



Engagement in Craft and the Development of Creative Skills among 6 – 13 Years Old Children

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Author's contribution

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ABSTRACT

Creativity has been a valuable an essential element in advancing development in the 21st century. Children within 6 – 13 years old are curious, active, and engage in play as well as other activities where they exhibit their talents, sense of industry and creativity. During this period, the adults, care givers and educators around the child have the responsibility to identify such talents, interest and skills the children possess and direct them towards befitting learning and career opportunities that suits them. Unfortunately this has been overlooked in most African and Cameroonian communities. Now our days, children are hardly even given the opportunity or freedom to engage in craft. Besides, the awareness and value of the skills children gain from engaging in craft seem to be lacking. This paper thus aims at exploring elements of creativity in 6-13 years-old rural and urban Meta children's engagement in craft. Apart from this, it compares the creative dispositions exhibited by rural and urban Meta children's engagement in craft. The sequential explanatory design was used to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data through an observation check list and an interview guide from a sample of 40 6 – 13 years old Meta children purposively drawn from some Meta villages and neighbourhoods in an urban area. Thematic content analysis together with descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that Meta children exhibit creative skills as they engage in craft. Comparatively, children in the rural area exhibited more creative skill in craft than those in the urban area. Children should thus be encouraged to engage in craft as it develops their creativity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Children are usually born with a natural desire to understand the world [1] states this clearly when he says a child's mind at birth is a "tabular rasa" – blank slate ready and eager to be filled with knowledge from the environment. The innate predisposed curiosity in humans from birth spurs creativity. However, the degree to which such dispositions can enhance the development of creative skills in children is dependent on stimulating the environment in which the children live. It is interesting to note that most of the people who invented the first set of crude engines, such as the steam hammer, the power loom, and the spinning jenny during the Industrial Revolution were not doctors of philosophy in any branch of institutional learning, or heroes of first rate organizations. Rather, these were people whose common sense developed with their interest in their environment and what went on within it [2]. Acknowledging the keen creativity of the African child with a focus on their environment for the purposes of development and not on the frills of theoretical knowledge which makes them strangers in their own home will therefore enhance achievement. Such situation can be a fertile ground to nurture creative dispositions in young minds and foster development in due course.

It is commonplace to see children in the Cameroonian context engage in activities such as craft in which one can identify their creativity. It is also commonplace to see the children try to emulate what their parents do like weaving bags, baskets, making chairs, brooms out of bamboo and palm tree leaves. Some do produce toy cars as well as construct small houses out of bamboo and sticks. Meta children are also known for creating play objects such as improvised balls from plantain leaves. Meta is a clan located in the North West Region of Cameroon at about 35km to the North West of Bamenda, the regional headquarters. Clan as used here refers to the conglomeration of 29 contiguous Meta villages that share one language and ancestry. Meta people are involved in the production of handicrafts, particularly raffia bags (produced by men), baskets (produced by women) and brooms (produced by children). Meta children are children from this community.

Creative dispositions exhibited by children can be easily identified through careful observation in

the course of their engagement in craft. Creativity is doing things in a way that is novel and effective in achieving required goals [3]. Being creative within the context of this write up is about how children respond in a variety of ways to what they see, smell, hear, touch or feel and how as a result of these experiences, they express and communicate such experiences in their own thoughts, feelings and activities. Creative children are those who would have a large number of ideas or solutions to problems, are often concerned with adapting, improving and modifying existing ideas, thoughts or products of others and do not fear being different. Creative skills here is looked at in terms of the ability for children to exhibit a sense of imagination, their ability to develop new and original ideas or things, think divergently, adapt to the environment and do the extraordinary or uncommon things as they engage in craft. Craft is the making of things by children with their hands. A society that observes, identifies, and promotes creative skills in its children, builds a future state of self reliance, independence and economic growth. This paper x-rays 6-13 years old children's engagement in craft and how they develop creative skills in the process. It begins with a review of literature on the subject, the statement of the problem, objectives, methodology, findings and discussion.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Craft and Creative Skills

Some philosophers' perceived craft as something of value and an important educational tool that builds the character of a child, encourage moral behaviour, greater intelligence and industriousness. Comenius (1633/1986) for instance highlights the importance of a child's use of tools in making precise copies of artefacts in the traditional way, starting with simple familial things to the child's learning and skill mastery. Similarly, Locke (1632-1704) advocated for an education that prepares individuals for practical life through instruction in manual work and mechanical trades [4]. He argued that craft is healthy for the mind and important in order to give the body enough physical movement [4]. Aristotle [5] creates a strong link between craft and virtue. To Aristotle [5], 'a craft product, when well designed and produced by a good craftsman, is not merely useful, but also has such elements as balance, proportion and

harmony.' Aristotle [5] uncovers the deep satisfaction that emerges from making things and sees it as an integral part of human intelligence. The Greeks referred to craft as 'techne' that can be translated as craftsmanship which is construed as knowledge, experience and applied skill in doing what is necessary [5]. Pestalozzi (1746-1827) is known as the father of pedagogical craft or manual training [4]. He expanded on Rousseau's philosophy which had appeared in *Emile* and named his ideas a "vocational alphabet" (*A B C des Könnens*) [4]. To Pestalozzi, schooling which emphasized only one side of education, either vocational or general, would create an individual of little value to society [6]. Pestalozzi divided the human character into three main entities; the intellectual or the head concerned with mental functions that lead a person to a realization of the world and to a reasonable judgement of things requiring perception, memory, imagination, thought and language; the moral or the heart primarily involved with the basic moral feelings of love, faith, trust, thankfulness and secondarily the activity of the conscience, the sense of good and bad and the orientation towards moral values and the physical or the hand. The term 'hand' was parallel to 'craft education', 'vocational education', or 'education for work'. The intention was that practical activity combined with dexterity and physical strength developed common sense and encouraged the determination that one's actions should culminate in fruitful labour [7]. Every artistic ability to Pestalozzi as sighted in [4] is connected with intellectual and moral powers thus necessary to be embedded in the education of children. Froebel (1782-1852), developed the idea that children are inherently creative and better express themselves through action [8]. Froebel saw handwork as something that lies at the centre of all learning [9].

According to Shevda [10] craftsmanship is one of the few skills acquired directly from one's immediate environment. The existence of the surrounding natural materials such as stone, wood, metal, clay, cotton, cane and bamboo, silk, is the impetus of most traditional crafts. The environment in which a child lives thus influences a child's engagement in craft and the degree to which they will develop creative skills in the process. The creative skills exhibited in the course of engaging in craft involves novelty, utility, imagination and divergent thinking. This stems partially from [11] and [12] perspective that novelty (originality) and utility (usefulness) are the criteria to judge a creative product. With

regards to imagination, [13] argues that it serves as an impetus for all human creative activities and builds from materials supplied by reality. Vygotsky [13] also highlighted the importance of context in imagination as he mentioned that every inventor is a product of his time and environment. Also, divergent thinking is closely related to creativity [14] and a major element in creativity [15] as well.

2.2 Theoretical Orientation

Characteristics of children between 6 - 13 years old have been described by Erickson and Nsamenang. Erickson [16] argues that children within this age bracket experience industry versus inferiority. The child develops the urge to enter the larger world of knowledge and work and learns to win recognition by producing things [16]. Children who do well and are recognized for their achievements develop a sense of success (industry) and master the basic skills required in society while the reverse is a general feeling of inferiority, uselessness and futility [16]. It is thus essential for parents and caregivers to encourage children's creative dispositions so as to develop a sense of industry and not inferiority. Nsamenang [17] places such children at the stages of social apprentice and social entrée. Children at the social ontogenic stage of social apprentice (childhood) have the developmental task to recognize, cognize social roles, acknowledge self in connectedness as well as engage in peer group interaction and work. Children in the social entrée (puberty) stage do recognize and adjust to changes, perform domestic chores and do participate in rites of passage if there is any [17]. The developmental task to recognize, cognize social roles vary for different cultures. This task for Meta children is based on children mastering craft in making things like baskets, chairs, brooms; being able to work on the farm, care for younger siblings and do house hold chores. The children are expected to develop mastery of the different task they engage in but the awareness and value of the creative skills they develop in the process seem to be lacking.

The physical and social setting in which a child lives and the culturally regulated customs of child care and child rearing to [18] influences the development of creative skills. Children in rural areas for example not exposed to readymade play objects are more likely to imagine and originate their own play tools from the common materials they have in their environment.

According to Supper & Harkness [18], the physical and social setting in which a child lives is not only important in shaping the child's creativity through the kinds of activities available, but also through the defining activities of other people present. The identity and relationship of the others are, of course, part of the setting itself. Similarly, the identity and activities of the caretakers are influential; for they determine the degree of playful interaction [18]. The commonly practiced activities of parents and others around children's environment determine the nature of the creative activities the children would be engaged in. Craft especially in basketry, bamboo works and broom making commonly practiced among Meta people is evident in their children's creative activities.

2.3 Empirical Review

An exhibition on African children's toys held by the UNESCO Section for Crafts and Design from 26 March to 6 April 2006 demonstrated the great creativity of the African craft workers and children. Children made toys to play with and entertain themselves [19]. Boys from the exhibition showed more interest in physical activities linked to speed, dexterity technology and movement. They thus made toys that were models of bicycles, motorbikes, aeroplanes, boats and particularly cars. Some play tool created by boys in some African countries that were exhibited at the UNESCO exhibition of children's craft cars, houses, ships and aeroplanes as illustrated below.

African children know how to choose materials suitable for the types of toys they are making. Thin wires and steel bars for the axles, bottle tops for wheels, tin cans for the wheels of heavy vehicles, strips of metal for the rims. Children then add cloth or used inner tubes, which they cut into strips and use as ligatures, axle stops and tyres. Reports from Jean-Pierrers [20] field study on children's creativity in toys and play in Morocco revealed that Ghrib boys extensively used waste material in making a cart pulled by a mule of stone or bicycles. For one type of bicycle wheel they used about 20 sardine tins fixed around a tomato tin [20].

Girls on the other hand love to make different articles using their creativity from the simple materials available at home. Craft is unquestionably a girls' domain and they are

happy doing it [21]. Dolls dominate girls creative play tools. The girl child might use the doll to symbolise a baby, a mother, even herself or some other person, child or adult, real or imaginary [19]. A girl who helps her mother in the kitchen, garden, laundry or at store is getting richer play material than the girl with the room filled with dolls [22]. Results from Jean-Pierre's 1992 field study on children's creativity in toys and play among the Ghrib of Morocco held that Ghrib girls from the Tunisian Sahara used wet sand, little branches and reed to make dollhouses whereby rags figure the carpet. They also used different kinds of natural material, such as sticks, reed, goat's or girl's hair when making their dolls [20].

Preto's [23] study on a comparison between children's toys in Urban and rural areas found that most children in the cities had readymade toys while those in the rural areas did not have access to such so they made theirs from the available materials they had in their setting. After conducting interviews on 9 children and 9 mothers in both the rural and urban settings to obtain information on what the children used in playing, their most preferred toys, if the toys were handmade, who makes the toys for them and if they changed things on these toys, he came up with the following findings. City children owned much more toys than village children, and they vary in type too. City children have dolls, Barbie's, miniature kitchen goods, modern heroes (ninja, batman, Luke sky walker), electronic vehicles, computer games and play stations. Most of them (80%) don't remember how many toys they have but after being asked if they own the toys by the interviewer, they replied as they owned all of them but it's hard to remember all. On the contrary, village children remember (100%) how many toys they have and it is around 7-20 in an average of 11 toys for a child. They have dolls but not Barbie's, one of them have an imitation of it. They have balls, plastic dolls, kitchen goods, and non-electronic vehicles. None of them have computer games and play station. None of the city children had handmade toys while some of the village children (3 out of 9) had [23]. The issue of originality and imagination that emerges in the course of creating play tools will seemingly be higher amongst children in the rural areas not too exposed to readymade toys unlike the city dwellers that are more exposed and own the readymade toys.

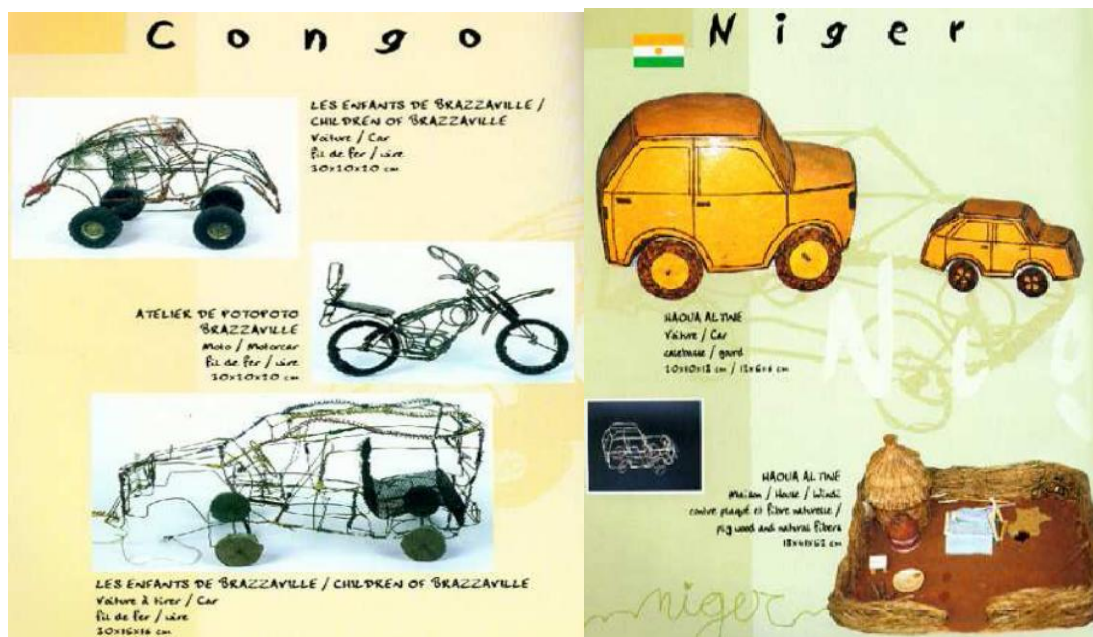


Fig. 1. Craft objects made by boys in Congo

Fig. 2. Craft objects made by boys in Niger

Source: UNESCO 26th March to 6th April 2006 exhibition of African children's craft works

2.4 State of the Problem

Whether Meta children demonstrate any creative dispositions is an empirical question. The suspicion is that Meta children, like children elsewhere, do exhibit creative skills in several spheres of childhood life, with particular reference to African childhood roles such as play and making crafts. The tendency is that Africans in general and Meta people in particular overlook these creative skills and do not see their importance or relevance to the growth and development of children. Cameroonian schools typically focus on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge in imitation of the Western school curricula of old. It neglects the development of natural creative skills in children. In the past, creativity was encouraged in school through handwork as one of the school subjects where children were expected to create and produce items of interest to them, which were supervised and assessed by teachers and the best ones were sold. The sad story is that children are no longer encouraged to do handwork as most schools instead request pupils to give money in lieu of doing handwork.

The foregoing concerns prompted the present study to explore children's engagement in craft with the aim of identifying those creative skills

they exhibit as they participate in the activity. It is also aimed at finding out if the creative skills children exhibit in craft is influenced by differences in locality that is for urban and rural settings. In this regard, the urge to find answers to the following research questions was triggered.

- To what extent does 6-13 years old children's engagement in craft develop their creative skills?
- Is there a significant difference in the creative dispositions rural and urban children exhibit in crafts?

3. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

A sequential explanatory design was employed to obtain data from a cross-section of Meta children aged 6 to 13 years in the ancestral Meta land and the town of Bamenda in the North West Region of Cameroon. It was sequential explanatory because some quantitative data was first obtained from the children through an observation check list and later qualitative data was obtained from those same children through an interview to get in-depth information on some of the issues observed. The findings were later on compared.

3.1 Area of Study

The 29 contiguous villages comprising Meta, the empirical referent of this study is located at the South Western edge of the Bamenda Plateau in the North West Region of Cameroon. Meta, which covers an area of about 335 square kilometres, has an average elevation of 1,800 meters [24]. Within the geo-political context of Cameroon, Meta is part of Momo Division. Meta occupies three upland valleys of the south western edge of the Bamenda plateau commonly called the Bamenda "Grass field". The floors and lower slopes of these valleys are forested with a mixture of natural trees such as raffia, kola, oil palm, and plantain. These natural resources justify the kinds of craft (bamboo works, bags, baskets and brooms made out of raffia and palm trees) the people engage in. Bamenda is the capital of the North West one Cameroon's 10 Regions. The settlement pattern in Meta is characterized by dispersed compounds or homesteads, with each having its own surrounding farms and gardens [25].

3.2 Population and Sample

The latest estimate place the population of Meta at about 80,000 [26]. The universe for the survey included all Meta children, aged 6 -13 years in selected Meta villages and Bamenda at the time of the study. However, a sample of 40 Meta children were drawn purposively for the study. Out the 40 children, 20 were selected from the town of Bamenda and the other 20 from three selected Meta villages. This sampling schema was necessary to compare rural and urban Meta children on the focal variables of the study. The reason for purposive sampling was to identify and work just with 6 – 13 years old Meta children that were skilful in craft. Three villages Mbemi, Nyen and Guneku out of the other 29 villages in Meta were purposively chosen to select the 20 respondents from the rural area. This choice was based on the account of a discussion with the president of MECUDA (Meta Cultural and Development Association) Bamenda branch as well as other Meta indigenes who held the opinion that children in these areas are hardworking and skilful¹. To do a comparison of the creative dispositions exhibited by Meta children in an urban area and those in the village, Bamenda was chosen. In this case, respondents were being drawn from neighbourhoods in some quarters such as Mbengwi road, Meta Quarter, and Travellers. The quarters chosen were those in which

many Meta families lived at the time of the study. Snow ball was used alongside to get from respondents other Meta children who were good at craft.

3.3 Instruments

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected using observation check list and an interview guide. The observation check list was designed based on noting the activities children engaged in as well as the objects and tools they used which exhibited or portrayed their sense of imagination, originality, divergent thinking, adaptability and uncommonness in craft. The check list contained three major items with both structured and unstructured questions.

The first item was based on respondent's characteristics such as age, sex, and place of residence. The second item was concerned with craft. Common craft among Meta children such as basketry, bamboo works, and papermaking were short listed. Other aspects of this item were; the name of the craft product made, tools used in the production and usage of the products. The third item was based on the skills involved in making craft. In this case, a 4 point likert scale was used to indicate the degree to which creative skills (imagination, originality, divergent thinking, adaptability and uncommonness) occurred as the children engaged in craft.

An interview guide containing 9 questions was used to obtain information from the children concerning what they made. The questions included aspects such as the name the child gave to the product he or she made, the tools used, sources of the tools, the source of knowledge, the amount of time spent on making a particular craft work and the usage of the product made. To ensure reliability and validity, a pilot test was conducted and the instruments were given to 3 experts in the study domain for scrutiny.

3.4 Administration of Instruments

The data collection process took 4 months (from May to August, 2010). A letter of authorization to carry out this study from the Faculty of Education of the University of Buea was presented to the authorities such as the chiefs, quarter heads and elders and some parents of the children concerned where ever the observation was to be carried out. A period of two months and two

weeks was used in collecting data in the rural area. The first two weeks in the Month of May 2010 was spent at the rural community aimed at getting the specific cases for the study and gaining some acquaintance with the people and the environment. About five days each was spent in each of the villages (Mbemi, Guneku and Nyen) where the study was conducted. The chiefs of these different villages were visited and the letter of authorization to carry out the study from the faculty presented to them. The purpose of the study was also made clear to them. During this period, the researcher attended and took part in most of the activities of the people such as daily morning prayers in the churches, Sunday church services and other village meetings. In the course of participating in these activities, the letter of authorization was presented to the leaders of the institutions or groups. They were also being told the reasons for the study. These leaders introduced the researcher to the people and sought for their permission and cooperation with the researcher in the course of carrying out the study.

The people were assured of confidentiality of the information they had to provide concerning their children as well as for every information to be gotten from the children. From these people, information about some persons who were so versed and concerned with children's affairs were identified. The most prominent one, a teacher, an elder and Sunday school leader was met and talked to about the study. She identified some of the extremely creative children in the village who belong to the age group of the study. She acted as the research assistant. Movements were done around the neighbourhoods in these villages to identify the homes of the specific cases as well as obtain permission from the parents. In this course other cases were identified by some parents giving information on the names and homes of other creative children. Some children were met in action - playing and others making craft. With these cases, information on the child's place of residence was sought for. During this first phase of movement, note was only taken of the age, sex and residence of the children that were gotten.

After identifying almost all the research participants and their places of residence, the next two months were based on the actual collection of data. One child was visited about five times before all the necessary information needed about the said child was gotten. Nothing was actually noted during the first visit for each of

the children. This was aimed at eliminating behaviour modification and getting the natural behaviour in the children engaging in craft. The best days in which the children were actually met in action were 'county Sundays' (the days before market days), Sundays after church and even on market days for children who did not go to sell or assist parents in the market. Good enough it was the holyday period. Though most of them had to help their parents in the farm, it was common to see them around also playing or engaged in one craft work or the other especially on bright weather days.

Movements on daily bases were begun from about 9 or 10 am till about 6 pm. The specific cases were being observed in groups but attention was focused on the creative skills of the particular child of concern as they engaged in craft. Each child was observed for between 15 to 20 minutes on about four occasions. A similar procedure was followed in the urban area.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

Thematic and content analysis was used through coding and grouping similar responses for the qualitative data. This was done manually on a spread sheet. Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to analyse the data. For the descriptive statistics, pictures showing creative skills exhibited by children were described and the mean averages of frequencies and percentages of creative skills identified computed. The inferential statistics used was Chi Square (X^2). To calculate chi square (X^2), the observed frequencies were compared with the expected frequencies. The expected frequencies were obtained by multiplying the sum of rows (r) by that of the columns (c) and divided by the total number of observations (N).

The formula for calculating chi square value is:

$$X^2 = \frac{\sum (O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where O is observed frequency
 E is expected frequency
 \sum is sum of and
 X^2 is chi square.

In other to interpret the results, 0.05 level of significance was used and the degree of freedom (df) was calculated. The df is calculated by

Table 1. Summary of administration of instruments

RURAL AREA			Duration	URBAN AREA			Duration
Villages	Number of instruments administered			Quarters	Number of instruments administered		
	Check list	Interview guide		Check list	Interview guide		
Mbemi	7	7	22 days	Mbengwi road	7	7	14 days
Guneku	6	6	18 days	Meta quaters	8	8	28 days
Nyen	7	7	24 days	travellers	5	5	10 days
Total	20	20	62 days		20	20	52 days

Table 2. frequency distribution of creative dispositions children exhibit in making craft

	1 Creativity in the tools used in making craft					2 Creative skills involved in craft making						
	A	B	C	D	Total	A	B	C	D	E	F	Total
freq	56	31	33	14	124	15	29	17	20	26	16	113

KEY:

- 1A = Natural tools 2A = Use same tool to make more than one craft product
- 1B = Waste materials 2B = Imaginative use of craft object made
- 1C = House hold utensils 2C = Sense of order
- 1D = Others: stationeries/electrical appliances 2D = Beautiful designing of object made
- 2E = Good imitation; 2F = Insensitiveness

multiplying the number of rows minus one (R-1) by the number of columns minus one (C-1) that is the df is equal to (R-1) (C-1). After calculating the df, if the calculated value (X²) for each hypothesis is greater than the critical value (table value), the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate accepted. This implies a significant difference between variables measured. If the calculated value (X²) on the other hand is less than the critical value, the null hypothesis is upheld implying no significant difference exist between variables compared.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Creative Dispositions Exhibited by 6-13 Years Old as They Engage in Craft

Results for this objective have been presented qualitatively as observed. Pictures showing the creative dispositions 6-13 years old children exhibited as they engaged in craft are described and the average mean and percentages of the frequency for the creative skills computed.

Fig. 2 and 3 illustrates creative skills boys' exhibit in making craft. The child in Fig. 2 exhibits a

good sense of imagination as he looks for material (harvest bamboos), shapes them and makes a stool. The boy in Fig. 3 exhibits a good sense of originality and imagination as he makes a radio with an ear piece out of bamboo and foam. He designs the radio with all its accessories making it look like the original.

Most Meta girls make things good for house hold use. They exhibit a good sense of imagination and originality. The child in Fig. 4 is just 8 years old but she marks chair covers that are used in the house. When she was asked the source of her skills, she replied "I use to watch my aunt mark the North West traditional regalia". This little girl pursued her mother to buy her material for marking. This same child also exhibits a sense of originality as she uses similar designs she saw from the aunt to mark something new (chair covers). She actually shapes the material, draws the designs and marks with two colours of thread to make it look beautiful. This child shows much interest in this as she spends most of her time marking. The child in Fig. 5 also portrays imaginative skills as she makes and designs good baskets all by the self.



Fig. 2. 6-9 year old Meta boys' creativity in craft



Fig. 3. 10-13 year old Meta boys' creativity in craft



Fig. 4. 6-9 year old Meta girls' creativity in craft



Fig. 5. 10-13 year old Meta girls' creativity in craft

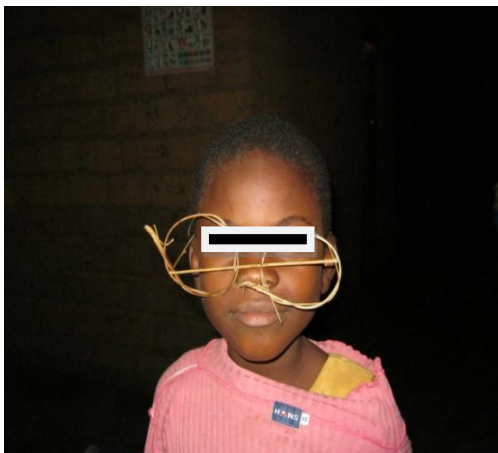


Fig. 6. Meta children's creativity in craft

Table 3. Frequency distribution and Cal and Crit X² value for creative dispositions rural and urban children exhibit in craft

1 Creativity in the tools used in making craft						X ² Cal	X ² Crit	df	2 Creative skills involved in craft making						X ² Cal	X ² Crit	df		
Status		A	B	C	D	Total				A	B	C	D	E	F	Total			
Rural	f	39	14	19	3	75	12.507>	7.815	3	11	16	8	10	9	5	59	8.216<	11.070	5
Urban	f	17	17	14	11	59				4	13	9	10	17	11	64			
Total	f	56	31	33	15	134				15	29	17	20	26	16	123			

KEY:

1A = Natural tools 2A = Use same tool to make more than one craft product

1B = Waste materials 2B = Imaginative use of craft object made

1C = House hold utensils 2C = Sense of orderliness

1D = Others: stationeries/electrical appliances 2D = Beautiful designing of object made

2E = Good imitation

2F = Insensitiveness

The child in the left of Fig. 6 makes an eye glass out of a broom stick. This is an exhibition of the imaginative, uncommonness and divergent thinking skills in the child. The child's ability to make an eye glasses out of a broom stick is not very common. The picture to the right of Fig. 6 illustrates boys' use of natural and waste materials in their environment to make toy cars. This exhibits an aspect of originality as they make cars that are different from those existing. The ability of these children to transform what they have around them considered as waste or useless in to something useful to them exhibits their ability to adapt to their environment which is creative. They make their tires out of waste bathing slippers and ensure they move along with their spare tires when driving.

4.2 Creativity in the Tools Used in Making Craft

Total frequency of creative dispositions in tools used in making craft = 124

Total number of children observed = 40

Number of grouped responses for creative dispositions in tools used in making craft = 4

Mean frequency of creative dispositions = $124 \div 40 = 3.35$

% creativity in tools used in making craft = $3.35 \div 4 \times 100 = 83.75\%$

4.3 Creative Skills Involved in Craft Making

Total frequency of creative skills involved in craft making = 113

Total number of children observed = 40

Number of grouped responses for creative skills involved in craft making = 6

Mean frequency of creative skills = $113 \div 40 = 3.08$

% creative skills involved in craft making = $3.08 \div 6 \times 100 = 51.25\%$

Average % creative dispositions for choice and tools used and the skills involved in making craft

= $83.74 + 51.25 \div 2 = 67.5\%$

Meta children generally (67.5%) exhibit creative dispositions in craft making. Their degree of creativity is however highly exhibited (83.75%) in the tools they use in craft making than in the skills they exhibit in making craft (51.25%).

4.4 Creative Dispositions Rural and Urban Children Exhibit in Craft

The calculated chi square value being greater than the chi square critical value at a degree of freedom 3 and significant level of 0.05 (X^2 cal (12.507) > X^2 crit (7.815) at df of 3 and 0.05 sl) as shown on the table above indicates that there is a significant difference in the creative skills rural and urban children exhibit in the tools they use in making craft. Rural children exhibit more creative skills than urban ones in their craft tools. On the other hand, there is no significant difference in the creative skills children in both the rural and urban area exhibit in making craft since the X^2 cal (8.216) < X^2 crit (11.070) at df of 3 and sl of 0.05.

However, the overall X^2 cal value for both the creative dispositions exhibited in the tools used and skills involved in making craft for rural and urban children is greater than the X^2 crit value (X^2 cal (8.814) > X^2 crit (3.841) at df of 1 and sl of 0.05. Children in the rural area tend to exhibit more creative dispositions in craft than those in the urban area.

Summarily, the findings reveal that Meta children, aged 6-13 years highly exhibited (67.5%) creative skills as they engage in craft. There is a significant difference (X^2 cal (12.507) > X^2 crit (7.815)) in the creative dispositions rural and urban children exhibit in the tools they use in making craft. Rural Meta children seem to exhibit more creative skills than urban ones in the tools they use in making craft. On the other hand, there is no significant difference (X^2 cal (8.216) < X^2 crit (11.070)) in the skills involved by Meta rural and urban children in making craft. Overall, considering both the creative dispositions exhibited in the tools used and skills involved in making craft, there exist a significant difference (X^2 cal (8.814) > X^2 crit (3.844)) in creative skills rural and urban children exhibit in making craft. Children in the rural area exhibit more creative dispositions than those in the urban areas in making craft.

5. DISCUSSION

Meta children generally as per the findings of this study exhibit creative skills as they engage in craft. This implies that the children show a sense of imagination, originality and divergent thinking, adaptability and uncommonness in the tools they use (natural, waste materials, house hold utensils and electrical appliances) and the skills

involved (imaginative use of craft object made, sense of order, beautiful designing of object made, good imitation, inventiveness and the use of same tool to make more than one craft product). Meta children make craft objects like, baskets, brooms, bamboo chairs, cars, aeroplanes, bird nest, catapult, knit skirts, bags and mark back rest. Meta children's participation and exhibition of creative skills in making craft is however not strange as craft is a cultural and income generating activity of the people. Just as Bandura [27] says children learn by observing and imitating adult behaviour, Meta children obviously learn much of craft work from members of their social settings. These findings are consistent with [16] perspective that children in late childhood are industrious and learn to win recognition by producing things and [17] who says such children have the developmental task to recognize and cognize social roles. These characteristic of children in the said age group keeps them active thus the tendency to exhibit their creative dispositions. Similarly, the exhibition of craft works done by children of the said age group in other African countries like Congo, Niger and Madagascar as expressed at the UNESCO 2006 exhibition of African children's toys portrays the creativity African children exhibit in craft.

Also, the findings revealed that there is a significant difference in the creative dispositions Meta children in the rural and urban areas exhibit in their craft tools but none actually exist in the skills involved in making craft. The differences are in favour of the rural Meta children. This implies, children in the rural area exhibit far more creative dispositions –better sense of originality, imagination, adaptability, divergent thinking and uncommonness in the tools they use in craft making than those in the urban area. This affirms the idea that the physical and social setting in which the child lives has a lot to play in a child's development [18]. The rural area being still very much in its natural state and the fact that children in this area don't have access to readymade toys or play objects as those in the urban setting, makes them bound to use the available natural resources to make their own play objects. In the same line, a study on a comparison between children's toys in Urban and rural areas proved that city children owned dolls, Barbie's, modern heroes, electronic vehicles, computer games and play stations with none of them having handmade toys while some of the village children (3 out of 9) had handmade toys [23]. The degree of originality and imagination of rural children's

creativity in the tools they use is thus bound to be higher than that for those in urban centres.

The insignificant difference in the dispositions exhibited by Meta children in making craft is perhaps due to the fact that craft is an indigenous aspect of the Meta people. Irrespective of where they live they still often engage in craft work. Though children in the rural area show more sense of originality, imagination and adaptability in the tools such as natural, waste materials and house hold utensils, they use in making craft, there is no difference in the skills they exhibit in making craft objects.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the little regard for children's development of creative skills in the course of their engagement in craft, this paper has been preoccupied with highlighting those creative skills that they develop when they engage in craft. Secondly, it compares the skills for urban and rural children. Through a sequential explanatory design, the findings revealed that children's engagement in craft develops their creative skills. Children in the rural area exhibit more creative skills than those in the urban area. The results have been discussed within the framework of the developmental niche theory by Supper and Harkness and Erickson and Nsamenang's developmental stage characterization of children in the said age group. The study highlights the fact that African children are endowed with creative potentials which if supported and encouraged would benefit the communities we all inhabit. Finally, the study has contributed to underscore the importance of Cameroonian children's creative dispositions to their development and education. People in the child's social setting like the parents, siblings, neighbours, are therefore called upon to encourage and appreciate creative moves children exhibit. It is also necessary for such persons to keenly identify the children's interest, abilities and potentials in the process so as to provide them with educational opportunities that can develop those potentials in to befitting careers.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, participant's parents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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