

## ART AND SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT: IMPORTANCE AND ROLE. CASE STUDY ON APPLIED ARTS IN ALGERIA

Yahya HADJI <sup>1</sup>, Nadia GUEDJAL <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ph.D. Student, Faculty of Arabic Literature and Arts, University of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis, Mostaganem, Algeria, E-mail: [hadji.yahya.etu@univ-mosta.dz](mailto:hadji.yahya.etu@univ-mosta.dz)

<sup>2</sup> Ph.D. Professor, Faculty of Arabic Literature and Arts, University of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis, Mostaganem, Algeria, E-mail: [Guedjal@yahoo.fr](mailto:Guedjal@yahoo.fr)

**Abstract:** *This article was generated for the sake of illustrating the importance of art in society, its effective role in stimulating the capacities of research, thought, dialogue and innovative performance. Also, it aims at driving individuals to develop and regenerate lifestyles through the development of different means of art, which means that the arts affect individuals and societies in intentional and unintended ways. This is the highlighted purpose of art in general. The effects of the arts on individuals and societies are reflected in the characteristics and features of each society and the extent to which it is influenced by different types of art. Throughout this article we are going to try to illustrate the reality of applied arts in Algeria, which is still looking for recognition and interest in order to ensure that it takes its place and its role in economic development. This is far from the disposable oil revenues, by trying to address the reality of applied arts in the institutes and universities, as well as to clarify the interactive relationship between university graduates and labor market training institutes, namely, the public and private sectors.*

**Key words:** art; applied arts; education; development; interactive relationship.

### 1. What about Arts?

In his book *Art and Society*, which he translated into Arabic, Herbert Reid says that: « It is not the expression of religious or philosophical ideas, but the artist's ability to create a complex world which is coherent and proportional in itself, the creation of a world which is not of practical needs and desires, nor of dreams and fantasies, but a world that is composite between these two oppositions. » (Reid, 1985 :09). Art for Reid is a compelling necessity and enticing portrayal of the body of experience and thus a way of portraying the perception of one aspect of truth and reality. According to Guetzkow (2002), art has a kind of balance that eventually leads to a kind of integration into the human existence.

By tackling the same viewpoints, Joshua Guetzkow refers to the importance of art in the life of societies as an active and creative force: « Art has a great potential to strengthen social ties by creating a positive social atmosphere of interdependence and harmony». Artistic programs and events are an opportunity to forge new relationships and strengthen ties of love and trust between members of society, whether they are active participants in these events or merely spectators, as they feel prouder and part of their society. In this context, Joshua Guetzkow emphasizes the ability of art as an important factor in society by strengthening the structure of relationships between individuals, thus increasing their interdependence. (Guetzkow, 2002: 8)

In regard to artistic events, Joshua Guetzkow adds, "Artistic events of all kinds are a practical application of the experience of meaningful community-based partnership and the necessary organizational and coordination skills at the technical levels. Joshua Guetzkow, referring to the importance of art by emphasizing the importance of the good organization of

artistic events, which must be followed and reviewed by specialists in order to give a valued chance for the partnership process to take place in an effective manner.

In the process of promoting the values of beauty and creativity, art has a significant role to play, so that enjoying art and participating in programs to showcase the creative aspect of the arts creates a sense of appreciation for the values of beauty and creativity among members of society, and they develop a delicate and tasteful artistic sense of all what is characterized by the sense of fascinating beauty such as parks and green yards . (National Endowment for the Arts, 2012).

Art has an important role in deepening the senses of pride and self-esteem of individuals towards the history of their nation, the richness of their culture and the prestige of the cultural legacy, which they have left behind. Art is considered as an important means of education in history and as a product of different civilizations. If the human being has a clear and comprehensive vision of these matters, it has become more sensitive to his culture and more relevant to his past. Society has become a strong and coherent that is not easily shaken in the face of adversity, and that does not weaken any attempt to weaken or dismantle him. (National Endowment for the Arts, 2012).

Joshua Guetzkow emphasizes as well the role of art in improving people's living standard. In his views, art has a role in helping to revive the economic situation of the state, improve the living standard of its citizens, by creating new jobs, reducing the prevalence of unemployment in society, as well as supporting the tourism sector and attracting passionate tourists, who often stay longer and have the willingness and ability to spend more than others. (California arts council, 2019)

It is no longer hidden that art shaped for itself the position to be as an important pillar of economic strength. Also, as an influential component of the States' budgets and economic growth rates. The most notable evident example is the California State Survey Annual Reports, on which arts and crafts contributed about 7.8% of GDP, and the number of workers in such industries was estimated at 1.4 million, for a total profit of \$99.3 billion per year. (California arts council, 2019).

## **2. The important roles of arts**

Language skills:

- Increasing the willingness of students to learn to write and read by the dramatic representation of stories and novels. In addition to the fact that the study of the arts of drama affects the language abilities of the student positively.
- Art also helps to promote the understanding of mathematics. As a result, many recent studies show that music is associated with the development of logical skills, understanding the relationships between things.
- Art also contributes by improving the cognitive abilities. For example, visual arts and dance help in developing creative, thought and imaginative skills.
- Increasing the desire for learning, thus, arts in their different forms contribute in enhancing competition, the values of teamwork among students, and reduce the likelihood of them escaping a teacher. (Ruppert, 2006)

The economic importance of art

- Art contributes heavily in the growth of the economic sphere. Its importance lies in creating new jobs, increasing the labour force, which contributes significantly to the increase in GDP and the development of the State economy, for example; "Art revenue in California alone accounts for 7.8% of GDP. "

- Art plays an important role in supporting the tourism sector, where travelers for the sake of artistic purposes stay longer and at a higher rate of financial spending than other tourists. (California arts council, 2019).

*The psychological importance of art:* The process of engagement in the artistic work helps in reducing stress and anxiety, and improves the mood. In addition, working in all kinds of artistic sectors helps the employees to feel more self-esteem and satisfaction towards their ability of producing their work of art. (Guetzkow, 2002)

*The social and cultural importance of art:* The ability of improving the living conditions of individuals, at the participation in various artistic activities help in strengthening the links and cohesion of society. (California arts council, 2019)

*The cultural importance of art:* The art's ability to promote a range of positive values in individuals, such as free expression of beliefs, increased tolerance and rejection of intolerance help in enhancing the individual's cultural sense.

In regards to the already-mentioned points concerning the importance of art, we are going to review the practical aspect of the study of the state in concerns with the reality of applied arts in Algeria and its role in economic development. In approaching this subject, we are not going to focus only in terms of the proceeds of defunct petroleum, but also in trying to address the reality of applied arts in the institutes and universities. In addition, to clarify the interactive relationship between university graduates and training institutes in the labor market either in the public or in the private sectors.

### **3. The applied arts: an overview**

Applied arts may include architecture, interior design, the design of manufactured items, ceramics, metalwork, jewelry, textile, glass, furniture, graphics, clocks and watches, toys, leather, arms and armor, and musical instruments, etc. Commercial art may be considered a branch of applied arts. The Applied Arts are usually contrasted with the Fine Arts (drawing, painting, sculpture, fine printmaking, etc.) (Chali-Rosson, 2014)

These forms date back to the time of the art classifications, which distinguished two opinions, one against the introduction of utility concepts from art, as noted by the American philosopher Irwin Edman: "The industrial arts are used to serve our purposes, and they're going. It's always about paying more attention than it is about beauty" (Bakhit, 2011:58). In this regard, Kant has an important view on which he points a distinction between art and profession: "art is a free automatic activity, whereas the profession is a salaried industry which is beneficial and purposeful." (Bakhit, 2011: 58)

In the opposite side, there is the fact that the utilitarian functions are almost disconnected from the absorptive functions. Here, it is recalled that the connection between utility and beauty has existed since the Greek era. In Socrates' view: "all useful things are beautiful and good, as long as they are considered as usable subjects." (Bakhit A.S, 2011:61)

The distinction between the applied and the fine arts did not emerge strongly until the time of the Industrial Revolution (1775-1875). (Sharma, 2011: 09)

### **What about the applied arts' teaching in Algeria**

In Algeria, the retainer of applied arts' education is based on the vocational training system, which is specialized in many traditional trades and industries. It should be noted that most of those in these institutions do not have a baccalaureate degree, but we believe that they are subject to a good applied composition.

A widespread problem, which is usually facing the university's graduate, lies in the fact that most of the employers are always looking for skilled graduates who are well trained in the applied arts. But the belief that the aesthetic studies adopted by many applied arts industries

are largely absent in vocational training centres, which is ultimately reflected in the quality of the product.

Unfortunately, there is no institute or polytechnic college in Algeria which take the responsibility of organizing well-qualified research laboratories, academics and researchers. In addition to the lack of coordination among the various sectors, the higher education sector, the labour sector and the economical one. In addition, graduates of some fine arts schools, which have few applied arts activities, are covering their skills in isolation, owing to the fact that their degree has not been widely adopted by public officials (Fani, 2017). Attention must be given also to the fact of the lack of a strong curriculum for art education and the lack of studies from doctoral notes and scientific articles.

#### **4. Applied arts situation regarding societal development: the Algerian case**

##### **4.1. The reality of Algerian traditional crafts and industries:**

The traditional industry sector represents a cultural and social face and an economy where it has contributed to conservation. We can consider heritage and the preservation of tradition as a linking connection to the past and also as an attachment to authenticity. The Algerian traditional legacy represents a multiple and varied cultural heritage. The latter is drawn back to the succession of several civilizations and cultures to rule this country.

Nowadays, Algeria is heavily dependent on the fuel sector through the export of petroleum, so that the Algerian economy is 80% dependent on the manufacturing industry resulting from the conversion of petroleum which led the Algerian economy to fluctuate prices of oil in the international market. Thus, this situation did not stabilize the economy, which is an important factor in the development, due to inadequate attention to other sectors such as tourism, services and investment in modern technologies. Also, the traditional trades and manufacturing sector still suffers from many problems that prevent it from playing an effective role in the process of development.

##### **4.2. The Algerian legislature and the laws governing the trades sector and the oligarchic manufacturing:**

The sector of traditional manufacturing and crafts in Algeria was defined by order No. 96-01 of 10-01-1996 (Ben Zidane, and Ben Nasser, 2019;04) , which sets out the rules governing traditional manufacturing, crafts and their applicable texts, so that: "Article 5 stipulates that: the traditional manufacturing and crafts shall be any activity of production, creation, conversion, artistic restoration, maintenance, repair or performance of a service which is dominated by manual labour." (Ben Zidane, and Ben Nasser, 2019;04). In addition, the Algerian law has divided the traditional trades and manufacturing sector as: (Abdeljabbar and Hadji, 2016: 49)

- traditional manufacturing and the artistic traditional manufacturing;
- craft manufacturing for materials production;
- traditional service craft.

The above-mentioned laws were accompanied with other laws enacted by the Algerian legislature in order to regulate and facilitate the activity of traditional industries and crafts.

##### **4.3. The importance of traditional crafts and manufacturing in the local development:**

Traditional manufacturing is considered as an aesthetic art and a cultural heritage with many economic and cultural dimensions which have contributions to the local development, including:

- Reviving the ancestral heritage, preserving the memory of the past and working for its continuity in keeping with the spirit of the times, as well as developing the talents of craftsmen and demonstrating their creativity and skills.
- Contributing to efforts in order to reduce the economic dependence.
- The policy of self-reliance is reflected at the local level, where traditional industries and crafts rely on the mobilization of local potential and resources.
- Contributing to the local development, the stabilization of society and the balance of activities between the rural and urban surroundings.
- Upgrading of institutes, universities and research centres through continuous research on product development and improvement.
- The contribution of traditional crafts and industries in the development of tourism through the promotion of movable products and artefacts. (Abdeljabbar and Hadji, 2016: 51)
- Contributing in the improvement of the country's wide image, particularly after the period of terrorism, which Algeria experienced in the 1990s, through the cultural diversity, which carried by these artisan products.
- "In addition to the great capacity of an industry of traditional crafts and manufacturing to absorb unemployment, this sector is considered as a requirement for society because it facilitates the acquisition of basic and daily items. It is indispensable in the various vocabulary of daily life. Thus, upgrading it by improving the quality of the product or service is an improvement in the level of respect for the consumer and its taste." (Ben Siddiqui, 2013: 13).

#### **4.4. Some important remark:**

Unfortunately, despite all the legislation and laws, but they were not enough. The sector is suffering from many delays owing to the failure to implement these laws well and to the lack of development of centres for the education of traditional crafts and industries. In terms of the contribution of trades and industries to national income outside the petroleum sector.

In most of the cases "The traditional manufacturing exports did not exceed the amount of 1,168 million \$, which is a very low if not neglected; We can therefore say that the development in exports of traditional industry remains far from the potential of the sector and its ability to bring hard currency into the national economy, thus contributing effectively to economic development (Abdeljabbar and Hadji, 2016: 53). This reason is due to a number of problems, the most important of which we mention in the following:

#### **5. Problems and Obstacles of the Development of the Craft, Arts Sector and Traditional manufacturing:**

The existence of many laws does not necessarily enough, since "there is a lack of clear legislation to regulate work and develop, as well as fewer specialized institutes and specialists with higher degrees in traditional manufacturing and crafts and the traditional practice of crafts" (Abdeljabbar and Hadji, 2016: 53).

In addition, the role of modern technologies and technologies in the process of production has been overlooked. The latter has helped foreign products to replace domestic products - Chinese products, for example - without forgetting to mention the inferiority of craftsmen which led to the reluctance of new generations to practice this activity and to deny it due to ignorance of the importance of traditional industry and its products from its cultural and economic aspects, as well as «the weakness of craftsmen in the field of controlling modern technologies (Benzarour, 2009: 33).

We have also to mention the "low level of the working conditions, working environment, health and social care for workers, as well as the difficulty of obtaining shops for the exercise of the profession and the equipment necessary for the production process, as well as the problems of supply with raw materials and difficulties in providing them at acceptable quality and prices." (Abdeljabbar and Hadji, 2016: 53)

The dearth of research, documentation and registration of traditional occupations and industries has led to the absence of a database on these trades and industries. We also note that some officials predominate in their own interests. This has led the sector to slow progress, despite the good will of the Algerian State's decision-makers to develop the country.

### **The Algerian consumer and product acquisition dialectic!**

In Algeria, the collectors of traditional crafts and industries tend to acquire these transferred artifacts for their functional side, without taking into account other aspects, either the aesthetic aspect or the quality of the material from which these artifacts were made. And the Algerian consumer necessarily goes to buy imported products which are cheap.

In the Algerian house, you will be surprised to notice that most of the items of the house are imported from the very smallest things, like ornaments, vases and glasses, to the largest ones, like the closet. Most of those items are imported from China, Turkey or Spain, so the house and the environment and surroundings on which we are living in has lost their original local identity. Several other factors interfere with the policy of Algerian acquisition of these products. One of these factors is the cultural factor which is considered as a central fact regarding to this process. The importance of the cultural factor lies in the fact that culture in one of its broad definitions is defined as: "It is a compound of knowledge, beliefs, the arts, ethics, laws, customs and values." (Ben Aissa, 2003)

This subject - the commodity and the consumer - also brings us to another very important and relevant point in the arts: the relationship of aesthetic to the career, in which many, including the American architect Sullivan, spoke: "We are no longer arguing about the priority of both form and function over each other. We cannot ignore each other's dependence." Whereas Sullivan's definition explains that it is a power which wants to express itself: life and soul, that functions are looking for their shapes and that the shapes are the external appearance of internal forces and needs, functions and forms are all interrelated." (Mamdouh, and Hossamuddin, 2010: 04).

This important subject which is the relationship of receiving and realizing creative products must be given the greatest importance through studies of researchers and specialists, so that through the results of these studies we can start in order to better solve the problem of receiving works and crafts of high aesthetic and functional value, including the establishment of a culture of conscious consumption of works of art in a way that is free from temperament, also, the attempt to promote those products as a resource of wealth away from viable wealth on which Algeria depends such as petroleum, gas and phosphate.

## **6. Conclusion**

To sum up, it is clearly noticed from the above-mentioned points that the handicraft and traditional industries sector suffers from many problems. This is negatively due to the convictions of the Algerian consumer convictions. The lack of quality of the polytechnic product is considered as a barrier to acquisition and development. This represents the reason behind the process of acquiring imported products by the Algerians.

Due to the lack of a clear plan, either at universities or institutes or even at the level of sectors which have a bearing on this subject, such as the Ministry of Higher Education and Work. As a result, in Algeria, applied arts have not contributed significantly to the development process, despite Algeria's natural and financial potential. Thus, we are recommending making the following points applicable:

- Trying to stimulate studies related to arts and make them as a development factor.
- Establishing institutes and centres, which are specialized in the field of applied arts. In addition to making an attempt in order to integrate university graduates, especially those from fine arts schools and regional schools of art, into institutes specialized in crafts and traditional industries

- Making a real attempt of signing agreements between the labour sector and the Ministry of Higher Education for the practical field training of university students. Thus, university graduates will benefit from good chances when applying for a job.
- Working on continuous training for students of vocational training institutes through lectures and scientific forums, which must have special supervision by university graduates' specialists. This is because practitioners of crafts and traditional industries who do not have university degrees also suffer from other problems, the most important of which is the failure to develop their products, which leads to their inability to resist the import of imported products.
- The necessity to include arts and crafts programs in all the educational levels.
- The necessity to establish specialized centres for the follow-up processes in order to develop the handicraft and traditional industries sector. The latter can be achieved by establishing regional centres: East - West - Central - North - South.
- Continuously renewing laws and legislations, establishing a digital database for the crafts, and applied arts sector.

### References:

1. Abdeljabbar, S, and Hadji, K (2016). Algerian Traditional Industry Reality: between Marketing Short-slightness and Competition Challenges, *AL-RIYADA FOR BUSINESS ECONOMICS JOURNAL-ABEJ*-. Laboratory of University of Hassiba Benbouali -Chlef – Algeria. (in Arabic).
2. Bakhit A.S (2011). *Classification of Arab and Islamic Arts - Critical Analytical Study*. Publications of the World Institute of Islamic Thought, 2011, Lebanon. (in Arabic)
3. Ben Aissa, A. (2003). *Consumer Behaviour*, OPU, Algiers, Algeria. (in Arabic).
4. Ben Siddiqui, N. (2013), *Composition in Traditional Industries and Crafts - Anthropological Study* – Magister Thesis - Specialization: Development Entropy, Department of Anthropology/Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Tlemcen. (in Arabic).
5. Ben Zidane, Y and Ben Nasser, S.A, (2019). *Importance of Traditional Industry and Crafts under Market Development in Algeria*. The first national forum: “traditional industry and crafts as a mechanism for activating the economics of sustainable tourism and marketing the regional identity in Algeria”, University of Jijel, Algeria. (in Arabic).
6. Benzarour, Ch. (2009). *Algeria's experience in the development of handicrafts and trades 1992-2009*, Algiers university. (in Arabic).
7. California Arts Council (2019). *Benefits of the arts,- a California states agency* – [online] available at <http://www.arts.ca.gov/resources/benefits.php>
8. Chali-Rosson, (2014). *Applied arts, Glossary of Art Terms*. Published. [online] available at <http://chalirosso.com/terminology/>
9. Fani, Gh, (2017). Alumni of Algerian University of Entrepreneurship. *Journal of Human Sciences and Society*, No. 22, Algeria. (in Arabic).
10. Guetzkow, J. (2002). How the arts impact communities. *Centre for arts and cultural policy studies*, 27 p. [online] available at <https://www.issuelab.org/resources/9753/9753.pdf>
11. Mamdouh, K.A. and Hossamuddin, M.B, (2002). Relationship between Function and Aesthetic Values - Proposing a Standard Method of Measurement and Documentation. *Journal of Arts and Human Sciences*, N° 00, Pages 15 (in Arabic). [https://www.kau.edu.sa/Show\\_Res.aspx?Site\\_ID=137&Lng=AR&RN=55348](https://www.kau.edu.sa/Show_Res.aspx?Site_ID=137&Lng=AR&RN=55348) (available since 28/02/2010)

12. National Endowment for the Arts, (2012). *How art work*. Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data, Washington.
13. Reid, H. (1985), *Art and Society*, Translated by: Daher Metri Fares, Al-Kalam Publishing, Egypt.
14. Ruppert, S.S. (2006). *Critical evidence: How the arts benefit student achievement*. National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. 1029 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20005. [online] available at [https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/critical-evidence\\_0.pdf](https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/critical-evidence_0.pdf)
15. Sharma, A. (2011). *Purpose and functions of studying applied art an analytical approach*. Thesis, Department of Drawing and Painting, Kumaun University, Nainital, India.