



Fostering Economic Sustainability within Rural Families in South Africa through Visual Arts and Crafts

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigated interventions that can restore the importance of visual arts and crafts in fostering economic sustainability within rural families, in particular, young rural community members. Prior to colonization, visual arts and crafts played a significant role in providing economic subsistence for many households in South Africa. During the inception of formal education, that practice was replaced by scholastic education, prioritizing theoretical knowledge over practical experiential learning, leading to a gradual decline in the subsistence lifestyle. Marxism Theory (1848), which underpins this study, posits that within a capitalist economic framework, workers are exploited whilst company owners amass additional money. Craft manufacturing has the potential to augment self-generated income, making a valuable contribution to economic growth whilst avoiding any form of exploitation. The qualitative convenient sample comprised fifteen school dropouts and graduates from both South Africans and foreign nationals and was studied through face-to-face and telephonically informal conversations. The findings revealed that insufficient application of traditional visual arts and crafts skills in elementary education; inadequate delivery of government services to promote visual arts and crafts entrepreneurship; and the divergent perspectives in defining the concept of "civilization and freedom" impede efforts to achieve economic sustainability. The study recommended that community members should not only rely on government support services but instead utilize government grants to acquire knowledge, develop skills, and adopt subsistence lifestyles that rely on natural resources for sustainable economic growth. The government should also support the establishment of training centres where skilled individuals can impart knowledge and skills to the younger generation and monitor the efficacy of non-governmental organizations. This study not only enhances the well-being of people and communities but also offers valuable material for academic research in several fields. It strengthens comprehension of cultural, economic, and social phenomena within the framework of sustainable development.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper examines interventions that can impact the perceptions of young people about the significance of visual arts and crafts in promoting economic sustainability among rural families. Before the introduction of formal schooling after the arrival of colonists in 1652, the traditional education of the South African black population encompassed a substantial incorporation of arts and crafts.¹ During that historical period, children were educated in

¹ Jonathan D Jansen, "Curriculum as a Political Phenomenon: Historical Reflections on Black South African Education," *The Journal of Negro Education* 59, no. 2 (1990): 195–206.

a diverse range of manual skills from an early stage, providing them with the essential abilities for self-sufficient living and guaranteeing their capacity to support their homes upon reaching maturity.² As a result, visual arts and crafts played a significant role in providing economic subsistence for many households in South Africa.³ During the inception of formal education, the industrial curriculum was implemented, wherein students were instructed in various crafts such as needlework, drawing, woodwork, and nature study.⁴ However, over time, this approach fell out of favour, leading to a significant shift towards scholastic education, prioritizing theoretical knowledge over practical, experiential learning.⁵

Nevertheless, as democracy continues to evolve, the reliance on a salaried job, as a means of livelihood, is becoming increasingly prevalent, leading to a gradual decline in the subsistence lifestyle. According to Tapfuma, Musavengane, and Magwaza, the concept of visual arts encompasses the generation of artworks that possess a visually captivating quality.⁶ On the other hand, crafts pertain to the production of objects that serve a specific purpose, necessitate the use of hands in their development, and utilize materials classified as natural, as Bellver, Prados-Peña, García-López, and Molina-Moreno assert.⁷ One of the objectives of the South African curriculum is to foster the development of effective individual learners.⁸ The Creative Arts discipline provides individuals with the opportunity to acquire and develop skills and information that enable them to function proficiently both independently and collaboratively within a team setting. On the contrary, the actual execution of scholastic education often fails to achieve its intended objectives. Despite being incorporated into the curriculum nearly three decades ago, the introduction of Creative Arts has yielded limited evidence of its effectiveness, particularly in the realm of visual arts and crafts. Many artistic and artisanal endeavours within rural settlements are mainly showcased by individuals of foreign nationality.⁹ These artisans engage in the sale of their handcrafted products to the rural areas of South Africa. However, young South African citizens prioritize formal education above the acquisition of indigenous knowledge in the early stages of their education.

The arts and crafts custodians of knowledge in South African rural communities are predominantly elderly individuals. Certain elderly individuals are no longer actively engaged in various activities for reasons such as age and other reasons known to them. Therefore, there is a scarcity, if any, of young people residing in rural areas who can acquire the expertise passed down by these elderly practitioners. As a result, a significant number of young people commence their professional careers without possessing any supplementary proficiencies that would confer a competitive edge over those with university qualifications. Some school dropouts may find themselves in a state of limited progress, primarily due to their inability to get career opportunities and their lack of proficiency in artistic and craft-related abilities. On the other hand, a significant number of graduates are actively seeking employment opportunities without any source of income as a direct consequence of their inadequate proficiency in arts and crafts. Even among the limited number of individuals possessing such abilities, there is a lack of initiative in establishing their enterprises, as they often opt for traditional employment.

Unfortunately, the South African education system is entangled in the legacy of colonialism, as it continues to be shaped by the Western educational framework.¹⁰ Mulaudzi posits that the concept of coloniality pertains to the persistent repercussions of colonialism, which have perpetuated the historical inheritance produced by colonial powers in terms of economic domination, governance, gender and sexuality, and knowledge systems.¹¹ As a result, the Western educational paradigm is often considered to be the most esteemed and effective strategy on a global scale.¹² However, not all individuals are able to attain the highest standards necessary to secure sustainable

² Michael B Adeyemi and Augustus A Adeyinka, "The Principles and Content of African Traditional Education," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 35, no. 4 (2003): 425–40; Gladys Rowe et al., "Prioritizing Indigenous Elders' Knowledge for Intergenerational Well-Being," *Canadian Journal on Aging/La Revue Canadienne Du Vieillessement* 39, no. 2 (2020): 156–68; A Babs Fafunwa and J U Aisiku, *Education in Africa: A Comparative Survey* (Taylor & Francis, 2022).

³ G. Nelson, "South African Women in Art: Women's Needlework Cooperatives as Income Generating Enterprise" (Howard University, 2018).

⁴ Patrick N Foster, "Technology Education: AKA Industrial Arts," *Volume 5 Issue 2 (Spring 1994)*, 1994.

⁵ Jansen, "Curriculum as a Political Phenomenon: Historical Reflections on Black South African Education."

⁶ Musawenkosi M. Tapfuma, Regis Musavengane, and Rowen Magwaza, "The Role of Creative Tourism through Arts and Crafts in Promoting Inclusive Tourism in Zimbabwe," *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 22, no. 1 (January 2, 2023): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2023.2231401>.

⁷ David Fernández Bellver et al., "Crafts as a Key Factor in Local Development: Bibliometric Analysis," *Heliyon* 9, no. 1 (2023).

⁸ Department of Basic Education, 2011.

⁹ Sally Peberdy, "Mobile Entrepreneurship: Informal Sector Cross-Border Trade and Street Trade in South Africa," *Development Southern Africa* 17, no. 2 (2000): 201–19.

¹⁰ Savo Heleta, "Decolonisation of Higher Education: Dismantling Epistemic Violence and Eurocentrism in South Africa," *Transformation in Higher Education* 1, no. 1 (2016): 1–8.

¹¹ Mutondi Mulaudzi, "Afro-Feminism and the Coloniality of Gender in Constitutional and Legislative Drafting: South Africa as a Case Study," *Southern African Public Law*, 2023, 21-pages.

¹² Heleta, "Decolonisation of Higher Education: Dismantling Epistemic Violence and Eurocentrism in South Africa."

livelihoods due to the considerable expenses and challenges those other learners face. The African traditional education places greater value on learning as a collective endeavour. In contrast, the focus of Western education lies primarily on individualism, as demonstrated by the importance placed on achieving success in scientific and mathematical reasoning, as well as competence in English as the language commonly used in international business.¹³ This Western strategy has adverse consequences for rural communities in Africa, as it leads to a significant number of students discontinuing their education for many reasons, such as incompetence, poverty, familial matters, obstacles faced by the youth, and environmental concerns. Undesirably, the official education received by young rural individuals failed to provide them with the necessary skills and values to ensure their economic well-being, despite the continued advocacy for the integration of Indigenous Knowledge into classroom curricula. Henceforth, it is crucial to implement the practical teaching of visual arts and craft skills at an early stage, where parents and teachers collaborate to ensure that young individuals acquire these skills without any limitations. This will enable school dropouts to sustain a livelihood. Thus, the holistic growth of an individual in contemporary times necessitates a harmonious amalgamation of moral principles and competencies instilled within the household in conjunction with the educational curriculum provided in schools. To delve deeply into the topic at hand, the researcher will conduct a comprehensive analysis of existing literature, focusing on the theoretical framework and empirical evidence. They will also address the methodology used to design the study, present and analyse the results, and provide recommendations and conclusions in the final report.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Background

This investigation is grounded in the theoretical framework of 1848 Marxism. Marxism posits that under the framework of the capitalist economic system, employees are subject to exploitation whilst owners of firms amass surplus money.¹⁴ The beginnings of Marxism may be traced back to Karl Marx, a prominent political economist. According to Marx's theory, the dominance of capital hinders individuals from effectively constructing their society in accordance with their collectively determined democratic interests. In brief, the notion of unrestricted capital freedom has led to a restriction of both individual and societal liberty, hence prompting the need for a government that places emphasis on the communal well-being of its citizens. The legitimacy of a government is predicated on its founding through democratic mechanisms, its grounding in widespread participation, and its dedication to public transparency and responsibility.

Craft manufacturing has the potential to augment self-generated income, making a valuable contribution to economic growth whilst avoiding any form of exploitation. This theory holds significance within the context of this work as it explicitly elucidates the key point being presented. In South Africa, certain individuals establish National Government Organisations (NGOs) and engage young individuals from rural areas as employees whilst disproportionately benefiting from substantial financial gains and compensating these employees with minimal remuneration. The argument posited is that due to the lack of professional skills among young individuals residing in rural areas, capitalists exploit their inexpensive labour as a means of sustaining their livelihoods.

Conversely, a significant number of foreign individuals migrate to South Africa and achieve notable success by using their acquired arts and crafts talents, which often originate from observing their elders in the community.¹⁵ These foreign nationals establish enterprises and engage young individuals from South Africa in various occupations, such as hairdressing, street vending, and occasionally as messengers. The rural population of South Africa is subject to exploitation whilst foreign nationals derive advantages from the utilization of the country's resources and products. They impose exorbitant prices for even the most basic antiques, as they are aware that South Africans have a taste for luxurious items, despite their inability to produce such goods themselves. These foreign nationals amass a significant amount of capital through young rural people's provision of services, compensating them inadequately under the assumption of their limited skill set.

Empirical Review

Twala has brought attention to the difficulties faced by self-taught young creatives who have chosen to pursue their crafts as a profession after dropping out of university.¹⁶ In his assertion, Twala further states that the arts serve as a platform for entrepreneurial endeavours, enabling several young creatives to generate income through their artistic

¹³ Thaddeus Metz, "How the West Was One: The Western as Individualist, the African as Communitarian," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 47, no. 11 (2015): 1175–84.

¹⁴ J. Coakley and E. Dunning, *Handbook of Sports Studies* (London: Sage Publications, 2000).

¹⁵ S Makwembere, "Hallmarks of Irresponsible and Unresponsive Governance: Internal Xenophobic Attacks in South Africa's Municipalities," *TD: The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa* 11, no. 4 (2015): 118–26.

¹⁶ T.A. Twala, "An Ethnography of Young Creatives in Itsoseng Township: Exploring the Relationship between Creative Arts and Non-Standard Employment in South" (North-West University (South Africa), 2023).

pursuits, thereby supporting their immediate families and maintaining their desired standard of living.¹⁷ Therefore, creative economy development plays a role in the economy of a country, especially in income generation, job creation, export revenue, technology, intellectual property, and other social roles.¹⁸ These assertions do not only benefit the school dropouts but also that graduates with such skills have an added beneficial advantage to the economy of the country. It is not necessarily beneficial only if these graduates are formally trained in arts and crafts but graduates from other avenues can supplement their income through arts and crafts.

The study by Tapfuma, Musavengane, and Magwaza examines the influence of creative tourism, specifically in the field of visual arts and crafts, on the development of inclusive tourism in the context of Zimbabwe.¹⁹ The results of their study emphasize the significant potential of visual arts and crafts in fostering inclusive tourism by mitigating poverty and enhancing the well-being of marginalized populations. Whilst the primary emphasis lies on the nation as a collective entity, the favourable outcome has the potential to extend its impact to even the most disadvantaged individuals inside marginalized communities. The authors additionally assert that artists face various challenges in the creation of arts and crafts, including limited financial resources, inadequate production facilities, insufficient marketing efforts, competition from foreign products, and a lack of support from governmental bodies and local tourism organizations. Therefore, artists are calling for the implementation of strategies to address issues related to financing and marketing, promote fair competition, and establish more lenient government policies.

Stoll, Gårdvik, and Sørmo, concurring with Tapfuma et al, explore the role of arts and crafts in promoting education for sustainable development.²⁰ The proponents assert that the inclusion of arts and crafts in the curriculum is crucial for the development of practical skills, fostering creativity, and encouraging critical analysis of visual and material culture. This educational approach aims to provide students with the necessary competencies to navigate the demands of contemporary society, both in their personal lives and professional careers, which increasingly emphasize the need for innovative thinking, practical aptitude, and the capacity to make informed aesthetic and ethical decisions. The integration of students' creative work with current challenges can be enhanced by partnerships with local cultural and business entities.

Additionally, Bellver et al.'s scholarly work examines the advancements made in the field of crafts research and their effects on the socioeconomic development of rural communities.²¹ This investigation sheds light on the efforts undertaken by various governmental entities to mitigate rural depopulation by fostering rural development initiatives. The focus of their argument centres on the assertion that handicrafts serve as a means of sustenance for impoverished rural areas, hence, serving as a poverty alleviation strategy within rural communities. On the other hand, Deb, Mohanty, and Valeri present a novel methodology aimed at fostering family businesses in the handicraft industry by leveraging local traditions and cultural practices.²² Their work contributes to the existing literature on family businesses in the handicraft sector and examines the economic implications of promoting local traditions to both domestic and international tourists. The authors emphasize the significance of government and community support, as well as promotional efforts, in ensuring the continuity of family businesses across generations and the subsequent enhancement of rural livelihoods.

The study conducted by Hadisi and Snowball sheds light on the persistent efforts made by the South African government to support a growing number of crafters since 1994.²³ However, most crafters face a significant obstacle because they lack technical skills, primarily because of their limited educational background. Consequently, this puts them at a disadvantage when competing against both educated local crafters and foreign counterparts in the craft industry. Hadisi and Snowball examined female and youth crafters hailing from developing countries, with a special emphasis on urban centres from a global standpoint.²⁴ However, this paper narrows its focus to the younger demographic originating from the grassroots of rural areas in South Africa, notably targeting the young generation.

¹⁷ Twala, "An Ethnography of Young Creatives in Itsoseng Township: Exploring the Relationship between Creative Arts and Non-Standard Employment in South."

¹⁸ Siti Mariam et al., "The Creative Economic Development in Improving the Income of Wood Artists," *International Journal of Economy, Education and Entrepreneurship* 3, no. 1 (2023): 270–78.

¹⁹ Tapfuma, Musavengane, and Magwaza, "The Role of Creative Tourism through Arts and Crafts in Promoting Inclusive Tourism in Zimbabwe."

²⁰ Karin Stoll, Mette Gårdvik, and Wenche Sørmo, "The Role of the Arts and Crafts Subject in Education for Sustainable Development," *Acta Didactica Norden* 16, no. 1 (2022): 30–sider; Tapfuma, Musavengane, and Magwaza, "The Role of Creative Tourism through Arts and Crafts in Promoting Inclusive Tourism in Zimbabwe."

²¹ Bellver et al., "Crafts as a Key Factor in Local Development: Bibliometric Analysis."

²² Santus Kumar Deb, P P Mohanty, and Marco Valeri, "Promoting Family Business in Handicrafts through Local Tradition and Culture: An Innovative Approach," *Journal of Family Business Management*, 2022.

²³ Serge Hadisi and Jen Snowball, "Assessing the Potential of the Craft Sector's Contribution to Employment and Gross Domestic Product in South Africa," *Creative Industries Journal*, 2022, 1–15.

²⁴ Hadisi and Snowball, "Assessing the Potential of the Craft Sector's Contribution to Employment and Gross Domestic Product in South Africa."

Ngubeni, Ivanovic, and Adinolfi conducted a study on the obstacles faced by marginalized women crafters in Alexandra Township, South Africa.²⁵ The researchers identified various barriers, including the complex procedures involved in accessing funding. Language communication emerged as a significant obstacle, despite the women possessing the necessary skills to initiate their arts and crafts projects. The primary challenge faced by these women is securing financial support for their creative endeavours. Abisuga, Mpofo, and Nenzhelele undertook a study to document the experiences and perspectives of crafters in KwaZulu-Natal pertaining to handicraft business activities within the province.²⁶ Additionally, their study sought to identify the key success factors necessary for fostering innovation and growth within the industry in South Africa. It is anticipated that such efforts may contribute to socio-economic development and the establishment of sustainable livelihoods. The findings of the study suggest that several issues pose challenges to the expansion of the artisan sector. These concerns include gaps in innovation, inadequate business security for artisans, the overall lack of organization within the industry, and insufficient training and assistance.

After examining the assertions made by other scholars, the researcher observed that the crafters under consideration are currently engaged in the practice of their skills. However, they encounter obstacles that impede their progress. In contrast, the participants examined in this study are unable to engage in entrepreneurial activities due to their lack of proficiency in visual arts and crafts. Thus, enhancing the visual arts and crafts within the scope of this study necessitates the acquisition of fundamental abilities at the primary level to achieve individual proficiency, which must afterward be refined and cultivated for a worldwide showcase. The researcher posits that the acquisition of theoretical knowledge continues to compel individuals to seek employment rather than engage in entrepreneurial endeavours. Hence, education that does not incorporate handicraft skills is insufficient to adequately prepare the individual for the practical application of knowledge.

METHODOLOGY

Dzwigol points out that it is crucial to carefully choose a research approach that aligns with the specific study challenge at hand.²⁷ The researcher employed a qualitative methodology within an interpretive paradigm, which involved delving deeply into a natural setting to examine a phenomenon. This approach was consciously and purposefully chosen by the researcher to achieve an intended goal. The researcher conducted interviews with a qualitative convenience sample consisting of ten South African and five foreign national school dropouts and graduates. Convenience sampling is a method of selecting participants for a study based on their alignment with the research criteria. Typically, this involves the researcher visiting a location where a significant number of individuals holding the characteristics that are needed by the target group are likely to be present.²⁸ According to Obilor, convenience sampling is a sampling technique that selects individuals for a study based on their proximity to the researcher.²⁹ The chosen sample method was deemed appropriate in this study because of the researcher's ability to engage with participants in proximity, primarily through face-to-face interactions and additionally through telephone or online surveys. However, for this study, informal telephone talks were chosen over online surveys as the ideal method to mitigate the potential for excessive, uncontrolled data. However, the majority of participants who were questioned via telephone were recommended by those who had conducted face-to-face informal conversations. Furthermore, Stratton argues that convenience sampling is characterized by lower costs, faster implementation, and greater simplicity compared to alternative sampling methods. Consequently, the researcher deemed it suitable for the present study.³⁰

The researcher's personal experience informs the data for this research paper, which is based on informal conversations and observations. According to Swain and King, informal conversations tend to facilitate communication more effectively, although this outcome is contingent upon the personality characteristics and dispositions of the individuals engaged in the conversation.³¹ Furthermore, with less performative behaviour from

²⁵ Thandeka Charmaine Ngubeni, Milena Ivanovic, and Maisa Correia Adinolfi, "Entrepreneurial Challenges of Marginalised Women Making Souvenirs in Alexandra Township in Johannesburg," *African Journal of Hospitality Tourism and Leisure* 11, no. 6 (2022): 1842–59.

²⁶ Oluwayemisi Adebola Abisuga, Khumbulani Mpofo, and Tshifhiwa Gift Nenzhelele, "Issues in Innovation and Development in the Handicrafts Industries of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa," *Innovation and Development* 13, no. 1 (2023): 193–212.

²⁷ Henryk Dzwigol, "Research Methodology in Management Science: Triangulation," *Virtual Economics* 5, no. 1 (2022): 78–93.

²⁸ Robert Wall Emerson, "Convenience Sampling Revisited: Embracing Its Limitations through Thoughtful Study Design," *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness* 115, no. 1 (2021): 76–77; Salome E Scholtz, "Sacrifice Is a Step beyond Convenience: A Review of Convenience Sampling in Psychological Research in Africa," *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology* 47, no. 1 (2021): 1–12.

²⁹ Ezezi Isaac Obilor, "Convenience and Purposive Sampling Techniques: Are They the Same," *International Journal of Innovative Social & Science Education Research* 11, no. 1 (2023): 1–7.

³⁰ Samuel J Stratton, "Population Research: Convenience Sampling Strategies," *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine* 36, no.4(2021):373–74.

³¹ Jon Swain and Brendan King, "Using Informal Conversations in Qualitative Research," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 21 (2022): 16094069221085056.

both the interviewer and interviewee, such conversations have the potential to produce data that is more genuine to life. In addition, the act of observing and engaging in conversations allows the researcher to accurately depict a particular event or occurrence in a naturalistic environment, thus enhancing its authenticity.³²

The data utilized in this study were acquired via informal conversations performed with fifteen individuals who were foreign nationals, South Africans who had discontinued their education, and tertiary graduates living in a rural community. Furthermore, the researcher gathered data by means of direct observations throughout their stay in a rural locality. The researcher conducted informal conversations with individuals of foreign nationality participating in door-to-door sales activities. Castleberry and Nolen assert that thematic analysis is a research methodology that involves the systematic identification, analysis, and reporting of patterns, known as themes, within raw data.³³ This process includes the transformation of data into codes and, subsequently, the organization of these codes into coherent thematic maps. The suggested approach is characterized as a descriptive methodology that effectively flexibly lowers data, aligning harmoniously with other ways of data analysis. The researcher selected this approach to data analysis because it is widely used and has the potential to successfully handle a wide range of study concerns and themes. Consequently, the repetitive concepts or terms extracted from the data were systematically arranged and categorized into thematic patterns.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The forthcoming section will explain the themes that were developed from the data obtained from informal conversations conducted in person and over the phone.

Insufficient Application of Traditional Visual Arts and Crafts Skills in Elementary Education

There is a widespread assumption among the young generation that home education is not aligned with the school curriculum. The learners do not prioritize the skills acquired at home as highly as the knowledge obtained from school. These learners devote most of their time to attending school, and even beyond school hours; they remain occupied with scholarly tasks. The young people appear to be ignorant of the indigenous knowledge abilities that they could acquire from their parents in favour of Western scientific information, which they perceive as more sophisticated.³⁴ Whilst most young individuals with skills in visual arts and crafts are foreigners, there are also young South Africans who demonstrate artistic talents in fields such as dressmaking, hairdressing, and other crafts. Both groups developed these talents through creativity, imagination, and observation. Some individuals developed these skills during their childhood whilst dressing up their toy dolls. By cultivating a deep affection and engaging in the persistent practice, these young individuals envisioned several styles and effortlessly assimilated the techniques through their dedicated practice. A few of them achieved success in their academic pursuits. Whilst searching for employment, they managed to sustain themselves by working in salons and as street vendors until they secured positions that matched their qualifications. Hence, many persist in working during their spare time to supplement the income they receive from their major jobs.

"My skill in hairdressing originated from my imagination whilst playing with dolls as a young girl, and my passion for it continued to grow over time." I would engage in this activity without anticipating any rewards until I became mature and recognized it as essential for sustaining a livelihood. Following my graduation, I diligently pursued employment for several years, although my efforts were fruitless. Life was not difficult, as I was employed in salons and hired privately by some clients. Even now, I continue to work in my permanent professional position, and this skill proves advantageous to me as it serves as a supplementary source of income alongside my basic salary." (Participant 7)

Indigenous visual arts and crafts knowledge is primarily acquired through the process of observing, imagining, and engaging in creative thinking whilst interacting with the custodians of this knowledge. However, adapting this learning style to the classroom setting can be advantageous for individuals who do not have direct access to this knowledge in their immediate environment. Whilst the curriculum promotes the incorporation of indigenous knowledge into pedagogy, the effective application of these skills remains problematic. There is a greater emphasis placed on the theoretical component rather than the practical outcome. As a result of this, classroom teaching and learning activities tend to neglect the visual arts and crafts. Perhaps the reason for this distinction lies in the fact that visual arts and crafts sometimes necessitate more practical work and a greater quantity

³² Swain and King, "Using Informal Conversations in Qualitative Research."

³³ Ashley Castleberry and Amanda Nolen, "Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Research Data: Is It as Easy as It Sounds?," *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning* 10, no. 6 (2018): 807–15.

³⁴ Sheila Manka, Mokong S Mapadimeng, and Ramosotho Mokgadi, "Indigenous Foods in Decline? A Study on Changing Consumption Patterns Within the Barolong Boo Ratshidi Community, Northwest Province of South Africa," *South African Review of Sociology*, 2023, 1–18.

of materials to achieve desired ends, whilst music, dance, and performing arts primarily rely on bodily movements for performances.

On the other hand, the current educational system primarily focuses on preparing students for higher education, thereby neglecting those who drop out and are left with limited employment opportunities due to a lack of basic entrepreneurial skills. Unluckily, individuals who choose to study fine arts at the higher education level acquire capabilities that are heavily influenced by Western hegemony. They lose relevance within the rural community and are compelled to encourage an influx to urban areas in search of employment opportunities at art galleries. Despite their artistic expertise, their businesses suffer from a lack of consumers due to the black nation's limited education in appreciating the significance and worth of paintings, especially when compared to the Western nation. Additionally, advancement to higher levels of achievement is contingent upon certification that is predicated on theoretical knowledge rather than the practical implementation of acquired skills.

'Ngelishwa ndaphuma phakathi esikolweni, akukho msebenzi wesandla endiwaziyo. Ngeclass ye – Arts and Culture besiziculela phandle ebaleni sixhentse sidlale nokudlala besingenzi msebenzi wezandla ngaphandle kokuzoba' [Unfortunately, I dropped out of school and there is no visual arts and crafts skill I learnt. Whilst at school we were singing, dancing, and playing during Arts and Culture class, we were not doing visual arts and crafts except drawing pictures] (Participant 12)

Ultimately, the primary education system in rural South Africa does not effectively equip young people with essential proficiencies in visual arts and crafts. As a result, individuals from foreign nations establish business enterprises and create employment opportunities for young people in rural parts of South Africa within a limited timeframe.

Inadequate Delivery of Government Services to Promote Visual Arts and Crafts Entrepreneurship

Although South Africans have gained political independence from colonial rule, they nonetheless struggle with a lingering colonial mindset.³⁵ The government incentivizes citizen participation in governance by offering rewards to those who vote for a particular group.

"Ewe kaloku! Urhulumente makasondle kuba savota". [Indeed, the government should support us because we voted for them]. (Participant 3)

Certain regulations, such as the requirement to seek licenses for entrepreneurial endeavours, impose restrictions on those who have a strong love for such activity. The government officials' procrastination, coupled with instances of bribery, hinders the acquisition of these services.

"I cannot start a business because it is not easy to get funding from the government". (Participant 4)

Even children are prohibited from engaging in the sale of confectionery due to concerns that it may disrupt their school activities even though such activities are considered to foster entrepreneurial abilities that are typically utilized in adulthood. The government consistently cultivates a culture that fosters idleness, irresponsibility, and a lack of accountability, rather than nurturing a community of productive individuals.³⁶ These individuals express dissatisfaction and participate in destructive behaviours when their desires are completely unfulfilled, depending on the government to supply them with the necessary provisions.

"Abantwana bethu mabafunde ngekhe bamane beyothengisa bazakushiyeka esikolweni, urhulumente makasinike imali" [Let our children learn, they won't just sell and miss school time, the government must give us money]. (Participants 6)

The government offers financial assistance in the form of grants (Luyt & Swartz, 2023) to individuals who are under the age of eighteen. Individuals who have reached the age of eighteen and are pursuing higher education are eligible to receive financial support for their tertiary studies. Additionally, individuals who are not employed and not enrolled in tertiary education may receive a stress relief grant of three hundred and fifty rands. However, a lack of adequate management exists regarding the allocation and utilization of cash provided to individuals. There is a lack of mechanisms in place to guarantee that the recipients develop a sense of responsibility and are held

³⁵ Sylvie Perkins et al., "Educational Approaches to Teach Students to Address Colonialism in Global Health: A Scoping Review," *BMJ Global Health* 8, no. 4 (2023): e011610.

³⁶ K J Sekatle and M M Selepe, "Assessment of Civic Participation in South African Local Government," *African Journal of Democracy and Election Research* 3, no. 1 (2023): 115–37.

accountable for their actions.³⁷ There is no monitoring mechanism in place to verify if the recipients of the three hundred and fifty rands utilize the monies for entrepreneurial purposes to generate further capital.

“Sizakuzomvotela loo rhulumente kuba usinika iR350 thina bangasebenziyo, nabantakwethu ubanika imali yokufunda kodwa xa engasasiniki imali sizokutoyitoya sitshabalalise izinto ukuze babenexhala de basinike into esiyifunayo”. [We will vote for the government because it gives us R350 because we are not working, and pay study fees for our brothers and sisters, if they won't give us the money we will boycott and destroy properties so that they panic and give us what we want] (Participant 1)

An unfortunate aspect of this situation is that the recipients of the money fail to comprehend that certain individuals have diligently laboured and contributed taxes to the government. In their perspective, the funds appear to be abundant and easily accessible, as they are distributed by a specific entity known as the government with the intention of incentivizing the rural youth to consistently support and vote for the political group that is leading in the government.

“Why do we struggle whilst we have voted for freedom? The government should provide for us”. (Participant 15)

The young South Africans lack awareness regarding the crucial role of hard work in achieving sustainability as well as the paramount relevance of resource management for the country's sustainable growth. According to their perspective, freedom entails unrestricted actions without any obligations or duties.

The Divergent Perspectives in Defining the Concept of "Civilization and Freedom" Impede Efforts to Achieve Economic Sustainability

The lack of pressure for young individuals in rural South Africa to attain independence can be attributed to the relatively advanced state of civilization in the country. Mathebula defines the concept of civilization as the societal progression and organization that lead to an advanced stage of development.³⁸ There exists a misinterpretation of the concept of civilization among certain young individuals residing in rural areas. To the individuals in question, the concept of civilization entails the ability to derive pleasure from existence without the necessity of exerting significant effort. Even within the confines of their households, their parents are engaged in labour without experiencing any external demands to establish a sustainable livelihood, wherein they exert significant effort to secure sustenance. This mindset deprives individuals of potential benefits even when they are provided with financial opportunities for innovation and empowerment. They participate in social events marked by parties and the consumption of alcoholic beverages whilst avoiding significant work. As a result, their foreign competitors dominate them.

“Yhu! Ndingafunda kangaka kanti ndisezokutsha ngamalanga estratweni ndikhangela into engekho, urhulumente makandiqashe”. [How can I learn so much and still spend days on the streets looking for peanuts, the government should hire me.] (Participant 5)

On the other hand, whilst young South Africans express dissatisfaction with the government's provision of job opportunities, foreign nationals who come to the country achieve success, eventually, assume leadership positions in South African businesses, and contribute to the development of practical skills (Ndinda & Ndhlovu, 2016).

“In my country, the government does not create jobs. Despite my efforts after graduating, I was unable to secure a job. I had to create a job because there is no government grant in my country”. (Participant 2)

This is because foreign nationals have experienced food insecurity, enduring periods of more than two consecutive days without access to nourishment in their home countries. These foreign individuals are compelled to engage in diligent and resourceful efforts to secure their existence, thereby enabling them to successfully meet their needs even in unfamiliar environments.

“I was compelled to do anything that can put a plate on the table; if one has not experienced a period of starving lasting more than 48 hours, they will continue to be selective in their decision-making”. (Participants 9)

³⁷ Gabrielle Wills, Servaas van der Berg, and Bokang Mpeti, “Household Resource Flows and Food Poverty during South Africa's Lockdown: Short-Term Policy Implications for Three Channels of Social Protection,” Available at SSRN 4331504, 2023.

³⁸ F M Lucky Mathebula, “South African Public Administration: Who Is the Public in Public Administration?,” *Journal of Public Administration* 58, no. 1 (2023): 57–76.

In contrast to the South African young people, foreign nationals do not define civilization on how educated they are due to the lack of resources in their respective countries, they instead pursue any available employment opportunities that can ensure their sustainability.

“Acquiring a certificate is not necessary to provide food if I possess the ability to use my hands. However, any task that can be of assistance to satisfy my needs is valuable”. (Participant 10)

RECOMMENDATIONS

If young individuals residing in rural areas can receive comprehensive training at their early stages of education, they may possess the necessary skills and knowledge to sustain themselves in life, even in the event of dropping out of formal schooling, by establishing their own entrepreneurial ventures. Even after successfully completing their tertiary education and obtaining a degree, individuals who possess visual arts and crafts skills can still derive benefits whilst searching for employment opportunities that align with their qualifications. Additionally, engaging in visual arts and crafts during their leisure time can serve as a supplementary source of income, thereby indirectly contributing to the economic growth of the nation.

Considering this, government bodies should prioritize sustainable development rather than pursuing short-term advantages driven by self-interest to ensure the well-being of future generations. It would be more beneficial to instil a culture of self-reliance and diligence to promote the achievement of young people. It is advisable to adopt a subsistence lifestyle to teach future generations to rely on natural resources to sustain their way of life, rather than relying on government grants. Government support is crucial for empowering young individuals to foster self-sufficiency and cultivate a mindset of productive engagement rather than passively consuming without awareness. Instead, the government should oversee the grants they provide to young individuals, and the grant's continuation should depend on the efficient and responsible utilization of the funds.

To operationalize the findings of this study, the researcher will support the youth by seeking funds and establishing non-governmental centres that will provide these specific skills. The custodians of visual arts and crafts skills would be remunerated for imparting such talents to the younger generation. Furthermore, the young individuals will acquire entrepreneurial skills that will enable them to sustain their own businesses.

CONCLUSION

The study focused on fostering economic sustainability within rural families through visual arts and crafts. The article aimed to identify practices that can reinforce the economic growth of young rural community members through the promotion of visual arts and crafts. The South African youth in rural areas exhibit fewer concerns than their foreign nationals as they receive ample support from government agencies. Due to their ignorance, idleness, and lack of accountability, they become victims in their own land. Whilst some individuals may struggle to understand the correlation between civilization and freedom, others choose to actively engage with and embrace indigenous visual arts and crafts as a means of livelihood. To reduce difficulties such as poverty, health risks, corruption, and others, the South African government should promote youth responsibility by closely monitoring the help they provide and focusing on the development of autonomous, productive, and efficient citizens rather than fostering a culture of ignorant consumerism. To achieve additional progress, it is imperative to execute the recommendations, particularly at the grassroots level, by establishing centres dedicated to skill development. Ultimately, the optimal strategy for achieving economic expansion and long-term progress is to allocate resources toward the acquisition and use of knowledge.

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