



ODYSSEY THROUGH ACADEME I & II: Exploration of Metal Scraps in the Production of Creative Lampstand by Segun Okewumi

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ABSTRACT

The paper titled 'odyssey through academe I&II' was based on the problems and challenges students of higher education face in their quest of obtaining a degree in Nigeria. It is also a celebration of the determination of these students to be trained and acquire knowledge through formal education despite the hardship posed by the education system of higher institutions of learning. The methodology explored in this project involved both primary and secondary sources of data collection. Primary sources included observation, examination and review of previous works and studies related to challenges facing students in higher institutions, material exploration and the use of scraps for sculptures. The secondary sources include images/ photographs from the internet and journal articles. The analysis used includes descriptive analysis, which involves the explanation of the procedures and interpretation of the theme and meaning of the work piece. The paper revealed that a lot of undergraduates are faced with academic struggles and challenges such as, inadequate learning facilities, lack of regular water and power supply and tedious administrative processes amidst many, which are caused by the prevalent economic and political instabilities of varying nations. The paper also highlighted some of the ways forward from these problems. The study therefore concluded on the note that the effort of these students needs to be celebrated always. Also, laying emphasis on the importance of the executed piece to the academic community as a whole.

KEYWORDS: welding, metal, waste, education, experimentation

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The word scrap is conventionally used to describe fragments of a larger part, small pieces or remnant that has been detached from a larger piece. Scrap can also mean waste materials used particularly in relation to metal waste awaiting processing (Encarta, 2007). The choice of metal scraps is based on the popular belief that metal scraps are injurious to the environment and considered less valuable. The idea of metal scraps is not just to repurpose the scraps into art alone, but through repurposing scraps, we reshape and remodel our humanitarian functions and identity. As we see beauty and usefulness in these discarded scraps, we metaphorically emphasize that everyone has an innate ability, i.e. no one should be considered useless. Instead, we should consider ourselves artists who sees beauty and purpose in others and serves as vessels that brings out the genius in people.

This paper explored the use of metal scraps and the production of a functional lampstand. This paper titled Odyssey through Academe I & II is not just another paper topic or research topic, it is more of an idea (concept) which draws our attention to a phenomenon, the phenomenon since the system of school began. And in which almost all academic, learned and people bonded together with education especially in Universities, Colleges and Polytechnics, have encountered and passed through. Segun Okewumi in his discussion, "I like to think of the major words in the topic 'Odyssey through Academe' i.e. odyssey and academe as collocations as they well fit together and make sense. Just like the word theory and methodology are often used together".

According to Macmillan English dictionary, it describes the word odyssey literarily as a long journey during which many things happen. It also describes it as a form of a person's progress from one stage of life or set of beliefs to



another. While the word 'academe' is a noun, and it is often used to describe the people, activities and institutions that are connected with education, especially in colleges and universities.

However, to start with, a lot of definition on education has been given by many great scholars, authors and philosophers, such as Socrates who defined education as the bringing out of the ideas of universal validities which are latent in the minds of everyman. Plato described education as the capacity to feel pleasure and pain at the right moment as it develops in the body. John Dewey sees it as the development of capacities in individuals. Rousseau equally described education as an experience which is a forerunner of precepts. And so much more views of scholars on education.

A more acceptable definition for the scope of this study is one by Aristotle, he defined education as the creation of a sound mind in a sound body. This definition expresses the aim of education as the welfare of individuals to bring happiness into their lives. Even though, Aristotle's view of education was a bit different from his predecessors, his view expresses the purposefulness of education rather than just the aim to attain knowledge. His view suggests that education should be a means to an end while keeping the body and the mind in shape.

Education should be a path to life and livelihood. In many higher learning institutions of developing nations, we see the struggles and efforts of students at attaining the status of education called 'degree' or 'ND' or as the case may be. This is because they believe or at least their societies believe that formal education guarantees their welfare and happiness in the future. Oddly enough, in Africa and the developing nations of other continents, the system of education is odious and not as it should be. Students in many institutions are faced with varying challenges, as a result of what the society or the world system has made them believe. That, therein in formal education lies survival. They are thereby resolute on enduring the hardships imposed by their societies' system of education.

The plight of students coping with odious conditions of study such as overpopulation, poor infrastructure and lack of learning amenities among many in institutions of higher learning. You see students going to lecture halls hours before the lecture commences just to get a sit close enough to the lecturers stand, while those who arrive at the exact time stands outside the lecture hall to attend the class. Ejiogu et al., (1986) confirmed the inability of Nigerian Universities to meet the ever grow demand for higher education by Nigerian Students. Ejiogu et al., (2012), posits that the number of students to be admitted must be determined by the available adequate teaching-learning facilities. This study is necessitated by the afore mentioned challenges faced by students of institutions of higher learning in Nigeria, their ruggedness and doggedness to persist to study in these institutions of our society despite the inconveniences, time lost, learning standards and other academic turbulences faced by these students. Hence, the need for this study is not only to unveil the challenges present in our institutions, and warring against our higher learners, but to also celebrate their tenacity towards success and achievement in their own nations institutions. It is important to celebrate the academic success of these heroic undergraduate and graduating students.

1.2 STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

Over the years, various scholars and academicians have carried out series of studies on the struggles and challenges faced by students of higher education in developing nations. While some scholars focused on academic challenges caused by personal factor (students discipline), some focused on difficulties caused by infrastructure, social life of students, impact of stress and time management on students' academics, challenges initiated by students' campus environment and so on.

However, only a handful of research have been made no the coping strategies and efforts of these students to cope and find balance amidst the varied turbulences faced by the students of higher learning. While almost all these researches are only focused on emphasizing the challenges, difficulties and hurdles faced by these students, their causes with an aim to only create an awareness without an end to it.

Ifeoma et al., (2021) worked on the evaluation of problems faced by the undergraduates of Federal University of Wukari, Taraba State. The study highlighted the infrastructural problems faced by the students of the institution. The infrastructural problems include; inadequate male and female hotels, lecture halls, laboratories, and libraries. Others are unstable power supply, poor internet services and inadequate water supply. The research recommended that the government should increase the funding of federal University Wukari to enable the school administrators provide adequate infrastructural facilities.

Peretomode et al.,(2013) studied the problems faced by undergraduate and diploma students and their survival strategies in Nigeria. A research which identified and analyzed the problems faced by students, with a case study of



the Delta State University in Nigeria. The research revealed the challenges of University procedures, such as paying school fees, screening and registration procedures and infrastructures such as inadequate class rooms, seats and lack of steady power supply. The research concluded with a recommendation to the institution on making efforts to ameliorate the procedures of school fees payment and screening exercises.

In view of the above studies and more, the paper emphasizes on the need to not only identify the problems and struggles of undergraduates but to also, and most importantly celebrate their endurances, coping strategies and academic successes of these ones, through the production of a functional art Lamp Stand.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The study is aimed at the use of metal scraps and metallic objects, to produce a functional art of a lampstand through the exploration of metal scraps, African forms and conventional iconography to produce a functional art piece, with a view to celebrate the struggles of undergraduates in institutions of higher learning.

The specific objectives are to;

1. Identify the African traditional forms and conventional icons used to describe scholarship
2. Create a sculpture functioning as a lamp stand which projects African forms and conventional icons of meaning
3. Install the functional sculpture in the allocated space
4. Analyse the educational and socio-cultural significance of the functional sculpture.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will serve as an encouragement to all undergraduates facing challenges in their quest for academic pursuit, as it exposes and expresses their plight to the academic environment. Similarly, the project will serve as a point of reference for further artistic creations and practices by artists aiming to projecting an African identity through the exploration of unique African forms and conventional iconographies. The project will also provide illumination to the surroundings by adding aesthetic value to it.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews various studies by scholars that are relevant to the subject of the study project, Odyssey Through Academe. The following topics are relevant to the project and corresponding studies are therefore reviewed under this section:

1. Problems and Challenges Facing students of Higher Education
2. Material Exploration in Art
3. Lamp Stand

2.1 *Problems and Challenges Facing Students of Higher Education in Nigeria*

Adegboyega (2020), studied the sources of academic stress among undergraduates at the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. The study revealed that academic stress could be caused by various factors, excluding factors which distinguishes male students from female students. The causes of academic stress discovered includes academic overloads, fear of failure, process of adapting to a new environment. The study revealed that the mode of entry of a student into the university is always a determinant on how such student would come the academic activities of the institution. The study recommended that the orientation programs in higher institutions must be made compulsory for all newly admitted students of various degrees, and structured academic development programs should be put in place at all faculties and departments of universities.

Peretomode et al.,(2013), also studied problems faced by undergraduates and diploma students and their survival strategies in Nigeria. The study which is an institutional analysis, focused on the undergraduates and diploma students of the Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria. The study revealed the common and serious problems encountered by these students, while some of these issues validated previous studies on the topic, others negated the discoveries of other scholars on the topic. The study which showed that the problems faced by these students falls under the universities procedures of student enrolment and the infrastructural development of the students such as, screening procedures, registration processes, inadequate classrooms/seats and lack of constant power supply.

However, the study further analyzed that the sex is another determinant of the level of problems faced by each student. The study analyzed that the female students tend to encounter more problems than their male counterparts



which are due to varied reasons and factors. The study concluded by advising the university management to look for ways and devices to ameliorate the hardship that comes with school fees payment, screening, registration and other institutional procedures.

Ifeoma et al., (2021) evaluated the problems faced by undergraduates of Federal University, Wukari, Taraba. Their study was based on the evaluation of the challenges faced by the undergraduate students of the institution. The study analyzed the challenges into three classes, infrastructural problems which includes inadequate male and female hostels, poor lecture hall, laboratories and libraries, power & water supply, internet service and so on. Administrative problems which includes misplacement and missing exam scripts and delay in the release of results. While Academic problems includes; poor teaching and learning activities and inconsistencies in keeping to the timetable by lecturers.

In the evaluation, the various problems faced by these students are indirectly the setbacks of the institution which are usually suffered by the students of the institution. The study concluded by recommending to the government to increase the allocations of federal universities, so that the school administrators can provide adequate infrastructural facilities. Other works essential to this study includes (Abomaye-nimenibo et al., n.d.) which studied and empirical view of how campus life and behaviour of Nigerian students affect their academics. The study which posits that there is a direct relationship between the type of life a student lives on campus and their academic performance. Hence, student should endeavour to live a 'good'. One that will maximize their academic potentials.

Other relevant studies include (Ramli et al., 2018) academic stress and self-regulation among university students in Malaysia; (Tanga et al., 2018) academic hurdles facing Undergraduate students at One South African University.

2.1.1 Higher Education in Nigeria

(Jacob & Musa, 2020) studied Higher Education in Nigeria and the Ways Forward. The study focused on the challenges facing higher education in Nigeria and ways in which these problems can be solved. The paper defined higher education in the light of different scholars. "Higher Education is taken to embody all organized learning and training activities at the tertiary level, which includes conventional universities, those with the conventional arts, humanities and science faculties as well as specialized universities like institutions specializing in agriculture, engineering, science, and technology (Obanya 1999 in Jacob & Musa, 2020). It also defined it as the machinery behind a county's workforce, that Higher Education is the system which embraces much of the country's research capacity and reproduces majority of the skilled professionals that are required in the labor market. (Adeyemi, 2001 in Jacob & Musa, 2020).

The paper identified some of the common challenges of higher education in Nigeria, such as; inadequate funding, inadequate lecturers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, unstable academic calendar, academic corruption, insecurity, brain-drain, etc. The study concluded by preferring solutions to these afore listed challenges. (Otonko, 2012) studied University Education in Nigeria; History, Success, Failure and the way forward. The study scrutinizes university education in Nigeria through review of the historical development of university education in Nigeria, examination of the benefits derived so far from the educational system in Nigeria and the benefits obtainable from a good university education system.

The study also throws light on the systematic destruction of the Nigerian University system, with a question tag 'who to blame?', allotting the blames among all components and influences responsible for the gradual dwindling of the university education in Nigeria. The study also expounded on the way forward, summoning the government and the concerned relevant agencies to follow its function suggestions, if the future of university is to be revamped. (Ejiogu & Sule, 1986) worked on sixty-five years of university education in Nigeria, and some key cross cutting issues. Also, the study traces briefly on the developmental history of the establishment of universities in Nigeria from one university in 1948 to a total of 118 as at the time of the study.

The study also examined the major problems facing the universities, and not allowing universities to excel to their full capacities and fully perform their designed programme initiatives. Amidst the identified problems impeding against our universities to compete with their counterparts in the world, the study concluded on a call to action to government, individuals and other concerned parties to tackle these issues as a way forward.



2.2 Material Exploration in Art

(Ggangbayau et al., 2019) studied the transformation of discarded materials to objects of aesthetic importance, otherwise known as waste to wealth. The study sees waste (junks) as found objects or trash items regarded as useless or discarded materials in homes, offices, workshops, factories and the environment as a whole, which can actually be turned into objects of aesthetic importance and also serve as a means of wealth creation through artistic expressions. The study described various means through which waste could be adopted as medium of artistic expression and also how waste to art solves the challenges of environmental degradation and material sources for artist.

The study posits that artists spend lesser when they use discarded materials to produce as these materials could be procured cheaper or even sourced freely from the environment. It concludes by advising young artists to explore using waste as their medium of expression, as it helps the environment and also helps the artist. (Bassey & William, 2021) studied the art of converting waste to wealth: towards environmental sustainability in Nigeria. The study explored and discussed various concepts of waste, waste management of reduce, re-use and recycle.

The study also discussed art as a concept and how its activities helps to convert waste to wealth, how its activities of junk collection, assemblage and composition are viable approaches to ensure a safe and sustainable environment. The study proposed that visual artists should be involved in decision making of environmental policies and formulations. (İLHAN, 2016) studied transforming trash as an artistic act. The study focused on the discourse of the usage of waste in artistic contexts. It went through the process of questioning the role of art in the transformation of discarded items. The study also examined the approaches and methods artists uses in exploring discarded materials to produce their works. The study argues that the process of transforming trash in an artistic and humanitarian act in itself.

The study also considered wastes like discarded papers that has been transformed into useful items such as notebooks which are therefore exhibited or installed in non-conventional art space such as libraries, computer laboratories etc.

2.2.1 The Use of Scraps

The word scrap is conventionally used to describe fragments of a larger part, small pieces or remnant that has been detached from a larger piece. Scrap can also mean waste materials used particularly in relation to metal waste awaiting processing (Encarta, 2007).

The choice of metal scraps is based on the popular belief that metal scraps are injurious to the environment and considered less valuable. The idea of metal scraps is not just to repurpose the scraps into art alone, but through repurposing scraps, we reshape and remodel our humanitarian functions and identity. As we see beauty and usefulness in these discarded scraps, we metaphorically emphasize that everyone has an innate ability, i.e. no one should be considered useless. Instead, we should consider ourselves artists who sees beauty and purpose in others and serves as vessels that brings out the genius in people.

(Oluwole, 2019) studied an approach to Dotun Popoola Welded Metal Art. The paper which focused on Dotun Popoola's metal art and his idea of transforming metal scraps into environmental art. Oluwole described Dotun's practices as an injection of foreign artistic idea into the 21st century Nigerian art scene. The scraps used by Dotun Popoola for his metal sculpture majorly ranges from automobile parts, machinery parts, utilitarian objects, and tool. The paper situates Dotun Popoola as a 'natural synthesist' whose aesthetic activism has enriched and promoted the Nigerian art scene.

2.3 Lamp Stand

(Venslauskene et al., 2020) studied the history of street light. The study traced the advancement in the evolution of street light in St. Petersburg from the 18th century to 20th century. The study talks about the emergence of street light system in the metropolis of St. Petersburg shortly after its emergence. It showed a detailed analysis of the various types of street light elements which featured in the society of that age and the transformations from oil lamps to gas lamps, alcohol content mixtures, to kerosene lamps, incandescent lamps to electric lamps.

The study also traced the advancement in the different architectural design of these street lamps in the fast growing economy. In the various phases of evolution, the study showed their stylistic characteristics and technical differences



between the street lamps that evolved. The roles of these street lamps are highlighted as an element of development in the society of the time.

(George, 2020) worked on a concise review of fifteen intelligent street lighting system. Although the study has an outlook of futurism and urban development, yet the study examines the traditional use of street lighting systems in communities as provision for lighting routes to communities and roadways. It also examined the new uses or development in the perceived use of street light systems in the recent times, and how it has made it possible to build smart cities in the Caribbean.

3.0 AFRICAN ART

3.1 *Survival of Traditional Art Styles*

Traditional art styles as expressed by the author has a very long history as evident in the sculptures excavated in Africa, the sculptures were as early as 500BC which belongs to the Nok culture. Majority of the works produced in the traditional Africa were sculptures and were mostly made of wood. The nature of the materials used caused most of this works to perish, leaving only little evidence of the traditional art styles available (Mount, 1973).

Though almost all African traditional art shares the same stylistic variation and function, but recently, the style and socio-religious functions of traditional African Art are fast disappearing in the African societies and cultures. This present situation of African traditional art is as a result of Africa's contact with the west, first before colonialism through trade and then through colonialism, the European have invaded every sphere of the African life which includes the economic, political, social and religious. All these influences soon have a direct effect on the traditional art of Africa which is the most important means of expression of the African culture. The breakdown of the traditional African religious system and practices by the European missionaries who established permanent churches and schools to suppress the African religious practices.

The Europeans through different means have succeeded in indoctrinating the African elite which now contribute to the extinction of the traditional African Art. African elites believe that Europeans encourage traditional African art to keep Africans in their place from developing and to influence western dominion.

Over the years the negative attitude towards African art began to shift as scholars found African artist incorporating traditional elements, styles and techniques in their works. The government agencies became more conscious and started encouraging traditional African art through commissions, they established museums for collection and patronage of traditional African art.

3.2 *African Artist Shifting Identities in Postcolonial World*

(Kasfir, 2000) discusses first the new emerging African artists as a result of formal art schools or universities in African countries in the postcolonial world. Also he distinguished these emerged academically trained artists with their informally trained counterparts. One significant distinguishing factor is in their facture (manner or style of rendering or creating art. This new emerging artist have also been trained to understand patronage and art beyond the scope of their local communities. The university academic training gave birth to intellectual class of artist in the postcolonial Africa. The writer therefore warns that, for fair assessment of these new emerged or emerging artist, the talent and creativity found in untrained and informally trained artist must be put into consideration.

Another major distinction between these artist is that the formally or academically trained artist were taken through the process of mastery of techniques, material and equipment and have also been exposed to the knowledge of art history. Kasfir (2000), however submits that training (formal or informal) or lack of training will definitely affect originality or lack of it. One of the major result of formal art school is that it gave birth to individuality in expression, while repetition was highly suppressed.

In contrast this was a major challenge in the works produced by informally trained or untrained artist, the non-academically artist were not aware of the postcolonial condition that surrounds them, most of the non-academically trained artist that are discovered by the expatriates are often sponsored abroad to feature in exhibitions. These opportunities often create a scenario where these artists are interviewed with the aim of exposing the 'naivety' of these African artist. Most times these create a permanent image for the African artist.

Meanwhile, the academically trained artists have been taught the attitude towards the commodity status of art, the attitude of these emerging artist is guided by the article that art is created as an act of self-realization for the artist. They understand that what makes an artist successful is the recognition which comes from having the works of an artist collected by major art community or institutions. As different from the non-academically trained artist whose idea is that any work he creates is to be sold at any small opportunity.

In a statement made by an American poet Robert Pinsky that; Art comes from art. This expresses that the works produced by artist are mostly influences from the works of other artist, and also shows that they are convinced of the of the idea expressed in such works. This is seen in the works of artist of independence or nationalist movement. These artists produce works which portray themselves as African and anticolonial. These expressions redefined the identities of the postcolonial African artists and art.

3.3 Sourcing for Metal scraps

The methodology used in the project includes both primary and secondary sources of data collection. The primary sources comprise of first close observation of the environment space in which the project piece will occupy, the type of project that will properly fit into the space and the appropriate piece that will improve the quality of the environment. The primary source also includes the generation of the form and structural concept of the garden Lamp, the conception of the sketch and iconographies involved in the art.

The secondary sources of data collection include the varieties of books, journals, publications, e-books, websites and other online resources that were consulted. Various books and publications of other scholars were consulted to validate the discussion of the project report topic. Also, some of the secondary data were only reviewed as literature.

According to Segun the stages include:

- Sourcing of scraps
- Assemblages and Compositions
- Welding and Coupling
- Finishing (painting)
- Installation
- Connection with power line

4.0 ANALYSIS OF FORM AND SUBJECT MATTER



Plate 1: *Segun Okewumi posing with one of his works titledOdyssey through Academe I & II*
Photograph by: *Babalola Adeoye,2022*



The eccentric ever evolving Segun is one of the Nigerian's fastest rising contemporary artist noted for his intricately crafted welded sculpture. Using a variety of techniques, his unique approach to sorting, cutting, welding and fixing common materials captures a richly layered history imbedded with personal and political meaning. The use of traditional onna symbols links his work to the Ife Art School tradition which expanded and modernised the Ife cultural aesthetic. Meanwhile, the transformation of object into highly detailed artworks roots him firmly in the contemporary moment of rapid environmental and ecological change.

In his sculptural works, Segun explores migration as a constant process of transformation and reinvention, considering the implications of globalisation on his local community, Segun transforms everyday materials to render new stories of Nigeria's socio-political landscape. In 2006, when Segun made his first metal work, the ornate, the style for which he is best known for, it was his response to the way humans pollute their environment. Segun has described this genesis as "an inflammatory response", a conduit of rage and helplessness channeled into something both theoretically aesthetic and visually striking.



Plate 2: *Odyssey through Academe 1&2, H10" W3" L3" each, Discarded Metal and Aluminum, 2022, Segun Okewumi*

Photograph by: Yemi, 2022

The project is a sculptural representation of an ideal African head in metal with a total dimension of 10ft by 3ft by 3ft. The sculptural head is depicted with the face of a stylized African mask, wearing an academic graduation cap. The project works which are functional pieces are two metal sculptural heads titled *odyssey through academe I* and *II* which represent the female and male figures respectively. The sculptural heads are made as functional pieces which serves as lamp stands. The pieces which are made of entirely metal, are composition of different metal parts from kitchen utensils, automobile parts, machinery, large metallic cylinders, metal sheets, twisted metals, and other metal junks.



The bodies of the sculptural head are constructed from large metal cylinders, while the mouths are made from the wheels of an automobile (II) and an aluminum cooking pot (I). The nose which protrudes from the middle of the eyes are crafted from galvanized pipes which are aesthetically joined to the faces to fit with the mouth. The eyes of the sculptural heads are made from bolts, nut and shorts pipes dissembled from machineries. The foreheads which connects the faces to the mortarboards are composed of mainly twisted metal rods and idealist figural representations of students which were also constructed with the twisted metal rods, brake pads, copper wire, bolts, nuts and cutleries. which are directly connected to the academic graduation cap. The mortarboards (graduation hats) are creatively constructed with aluminum pots, metal sheets, twisted metals, bike chains, etc. The tassels of the cap which are made of bike chains are created to be detachable from the cap. The sculpture heads lamp stand is well crafted and finished. Whilst some of the metal parts have been left to flourish in natural colours, other parts have been patinated to adorn them and to signify meaning.

The pieces “Odyssey through academe I & II” describes the imagery of a female and male figure respectively through the representation of the most important human symbol “the head”. The pieces exemplify the attributes of efficient student striving for survival in their academics. This is made possible through the objective representation of the components of the human head and the symbolic meaning of the human head, perhaps in an African context. In his own study, “I lay more emphasis to the figure through the mouth. The mouth of the female figure is represented with a big cooking pot which is mostly seen as a feminine object in our society. The forehead of the figure also commands a lot of awareness as it is represented with a creative negative space. The forehead serves as a gallery to project a lot of meaning in the work. The forehead in the African settings is viewed as the seat of human wisdom and intelligence. The forehead was intentionally represented to pique our interest and awareness, to show that the brain is the power behind all the activities, stress, and struggles that students pass through to survive. The forehead displays the activity of the female student leaning against a wall while she reads her book and the male figure in sculpture II seated on a donkey chair as draws.

All these emphasize that academic success doesn’t come with ease and to also signify all that these students go through to attain a degree. To conclude, the sculptural representation is wrapped up as the forehead is crowned with the mortarboard, to naturally suggest and encourage that if one is persistent and committed to academic activities, even against the odds and struggles, then success is inevitable. The cap is used to top the entire sculptural representation, serving as an icon of academic success.

5.0 THEMATIC ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This project focuses on the academic challenges and struggles of undergraduate students with an aim to encourage and motivate these struggling students to persevere and not to give up. The work focuses on the execution of a functional sculptural piece as a lamp stand which is a celebration of the struggle lifestyle of an average African student. The sculptural piece which is titled “Odyssey through academe I & I” narrates the expedition chronicles of African students through the academia. It describes and celebrates not only their struggles and challenges faced, but also their survival instincts, intuition, doggedness, and all positive measures these African students take to prevail against the odds. The work celebrates all African students, including those who have passed through this tedious system of education and those who are currently students, and subjected to this system affected by our daunting economic and political system.

However, the work addresses the theme of Academic Voyage and scholarship under the African symbolism of the head. The head is viewed with a lot of importance in the African settings. Africans believe that the head is the most important part of the body, which is the reason why they lay an emphasis of size on the head in their figures i.e. the head is expressed larger than the body. The projects focused on the expression of the head as a representation of the African student, to express the symbol ‘head’ as the seat of human wisdom, centre of human intellect, source of human decision. The academic inclination of a student is determined by his head.

The two pieces are also represented as a male and a female which is to assert that gender is not a basis of student’s academic struggles. This affirms that both male and female students experience academic struggles and challenges



in their individual ways. They can equally both survive these challenges and struggles through their individually inclined strategies.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The paper identifies that many undergraduate students are faced with academic struggles and challenges. The project reveals that majority of these academic challenges and struggles are caused by the prevalent political and economic instabilities of the nations which in turn militate against the smooth running of the common academic institutions of higher learning of the nations. The project also identifies some of the common challenges students experience in the institutions of higher learning to be irregular power supply, inadequate lecture halls, insufficient training equipment, accommodation problems, unstable academic calendar, tedious registration and screening procedures etc. The study also identified various means through which these problems can be solved.

The paper also identifies that illumination in the environment is important and it is significant of development and progress of the society. The paper however asserts that the production of lamp stands will enhance the activities of the students at night especially ones doing assignment, projects and practical over the night.

The execution of this project is an important utility to the society and the educational environment at all. It also adds value and beauty to the department. The Functional sculpture is indeed a commemoration and celebrations of the millions of vibrant, dogged and courageous undergraduate students silently waring against the academic struggles prevalent in their various Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges and other Institution of higher learning.

Segun's work speaks about the myriad psychological oppressions the public have been made to endure and subject too due to improper disposal of wastes in the environment. Along the representation of forms, welding, and mixed media, Ibadan based artist Segun draws inspiration for his detailed mixed-media sculptures. As an avid metal artist, he is fascinated by the way of life and human interaction. "the more junks I collect, the more I want to create", sharing that welding each junks can be likened to the veins or arteries of the body.

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