculum to reflect these changes, new graduates can be better prepared to compete in the world of work and the global market environment. There are negative consequences such as an inflexible curriculum when disciplines continue to be specialized within academic communities (Yang, 2011). The university must establish a strong reliance on market practice and less on theory for the Visual Arts degree and develop a strong programme of study that will produce functioning artists in the society (Nurse, 2006).

University graduates are heavily recruited by employers in Trinidad and Tobago and move into a range of work areas. For students in the visual arts, any attempt to produce work with the aim of gaining access to the market economy is minimal and many artists cannot financially provide for themselves from the sales of their visual work (Nurse, 2006). Despite actively producing work, they must confront the lack of availability of exhibiting space for sale of their work (Murray, 2009). The Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts conducted a survey of the culture industry and data within the visual art sector showed that 77% of art galleries surveyed present fewer than twelve shows per year which is the equivalent to one per month. Art galleries are generally privately owned and exhibit mainly established artists. The large community of artists seeking exhibitions are excluded and lack the connections to top galleries (Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts MCDCA, 2015). Consequently, graduates in the visual arts who become artists must seek other gainful employment, with 60% to 70% having to combine jobs to survive or accept employment in the teaching service, police service, and other public sector or unskilled jobs (UNESCO, 2007, p.1). UWI has supported these data, reporting that a small percentage of graduates find employment related to their degrees but many go into areas outside their discipline. This lack of market access and the ability for self-sufficiency through the creation of art can have considerable ramifications for the creative industry because the most talented artists migrate to more developed economies (Burke, 2007). The creative industry receives very little support and is not viewed as a viable economic sector (Nurse, 2009). As a result, the ineffective management and organization of stakeholders continues to perpetuate

itself within the region (Nurse, 2009; UNESCO, 2008). This inadequacy is reflected in the lack of consistent economic data and the existence of an efficient system in which to evaluate and track cultural activities (Nurse & Nicholls, 2011). The national discussion on the creative industry in Trinidad and Tobago and the larger Caribbean is gaining momentum because regional governments have begun to shift their focus towards the arts and implement policy initiatives that would utilize the arts in order to resolve economic challenges faced by states (Burke, 2007).

From an investor's viewpoint, the risk of investing in art is exponentially high (Forrest & Marshall, 2011). Visual artists face the high cost of producing work with very little hope of economic return on this investment (Nurse, 2006). Less than 40% respondents in the Visual Arts surveyed by the Ministry had exhibited in commercial galleries and 73% creative works were included in public collections both domestically and abroad (MDCA, 2015). These data suggest the difficulty of participating in the market because of the high cost of showing. As a result, the graduates in the arts are at the mercy of government bureaucracy because no standard policy has been adopted for the support and funding of the visual arts (Nurse, 2009). In 1997, the Artists Coalition of Central Islands was formed to articulate the demands of the artists and to lobby for policies and legislation that are sensitive toward the interest of artists functioning within the marketplace (Artists Coalition of Trinidad and Tobago, ACTT, 2011); however, market accessibility remains limited for visual artists in Central Islands because many market sectors are highly concentrated (Nurse, 2009). Cultural entrepreneurs experience great difficulty when they attempt to obtain financing from the traditional banking sector (Nurse, 2009). Currently, the university system has begun to implement programs that may redress some of the issues of cultural production and market participation. The postgraduate program in Creative Design: Entrepreneurship is designed to produce practitioners knowledgeable in the area of market activity and management. The Department of Creative and Festival Arts has also hosted a series of symposia with the aim of creating a context in which art education in the Caribbean can be articulated. In 1997 the department, in collaboration with UNESCO, hosted the Towards 2000 Arts in Education Symposium, entitled, "Who Are We?" This symposium was followed by Declaration of the 2nd Caribbean International Arts Education Symposium in June 2005. The assembly of experts, practitioners in the arts and cultural stakeholders, all acknowledged that progress has been made with respect to art education in the region. However, there remains increasing evidence that the educational and occupational goals as defined within the context of Caribbean arts fall short in meeting the agenda set forth by international and universal standards of education (Gibbons & Lyndersay, 2007). Art education should be relevant to social and educational institutions and the work environment (UNESCO, 2007a).

Despite these initiatives by the Department of Creative and Festival Arts, the role of the arts and its assimilation into the core elements of society was a challenge for the arts education symposium (Gibbons & Lyndersay, 2007). There was also no documentation of the visual culture (Nurse, 2006). Peter Minshall (2010), one of the most significant and respected Central Islands carnival artists of the 21st century, argued that the university must play an integral role in engaging in critical analysis and forming a bridge between intellectual activities and the realities of the social and cultural community.

Methodology

Qualitative data were used to identify the curriculum needs and attitudes towards the market as articulated by students, graduates, and the business community and thus construct a viable understanding of the phenomenon. Merriam (2009) posited that qualitative case study is often used because of its ability to provide insight, discovery, and interpretation, rather than test hypotheses. The study included twelve participants who were selected using maximal variation method based on their knowledge and experience of the phenomenon. For this research study, two students were selected based on their level of study in the programme, and two graduates of the program were selected based on the date of their graduation. Lecturers were selected based on their work experience and field of discipline. Three artists were selected based on the type of work they create while two investors were chosen based on work typical of their investment.

The qualitative data were in the form of interviews, audio visual materials, and personal documents. The interviews were conducted on one-on-one via email to gather the feelings and reactions of the participants. The interview was asynchronous thereby giving participants the opportunity to respond at their convenience. James (2007) explored email interviews as a methodology in academic research with concluding evidence that email interviews produced narratives representative of participants constructed lives, thinking, and reflections of experiences. In addition, email interviews allow participants to retell their stories in a more structured way revising information prior to sending. Electronic files can raise serious ethical concerns because they are normally insecure (Parker, 2008). To counteract this problem the data were coded and a computer file developed along with a password for access. Another source of information was in the form of documents, in this case, private journals. Creswell (2008) articulated the advantages of journals as presenting the considered thoughts of participants about the central experience of the phenomenon. The journals were structured to ask broad general questions of the phenomenon to which participants entered their thoughts freely. The audio visual material collected images of creative work by the participants and a discussion of these works as cultural products within the traditional market environment. These data gave the participants in this study the opportunity to share their perceptions about the reality of market forces and how their work fit into this context (Creswell, 2008). All respondents were given two weeks to complete the interview and visual artifacts with an additional week to complete the electronic journal. Participants were made aware that follow-up questions may be asked after their initial responses are recorded. They were notified in advance when the follow-up will occur and the specific time frame for the responses.

These data were triangulated from the multiple sources and analysed for specific themes and trends. Creswell (2008) described triangulation as the corroboration of all the evidence derived from individuals, types of data and method of data collection in order to develop accurate and credible findings.

Limitations of the Study

Although the study focus was policy implementation, general administrative aspects of higher education were not specifically examined nor were any other aspects of curriculum except for its ability to develop competency in market place. The focus is devoted to a single university in Trinidad and Tobago with specific attention to its Visual Arts programme. Other artistic careers were not studied and therefore the data were limited to the visual tradition excluding the carnival arts and crafts. The findings may present different conclusions when compared to other artistic disciplines and may not be generalized to the entire scope of artistic expressions within the

Trinidad and Tobago society. The study nonetheless provides an important context where students, through modification of the curriculum, can compete successfully in the market.

Findings

Business Knowledge and the Art Curriculum

All stakeholders in the study unanimously agreed that there is a relationship between curriculum and market activity. The pursuit of art as a career is often related to the promise of professional and financial rewards as one graduate expressed: *“When a person makes the decision in doing a career in whatever field is because they picture themselves working and living out from it.”* As such, the training received ought to develop not only proficient studio practices but business acumen among students. Both graduates and student participants discussed the relevance of business knowledge to their programme and its value in their overall development as studio artists including the ability to function in the market. Students are interested in obtaining robust training that would inevitably prepare them for their career and give them an advantage in the market place as one student noted, *“I think it is important because it would allow a more practical understanding of art and design as a commodity.”* This relationship between the knowledge obtained within the educational and the practical engagement with the world is substantiated by Barnett (2009) who expressed the opinion that knowledge alone cannot produce any significant change to the world but producing graduates with the needed skills who will actively engage with the world.

The curriculum must address the core principles of marketing along with the succinct understanding of artistic activity in order to gain sufficient relevance to would-be Visual Arts graduates. Given this perception, it is imperative that a programme in Business become a core part of the curriculum because artists must address the nuances of a complex art market. Students are only exposed to market knowledge through the initiative of lecturers but this activity is not woven into the structure of the curriculum framework. There is however some disparity between lecturers and students regarding when this opportunity to fully engage students should occur as one lecturer stated: *“I am old fashioned-I ask students to seek the resolution of imagination, the marketing I leave to the professionals in the field, indeed necessary for making one’s living from Visual Arts.”* Students and graduates, however, agreed that the rudiments of business knowledge and training in marketing strategies are essential when formulating curriculum and these can be taught in addition to studio practice. There is the definite need to institute managerial concepts and economic knowledge in curricular but with a direct focus on the arts (Brkic, 2009).

Art and Market Activity

The data suggest that the market is narrowly structured in a way that caters for the select few. As a result of this imbalance, artists can become a bit apathetic about achieving any real financial success. The pool of investors in the country is relatively small and so artists are competing in a market that is limited. This inequity makes it difficult for new artists to navigate as they have not built up a reputation and clientele to support their creative efforts. The alternative to work of a full-time artist is seeking employment in other areas of the job market as one student suggested: *“Making a living as an artist is crucial to being a good artist. If you cannot sell art you would have to choose another career to survive and this would divert your attention elsewhere. When an artist chooses another career years may go by and you do not paint.”* The production of creative work ceases when graduates are forced into other areas of employment and are unable to sustain their creative careers. The initiation into market activity for the Visual Arts graduate

comes with other challenges beside market knowledge. They must be able to evaluate the market structure and how it impacts their overall performance. The understanding that the art market may be exclusionary and is an important factor when planning for active engagement and graduates must use all the resources in which to survive and to broaden their marketability to the wider market community.

Any programme of study geared to preparing Visual Arts students for successful careers within the traditional market structure must entail the University's commitment to partnering with the business community and other productive sectors. The lack of artistic appreciation may have to do with an uninformed public regarding the role of the Arts and value attached to creative goods. As a result, the imperative for Art education is directed not only within the institutional walls but to the general public. This strategic approach was echoed by one lecturer in the study who believes that students should be given opportunities to travel and collaborative projects with art designers and manufacturers to *"remove the specter of leisure and hobby that haunt Visual Arts education."* This sentiment was also shared by a student who lamented that, *"internships were not sourced or made available for students, even as apprentices to artists."* This attempt to integrate art in the public sphere through collaborative projects would indeed broaden the understanding of the Arts and its relevance to societal developments. All participants in the study agree that the programme structure must therefore facilitate these opportunities for students to become part of the work experience so they have an advantage in the market. This view is held by one investor participant who proposed: *"Through employment opportunities—and through mentoring and having spaces the artists can call their work-space."*

The awareness of the relevance of the Arts and its relationship to the community may help broaden the market and present additional opportunities to emerging artists. Having access to the market is important to all participants and this will give them some leverage to effectively negotiate the value of their creative products within the market.

The Market Value and the Industry

The role that curriculum plays in producing artists knowledgeable about market behavior is important because it helps them determine the value of their creative goods within the market structure. The Art market industry is structured in a way that may make it difficult for new artists to penetrate as one investor described the market as: *"Elitist - mainly those of the intelligentsia tend to be patrons of artists."* The predictability of the market being reserved for the select few places tremendous pressure on emerging artists and this may inadvertently affect the value of their work in the market place as underscored by one student: *"Most students are expected to keep their work at very low prices devaluing the quality of the work. The local art market is mostly interested in investing only in established artist. The work an artist produces is not marketed well enough, the artist do not know buyers."*

Graduates often times see themselves as experiencing loss by devaluing their products in order to participate in a market that is for the most part exclusionary. This feeling of alienation within the market structure has an impact on students' decision to engage in its activity. As such, students are forced to engage in a variety of activities and experiences that would add value to what they do and bring respect to their creative efforts. The challenge to produce quality work is important to attaining respect and creating value for the work in the market place, however, the artists must carefully balance the expectations of the market attaching value to the work and their own estimation of its worth.

The pressure to negotiate for less value is a common problem and artists participants in the study related the virtue of having confidence in the value of their creative goods while compromising the possibility of sales. The pricing of work for creative artists is not stipulated and each artist has a set of criteria motivated by personal interests and reference drawn from other works on sale. The market industry is slowly emerging in Trinidad and Tobago. Artists, particularly emerging talent, are alienated within its structure with little incentives to promote their creative products. The predictability of the market, as an exclusive place, makes it very difficult to penetrate and achieve financial success. The conflict of attaching a price to work explains the larger problem related to establishing value to creative work-one that is affected by personal decision rather than an efficient market system.

Recommendations

The data provided overwhelming evidence that the existing curriculum does not adequately prepare graduates in becoming successful employees or entrepreneurs in the market environment. Several recommendations were developed based on the evidence from the investigation that will be beneficial for UWI administrators and stakeholders.

The university should create changes at the administrative and policy level. This entails restructuring the curriculum to include Business Studies and Marketing as a core part of its undergraduate studies in the Visual Arts. Students in the Visual Arts should be given greater flexibility within their program such as allowing them to combine course from other disciplines and faculties deemed necessary for informing their creative work. Access to technology is critical for visual art students and can be incorporated in the delivery of instruction. Students can also make use of technology to engage in marketing and self-promotion for their artistic products. As part of the larger global initiative, the university ought to seek partnership with international institutions in order to foster student exchanges thereby providing students with the experience of international markets. There is a need to partner with corporations including manufacturing industries who can use the creative skills of Visual Arts graduates. As part of the cultural mandate, the government should provide financial support for artists by utilising their talents during cultural and national festivities.

Recommendations for Further Study

The research focused specifically on the Visual Arts department of UWI, Trinidad and Tobago. The Department of the Festival Center in the Creative Arts is made up of other disciplines including: Music, Theatre Arts, and Carnival Arts. Further research is needed to assess the impact of these other artistic genres on economic activity in Trinidad and Tobago. The research collected qualitative data regarding the perceptions of stakeholders in the Visual Arts programme. Though these data gave an insight into the problems that exist with content of the curriculum and provide a call for action on the part of educational developers and policy makers, quantitative researchers can provide data that will measure the economic contribution the Visual Arts make from graduates of UWI. Further research may look at the administrative structure of the University with the aim of assessing policy implementation and the various strategies used to monitor effectiveness. The research suggests that corporations can utilise the Arts within their establishment but a demonstration of the ways in which the creative skills of artists can improve product brands in the domestic market may be needed.

Conclusion

The study confirmed that curriculum is indeed a predictor of market behaviour by students and graduates in the Visual Arts in this instance. By modifying the exciting curriculum, graduates may be better prepared for the market place. The Arts have long been marginalised within Trinidad and Tobago, placed outside the domains of any major economic activity. The support for artists is minimal and this has had a direct impact on production of cultural goods. As the island integrates into global economic systems, it must consider the potential of all its human capital. The Arts can provide opportunities to diversify its economic portfolio and expand its cultural industrial sector.

An important revelation derived from this study is the emergence of the advocacy of students and graduates. Despite the obstacles, there still exist artists creating work as an expression of their cultural identity. Having observed the fundamental global developments in education, students and graduates of UWI are able to critically analyse their current situation and apply the relevant issues to their local context. The original mission of UWI to develop regional leaders is reiterated within the contemporary educational setting with the added demand for more active engagement in all sectors of the national economy. The impetus among students and graduates to evaluate their educational environments, measure it against those frameworks of international standards, and demand change is an important transformation in student behavior that educational developers cannot ignore.

The findings from the study must signal to policy makers in the arts that a shift in perceptions is necessary if there is going to be any meaningful contribution to the Arts. Educational developers, particularly in higher education, have a key role to play in formulating curriculum and designing educational policy that equip graduates with the entrepreneurial skills and knowledge for self-promotion within the market structure.

Trinidad and Tobago is poised for development on both the regional and global stage. Inclusion in the international network demands that participating nations recognise the full potential of both their human and physical capital. Educational policy must align itself with the changing demands of an increasingly globalized world. It is in the interest of regional governments, like Trinidad and Tobago, to engage in diverse economic activity investing wisely in the country's available resources while securing a healthy financial future for all of its citizens. The results from this research should be the catalyst in initiating some viable economic activity for the nation.

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