

POOR ARTS AND DESIGNS STUDIOS FACILITIES MANAGEMENT IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NORTHERN EAST NIGERIA: EFFECTS, CONSEQUENCES AND STRATEGIES INTERVENTIONS

***ABDULLAHI Ibrahim Musa, ISHAYA Shunom Leo, and HABIB Mustapha**

Department of Fine and Applied Art, Federal College of Education, Yola

***Correspondence Author:** ibrahimmusaabdullahi@fecyola.edu.ng Phone: 07030138934

ABSTRACT

Art and design studios play a vital role in higher education by supporting creativity, technical skills, and professional growth. However, in many tertiary institutions across Northern Nigeria, these studios are often poorly managed, leading to declining conditions and negatively impacting the overall learning experience. This research investigates the reasons behind the ineffective management of art and design studio facilities in Northern Nigerian universities and explores the effects of such underperformance. It also suggests solutions to improve the situation. Using a descriptive qualitative method, the study combines document analysis, direct observation of studio conditions, and a thorough review of existing literature on facilities management and arts education. The results show that the main factors contributing to poor management include insufficient funding, a lack of qualified professionals in facilities management, a tendency to delay maintenance, weak institutional policies, and insufficient involvement of stakeholders. These issues have created unsafe learning spaces, lowered student participation, reduced creative output, and harmed the reputation of these institutions. To address these challenges, the study suggests better funding, the adoption of professional facilities management practices, a focus on regular maintenance, and increased collaboration among all stakeholders to ensure the long-term success and effectiveness of art and design studio facilities in Nigerian tertiary education.

Keywords: *Art and Design, Studio Facilities, Facilities Management, Tertiary Institutions, Northern Nigeria.*

INTRODUCTION

Art and design studios (Plates 1 – 3) are essential spaces in higher education institutions and allow students to explore their creative potential, experiment with new techniques and develop critical thinking skills. However, effective management is essential to ensure that these spaces remain functional, secure and relevant for modern artistic activities (Zannoun, 2023). Despite their importance, many art and design studios in higher education suffer from inadequate facilities management, which can negatively impact academic results and student learning experiences.

The foundation of hands-on learning in creative fields is comprised of art and design studios. Students can experiment with supplies, equipment, and methods that are necessary for both artistic expression and professional proficiency in these areas. In tertiary institutions, especially universities and colleges of education offering Architecture, Industrial Design, Fine and Applied Arts programmes, the quality of studio facilities directly influences teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes.

According to Olubodun and Adetona (2018), the quality of studio facilities in numerous Nigerian tertiary institutions remains notably deficient in maintenance. Empirical investigations into Nigeria's higher education infrastructure indicate extensive deterioration of physical facilities, attributed to inadequate funding, deferred maintenance, and weak institutional commitment. Arts and design studios are especially susceptible, given their reliance on specialised equipment, consumables, and continual upkeep.



Plate 1: Department of Fine Arts Studio College of Education yola, Adamawa State.
Source: The researcher (2025)



Plate 2: Department of Architecture Studio
Modibbo Adama University, Yola.
Source: *The researcher (2025)*



Plate 3: Department of Creative Art Studio
University of Maiduguri, Borno State
Source: *The researcher (2025)*

However, due to ongoing insecurity, economic constraints, and competing institutional priorities, there is very little empirical research on arts and design studio facilities management in North-East Nigeria. Despite the central role of studio-based instruction in arts and design education, many tertiary institutions in North-East Nigeria operate with poorly managed and deteriorating studio facilities.

These conditions are characterised by obsolete equipment, overcrowded workspaces, weak maintenance culture, inadequate ventilation, and insufficient safety provisions. Although infrastructure challenges in Nigerian higher education have been widely discussed, region-specific empirical evidence focusing on arts and design studio facilities management in North-East Nigeria is scarce. This gap limits effective policy formulation and targeted intervention strategies.

This study aims to examine the state of arts and design studio facilities management in selected tertiary institutions in North-East Nigeria, with the specific objectives of assessing the condition and

availability of these facilities; identifying the major factors responsible for poor studio facilities management; examining the effects of inadequate studio facilities on the teaching and learning of arts and design; and proposing strategies for improving studio facilities management in the region.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Arts and Design Studio Management

Managing an arts and design studio encompasses the planning, organizing, utilizing, maintaining, and improving of the spaces, tools, supplies, and personnel to support artistic creation and teaching, which differ from standard classrooms in their layout, safety measures, air circulation, storage solutions, and equipment for activities such as painting, sculpting, pottery, fabric arts, graphic design, and digital work (NUC, 2018).

Successful studio management combines the administrative and pedagogical aspects. On the administrative side, this includes financial planning, purchasing, monitoring of supplies, planning of maintenance and compliance with security rules. From a teaching point of view, this means ensuring that the teaching environment supports curricular needs and facilitates hands-on learning through practice. Lussier (2000) defines management as the coordination of people and resources to achieve organisational goals; in the case of art education, this means the creation of an environment that encourages creativity, inquiry and the development of professional skills.

The Relationship Between Design and Art

Art and design are deeply connected, each shaping and inspiring the other in countless ways. At their core, both disciplines centre around the thoughtful arrangement of elements, whether that's combining shapes, experimenting with colours, or developing new concepts. To truly excel in either, you need more than just creativity; a strong foundation of knowledge and technical skill is essential, as is the courage to push boundaries and imagine something new (Ibrahim, 2023).

The relationship between art and design is dynamic, with each field constantly drawing inspiration from the other. Design often looks to major art movements like Cubism, Surrealism, or even Abstract Expressionism, incorporating their bold visual languages to infuse modern projects with a sense of history and emotion. This borrowing gives birth to designs that don't just function well but also carry a unique voice and flair that can captivate audiences.

However, the exchange isn't limited to designers taking cues from art. Many artists also look to design principles to enhance their work. By adopting strategies like effective composition, the strategic use of colour theory, and even incorporating elements like typography, artists can make their messages more impactful and accessible. This blending of disciplines allows artists to communicate ideas more directly, often reaching wider audiences who might not otherwise engage with traditional fine art. In today's world, where digital tools and media have blurred the lines further, it's common to find projects that are part art, part design, think of street murals that double as social commentary, or branding projects that feel like gallery installations.

Infrastructure and Design /Arts Education in Nigeria

The infrastructure of Nigerian higher education institutions affects the quality of education offered: the quality and condition of classrooms, labs, workshops, studios, and technology resources affect the quality of teaching and learning. UNESCO (2017) explains that infrastructure is even more critical in arts education because the teaching methods are very hands-on and require more resources. Research demonstrates that the infrastructure of Nigerian higher education institutions is crumbling due to underfunding, an increase in the number of students, and poor maintenance (Ogunode and Akpakwu 2021). This lack of infrastructure means academic staff have difficulty carrying out their duties, and crumbling, disused studios make it difficult to impart practical skills in architecture and fine arts (Olubodun and Adetona 2018). Christopher and Okoye (2022) noticed that even when universities and colleges have studios, there usually aren't enough, and the ones that exist are often outdated or can't handle the demand.

National bodies have also documented these issues. For instance, the National Universities Commission (NUC, 2018) states that when the Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards are met, then courses in the arts require well-equipped studios and workshops; yet arts and design programs often have fewer institutional resources, resulting in continued infrastructure shortfalls.

Importance of Management in Arts and Design Studios

Effective management is essential for a studio to prosper as well as for artists and employees to feel comfortable and confident in their positions and practices (Orpa, Samaun, and Mannan, 2026). It is important to start by recognising that everyone who

enters a studio, whether they are daily employees of an artist collective, individuals who hold keys but do not engage in creative work, or even volunteers who occasionally assist in studio maintenance, will be impacted by the way the studio's resources are handled. Mack (2021) asserts that, if the management isn't meeting the legal obligations or providing a safe and effective environment to work in, this can lead to conflict between the different groups of people using the studio. Historically, management in arts studios tended to be about keeping things the way they were and about providing spaces to practice only certain types of creative work, but management of studio projects has evolved, and studios are now seen as more than just a production unit for fine art: they may include education and outreach programmes, partnerships with external organizations, and commercial ventures.

Challenges of Studio Facilities Management

The role of an art and design studio manager is to help support the growth of creativity and technical skills within the artist, but in poorly managed studios, they face a few major challenges, including a lack of facilities and resources, which can be caused by insufficient funding that will lead to old equipment, small and cramped spaces, and poor air circulation, which will make it more difficult for artists to work and ultimately impact the quality of education (Jones *et al.*, 2019; Smith, 2018), as well as a lack of maintenance.

Inadequately maintained studios can be hazardous and uninspiring places to work in, with damaged structures, unsafe conditions, and broken equipment (Brown, 2017, Taylor and Clark, 2021), limited access and fairness to these studios means that the access to these areas is limited and less fair to students of lower socioeconomic status, limiting their ability to access the arts and limiting the diversity of the arts (Johnson, 2020; Taylor and Clark, 2021). The management challenges, such as weak organisational systems, slow administrative processes, and financial constraints, slow decision-making and prevent the needed changes to studio conditions (Jones *et al.*, 2019).

Poor studio management can manifest itself in low student participation, learning outcomes, and mental health, as inferior studio spaces and limited resources can discourage students from engaging with their work in a practical, experimental, and creative manner (Brown, 2017; Smith, 2018) and can negatively affect their mental health, leading to stress, irritability, and loneliness that can reduce confidence and productivity (Taylor and Clark, 2021). As such, it is important to manage studios

well, provide adequate facilities, and maintain positive learning environments to foster creativity, skills development, and self-efficacy in artists and designers.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design complemented by direct observation. This approach enabled the systematic collection of empirical data on studio facilities, conditions and management practices.

Area of the Study

The study was conducted in North-East Nigeria, one of the six geopolitical zones of the country (Figure 1). The region was purposively selected because of its unique educational, economic, and

infrastructural challenges, including prolonged insecurity, funding constraints, and ageing institutional facilities, which have significant implications for arts and design education. The study covered six public tertiary institutions that offer arts and design-related programmes, namely: Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi State; Modibbo Adama University, Yola, Adamawa State; University of Maiduguri, Borno State; Federal College of Education, Zing, Taraba State; Federal College of Education, Yola, Adamawa State; and Federal College of Technical Education, Gombe State. These institutions represent universities, colleges of education, and technical education colleges, thereby providing a comprehensive picture of arts and design studio facilities management across different categories of tertiary institutions in the region.

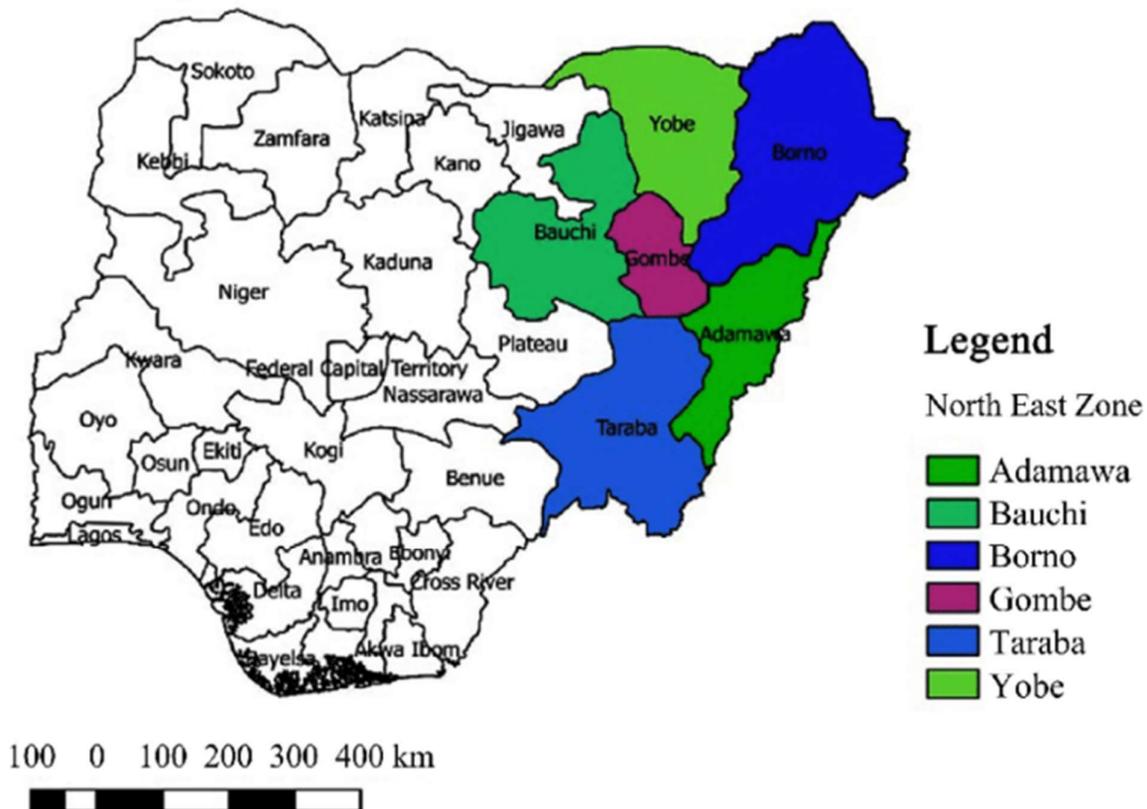


Fig. 1: Map of Nigeria showing the North-Eastern States

Source: Gwandi, and Adewuyi (2022)

Population and Sample

The population of the study comprised lecturers, studio technologists, and final-year undergraduate students in arts and design departments of the selected institutions. These categories of respondents were considered appropriate because they are the primary users and managers of studio facilities and possess firsthand experience regarding their availability, condition, and maintenance practices. Final-year students were

specifically selected because of their prolonged exposure to studio-based learning throughout their programme.

A purposive sampling technique was adopted to select respondents with adequate knowledge and direct interaction with studio facilities. In total, 150 respondents were sampled across the six institutions, with proportional representation to ensure balanced institutional input.

Instruments for Data Collection

Two main instruments were used for data collection: a structured questionnaire and an observation checklist. The questionnaire was designed to elicit information on the availability, adequacy, utilisation, and management of arts and design studio facilities, as well as the perceived effects of poor facilities on teaching and learning. The observation checklist complemented the questionnaire by enabling the researcher to physically assess studio spaces, equipment condition, safety provisions, ventilation, lighting, and maintenance status. The use of both instruments enhanced data triangulation and improved the credibility of the findings.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected from the questionnaires were coded and analysed using descriptive statistical techniques, specifically frequencies and percentages. These methods were considered

suitable for summarising respondents’ views and identifying prevailing trends in studio facilities conditions and management practices. The analysed data were presented in tables to facilitate clarity, comparison, and ease of interpretation. Qualitative information obtained from the observation checklist was used to support and explain the quantitative results.

Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) as presented in the various Tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the empirical findings obtained from the questionnaire responses and on-site observations across the six sampled tertiary institutions in North-East Nigeria. The results focus on the condition of studio facilities, causes of poor facilities management, and perceived effects on teaching and learning (Table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of Institutions and Studio Characteristics

S/N	Institution	Ownership	Programme Type	Studio Availability	General Condition
1	Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi	Federal	Architecture and Industrial Design	Available	Fair
2	Modibbo Adama University, Yola	Federal	Architecture and Industrial Design	Available	Poor
3	University of Maiduguri	Federal	Fine Arts	Available	Poor
4	College of Education, Zing	State	Fine Arts	Available	Very Poor
5	FCE (Technical), Gombe	Federal	Technical / Arts	Limited	Poor
6	Federal College of Education, Yola	Federal	Fine and Applied Arts	Available	Fair

Source: Field Survey (2025)

Condition of Arts and Design Studio Facilities

Table 2 presents respondents’ assessment of the overall condition of arts and design studio facilities across the institutions.

Table 2: Condition of Arts and Design Studio Facilities

Condition	Frequency	Percentage
Adequate and functional	28	18.7%
Fair but inadequate	54	36.0%
Poor and dilapidated	68	45.3%

Source: Field Survey (2025)

were adequate and functional. A larger percentage (45.3%) described the studios as poor and dilapidated, while 36.0% indicated that facilities were only fair but inadequate.

Observations across the institutions revealed cracked floors, leaking roofs, insufficient workspaces, obsolete equipment, and poor ventilation, particularly in sculpture, textile, and ceramics studios.

Causes of Poor Arts and Design Studio Facilities Management

Respondents identified multiple factors responsible for the poor condition of studio facilities, as shown in Table 3.

The data indicate that only a small proportion of respondents (18.7%) reported that studio facilities

Table 3: Major Causes of Poor Studio Facilities Management

Cause	Percentage of Respondents
Inadequate funding	82%
Deferred maintenance culture	74%
Lack of professional facility managers	69%
Administrative neglect	63%
Overuse due to a high student population	58%

Source: Field Survey (2025)

Inadequate funding emerged as the most significant factor, reported by 82% of respondents. This finding reflects the limited budgetary priority given to arts and design programmes compared to science-based disciplines.

Deferred maintenance practices and the absence of trained facility managers further contributed to the rapid deterioration of studio spaces. Overcrowding caused by rising student enrolment without corresponding expansion of facilities was particularly evident in Federal Colleges of Education and universities with long-established arts programmes.

Effects of Poor Studio Facilities on Teaching and Learning

Respondents were also asked to indicate the effects of poor studio facilities on teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes (Table 4).

Table 4: Effects of Poor Studio Facilities on Teaching and Learning

Effect	Percentage of Respondents
Reduced the effectiveness of practical instruction	76%
Low student motivation and engagement	71%
Increased safety and health risks	68%
Limited creativity and experimentation	73%
Delays in project completion	64%

Source: Field Survey (2025)

The results show that poor studio conditions significantly undermine practical instruction, with 76% of respondents indicating that teaching effectiveness was negatively affected. Limited access to functional equipment and safe working environments constrained students' ability to experiment and develop technical skills. Safety

risks such as exposure to dust, chemicals, and faulty electrical installations were frequently observed, particularly in painting and metal workshops.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a pervasive problem of poor arts and design studio facilities management across tertiary institutions in North-East Nigeria. The dominance of inadequate funding as a causal factor aligns with earlier studies that identified chronic underfunding as a major challenge facing Nigerian higher education infrastructure (Olubodun and Adetona, 2018; Ogunode and Akpakwu, 2021). Arts and design programmes, which require continuous investment in consumables and specialised equipment, appear to be disproportionately affected.

The high proportion of respondents reporting deferred maintenance and lack of professional facility managers underscores institutional weaknesses in facilities planning and management. This supports the National Universities Commission's (2018) assertion that the effective teaching of arts-related programmes depends on deliberate maintenance strategies and compliance with benchmark standards. Without professional oversight, studio facilities deteriorate rapidly, creating unsafe and unsuitable learning environments.

The negative effects on teaching and learning identified in this study further demonstrate the critical role of studio environments in arts education. Reduced student motivation, limited creativity, and delays in project execution mirror the findings of Jones *et al.* (2019), who noted that poorly maintained studios restrict hands-on learning and creative exploration. In the context of North-East Nigeria, these challenges are intensified by large class sizes and limited opportunities for facility replacement or expansion.

Overall, the results highlight a strong link between facilities management practices and educational outcomes in arts and design programmes. Addressing these challenges requires not only increased funding but also institutional commitment to professional facility management, regular maintenance schedules, and stakeholder involvement. The evidence provided in this study strengthens the argument for policy-level intervention to improve the quality and sustainability of arts education infrastructure in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

CONCLUSION

The study evaluated arts and design studio facilities management in selected tertiary institutions in North-East Nigeria and found that inadequate funding, weak maintenance culture, overcrowding, and low institutional prioritisation significantly undermine studio effectiveness. Although studios exist in most institutions, their condition and management fall below acceptable standards for practice-based instruction.

The study concludes that improving arts and design education in the region requires deliberate investment in studio infrastructure, adoption of preventive maintenance systems, engagement of trained facility personnel, and strict enforcement of regulatory standards. Addressing these issues will enhance practical skills development and contribute to the overall quality of arts education in Nigerian tertiary institutions

RECOMMENDATIONS

To entrench maintenance culture and ensure efficient performance of art and design studios' maintenance activities, the following strategies are hereby recommended:

To ensure that educational environments remain functional and effective over time, a comprehensive approach to managing school facilities is necessary. This involves all parties involved in providing, using, and maintaining resources. It starts with the government and related organisations making sure that the required infrastructure is properly available.

After the infrastructure is in place, the Ministry of Education or relevant bodies need to arrange specific training for those responsible for managing the facilities, so they can use and maintain them correctly.

At the school level, principal administrators should lead by example by regularly inspecting the facilities and carrying out routine maintenance tasks.

In the end, the successful operation of these facilities depends on the community, teachers, and students feeling a sense of responsibility and care for school property, just as they would for their own belongings.

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