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**Opinion Poll Surveys on Public Sentiments towards the Arts  
in Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

*This paper is aimed at establishing the need to recognize and support the arts in the development of culture through opinion poll surveys on public sentiments towards the arts. Particular reference is made to Nigeria as a paradigm for trends and developments in Africa and the rest of the developing world. The increasing awareness of the potentiality of the arts in the development of culture requires an investigation into the public perspectives on the arts and culture. Little or no attention was, until recently, paid to this issue which has been a regular exercise in advanced countries. However, the paper observes that there is a lack of public awareness of the*

*need to support the arts in performing its crucial roles in the development of culture; though respondents feel that the arts have the potential to promote their culture. Consequently, the way forward is for the government to develop an atmosphere in which both the arts and the artists can flourish.*

### **Introduction**

Although public supports for the arts and culture are a way of life in most countries; such still remain for others a debatable issue. Thus, there is a lot of polemics on the need for public supports for the arts. In fact, this issue has become a crucial one in the world today, especially in developing countries. This is because developing countries want to bridge the wide gulf between them and the developed countries. Nigeria is not an exception. This paper is aimed at establishing the need to recognize and support the arts in the development of culture and in the specific Nigerian context. This is with a view to review responses to thirteen opinion questions on public support for the arts. Also worthy of note is the fact that this is the first opinion poll surveys on public sentiments towards the arts in Nigeria.

### **Public Sentiments towards the Arts: A Review of Previous Work**

It seems that in Africa and the rest of the developing world, there is a comparative paucity of relevant literature on the subject, suggestive of a currently low level of formal research in this field by African scholars. Developments elsewhere in the world, and the increasingly growing complexity in public administration which has made it a necessity for a nation to have a body set up for the guidance of art and culture in the different countries of the developing world are likely to draw attention to society's support for the arts as a major field of research and experimentation. Nonetheless, some researchers have studied public opinions about the arts. One of the most relevant articles is that titled "How Society Supports the Arts: Four Views" (1983:2-7). It is a collection of four views of different scholars whose remarks were adopted from a panel discussion sponsored by the International Centre for Economic Policy Studies in New York. The panelists included Lewis Lapham, Hilton Kramer, Samuel Lipman and Michael Joyce. In his own view subtitled "Eliminate Federal Funding to the Arts" (1983:3-4), Lewis Lapham seems rather uncomfortable with the government getting involved in the business of patronage, underscoring the role of the Federal Government in supporting the arts. Lapham observes that despite its benevolent intentions, the government does not know how to play the role of a patron because the bureaucrats cannot help but to commission

mediocre work. He is, however, of the view that the government can encourage artistic expression. Obviously, an attempt is made here to distinguish between patronage and encouragement. Hilton Kramer, the second contributor to the debate on how society can support the arts, opines that the individual artist forms the creative nexus of the culture. Kramer is therefore not in support of increasing budgets going to the arts with very little of it coming directly to the artist himself. His is obviously more concerned with who should be supported while silent over who should provide the subsidy. The third view on how society supports the arts is that of Samuel Lipman under the title “What if the present is an unexceptional period for art?” In his own contribution, Lipman observes that supports should go to the arts because they are art; not when their faith seems grounded more in hope than in reality. Lipman elaborates, “If there is a real art, then of course it should be supported. If, on the other hand, there is not much at the moment, then more still must be given so that the flow of art can be induced to resume” (1983:6). The implication is that before the idea of art can be supported, there must be art to support. The question this poses is, how real are the arts to be supported? The fourth and last contributor to the debate on “How Society Supports the Arts” seems to take the most reasonable and objective position, having seen the need to encourage the existence of a diversity of patrons. According to Michael Joyce (1983:7)

The obvious point is that one wants many sponsors, many different centres of authority, in as many non-bureaucratic forms as possible. The less diversity in patronage, the fewer alternatives for the artist and the more likely the patron will be to abuse this position.

He, however, opines that the private sector should be as patron of first resort while the federal government must be the patron of the last resort, especially in areas which the private sector may from time to time be unwilling to support to the necessary extent.

The next related article is titled “Cultural Property and Public Policy: Emerging Tensions in Government Support for the Arts”, by Paul Dimaggio and Michael Useem (1978:356-389). By way of a case study, Dimaggio and Useem draw attention to elite domination of the arts in the United States of America. Historically, the arts in the United States have not been the public good. They have largely been the province of an economic and social elite, who have provided the staff and governing boards of most arts institutions

the bulk of the audience for the high arts, and virtually all the private patronage. The arts, too, have been used by the elites, not only for aesthetic fulfillment and enjoyment but also for maintenance of their so-called ever-threatened dominance of the class hierarchy. The result is the emerging tensions between the elite, concerned with maintaining its definition of art, and elements of society oriented toward making art a truly public good. A national survey which demonstrated that involvement in artistic events was greatest among those in prestigious occupations with the most education and the lowest incomes confirms this close relationship existing between the arts and the elite maintaining arts as a relatively exclusive preserve in U.S.A. However, the involvement of the government is considered to pose a fundamental challenge to this relationship and to the traditional definition of art itself as public good.

One other interesting aspect of Dimaggio's and Useem's article is on the language of justification for public support for the arts which is based on three propositions: that the public supports government subventions; that the arts have a substantial economic impacts on local communities; and that the arts can play an important role in public education. The public-demand argument is considered to be the simplest and most legitimate rationale for increased public arts funding. Nearly everyone is said to believe that art is important to the quality of life and that, in a phrase from one national poll, the arts "make a community a better place to live in" (1978:370). It is consequent upon this that the majority of Americans express willingness to contribute annually in taxes to support the arts; though support is said to have been strongest among those who would most directly benefit from government subsidy-the upper and upper-middle class. The economic impact argument is that cultural institutions are an important factor in corporate relocation decisions, that they attract out-of-town visitors who spend considerable amounts within the community, and that they employ artists and others whose payroll contributes to the general prosperity of the local economy. For instance, industry, it is believed, cannot hope to attract or retain the young executives it needs unless artistic resource are available (1978:373). The third line of justification is that cultural institutions deserve public support because they perform public educational functions. This is the educational-value argument and is taken most seriously in the museums, which have a tradition of at least formal commitment to educating the public. An alternative argument on the educational value of the arts has been used to justify increased public appropriations for arts education in the schools. All

the three justifications have been widely used to mobilize and sustain public backing.

In a related article titled “The Rationale for Public Culture” (1982:33-57), Kevin V. Mulchahy also discusses the justification in support of public culture. Apart from the economic argument, and educational argument, which he too discusses, he argues further that culture is deserving of such a subsidy because of its social contribution, moral contribution and political contribution to the local environment. By way of summing up the case for public culture, Kevin asserts that the most basic argument rests on the belief that culture is good-in-itself: what economists would call a “merit-good” and what political scientists would call a “value”.

The next source book to be considered is *Some Recent Attacks: Essays Cultural and Political* by James Kelman. In it is a collection of several articles (by the same author), one of which is titled “Art and Subsidy, and the Continuing Politics of Culture City”. Kelman examines the issue of arts subsidy from the political perspective.

Arguments against public funding of the arts...might well be logical but they aren't rational; and decisions to cut or withdraw subsidy are always political (1992:27).

He observes that while people struggling for private funding, trying to tempt open the sponsor's purse competing with each other, some winning, some losing, the art most likely to win the money will conform to certain precepts deriving from these criteria and will be decorative rather than challenging. The result is an increase in oppression, suppression and censorship, leading to repression. This is the situation where artists stop creating their own work. They begin producing what they think their customer (potential sponsor) wants. This gives us an insight into Lewis Lapham's view that the government does not know how to play the role of patron (despite its benevolent intentions) because the bureaucrats cannot help but commission mediocre work.

The issue of arts subsidy recalls another remarkable book, which has subsidy as its main focus. Titled *Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma* (1966) and authored by William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen (joint authorship), the book is one of the major contributions to the perennial debate on the seemingly intractable and volatile issue of public aid for the arts. In their own submission, Baumol and Bowen argue that subsidy is needed to

maintain any given level of output in the performing arts. They stress that performing arts organizations cannot expect to earn sufficient income through ticket sales to pay for the labour and goods they require for their performances. Consequently, their “earnings gap” will continue to expand, requiring ever increasing increments of public subsidy to augment increases in private contributions that are unlikely to be sufficient.

Cultural Policy and Arts Administration (1973) is the title of the book edited by Stephen A. Greysier which attempts a study of cultural management of different countries such as the U.S., Germany, Great Britain, Sweden and Ireland. The book which contains eight papers by different scholars treats important issues concerning cultural policy and the management of the arts.

The introductory paper, “Public Aid for the Arts – A Change of Heart?” is W. Howard Adam’s discourse on the public attitude towards support for the arts in the United States. One case against public subsidy is from people (including quite a few artists) who fear government subsidy because they fear governmental interference, the burgling intrusion of bureaucratic machinery in a delicate area that could be destructive to all despite its benevolent intention. The implication is total elimination of federal funding to the arts as viewed by Lewis Lapham.

Another argument against public subsidy for the arts is that the arts are fundamental frivolous and those who want them should be prepared to pay for them. The argument against this position comes from those who feel that the same logic could well be applied to attack education, healthcare, or even public street lighting which are equally considered to be essential services. One of the essential functions of a democratic government is to spread the cost of essential services. The case is, however, being decided in favour of those who want public subsidy rather than those who fear it. No doubt the increasing awareness of the potentiality of the arts in the development of culture requires an investigation into the public perspectives on the arts and culture. In the rest of this paper, an attempt is made to analyse the results of opinion poll survey on Nigerian’s attitude towards the arts as conducted between 1999 and 2000.

### **Description of the Survey**

The questionnaire method was inevitably adopted as the survey instrument for determining the social and political role of the arts in our national development and social mobilization. This was done through an opinion poll

survey, using five hundred respondents. Data were analyzed using simple percentages and chi-squares. The questionnaire used for this research was designed to get responses to a variety of information on the need for public support for the arts in Nigeria. The main hypothesis is: public support for the arts is a necessity. Several other sub-hypotheses as fashioned from this are as follows:

- i) The level of appreciation of or involvement in artistic events is low.
- ii) The arts are an integral aspect of development.
- iii) The survival of the arts depends on subsidy.
- iv) Both the artists and cultural institutions deserve to be supported.
- v) The government and the artists are to dictate the cultural pace of the society.
- vi) Public support for the arts in Nigeria is poor.

The null hypothesis is: public support for the arts is not necessary

The hypotheses stated above show that the study is a critical assessment of the issue. This renders section 'B' which is the social background of respondents to the questionnaire irrelevant in confirming or disproving the hypotheses. The core of the analysis is therefore embedded in section 'A'. For referential purposes and clarity, the results of section 'B' (demographic data) are presented below.

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	272	62.8
Female	161	37.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>100%</b>

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 20	6	1.4
20-29	100	23.1
30-39	165	38.1
40-49	125	28.9
50 and above	37	8.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Educational Qualification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Primary School Certificate	3	0.7
Secondary School Certificate	50	11.5
Tertiary Institutions	380	87.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Christianity	297	68.6
Islam	67	15.5
Others	69	15.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>100%</b>

  

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Artist	130	30.0
Civil servant	132	30.5
Others	171	39.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>100%</b>

The results above show a cumulative frequency of 433; this in turn amounts to cumulative percentages of 100.00%. Six hundred (600) copies of questionnaire were administered; though a minimum of 500 questionnaires were to be used for this analysis. Four hundred and forty-one (441) copies were returned. 8 of these were blank (unfilled) and so, cannot be used. Therefore the total number of respondents being dealt with in this research is 433 – that is, 72% of the total number of questionnaires administered; 98% of the number of questionnaires returned and 100% of total number of respondents.

The results also show (under occupation) that three groups of people were covered by the survey, viz: the artists, civil servants and others. Only one set of questionnaire was drawn up and duly administered between March and May 1999, and June-August 2000. The choice of the three groups of people with different occupations was far from being arbitrary. It was guided by the series of information collected during interviews with some cultural administrators which enabled the researcher to identify people likely to have different views on the issue of public support for the arts; while further useful details emerged from information gathered through journal articles and books on the issue by different scholars and critics. The purpose was, as far as possible, to achieve a fairly representative spread capable of portraying the existing realities in the case for subsidizing the arts in Nigeria. Consequently,

the occupational background of the respondents will be considered in confirming or disproving the hypotheses listed at the beginning in addition to a general overview of all the respondents' responses in respect of the questions asked in the questionnaire. Apart from bearing in mind the occupational background of the respondents in administering the questionnaires, the questionnaire was not directed at any particular geographical, social, economic or ethnic group, as it was administered at random. It will also be necessary to stress that the language used in the questionnaire is English.

### **Multivariate Analysis of Attitudes towards the Arts**

The results of the survey are set out in Tables 1 – 13.

**Table 1:** *To what extent do you appreciate or get yourself involved in arts events?*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Very great extent	98	22.6
Great extent	141	32.6
Fair extent	139	32.1
Less extent	55	12.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>100%</b>

In response to the question from the table above, 22.6% ticked very great extent; 32.6% ticked great extent; another 32.1% says its level of appreciation of the art is to a fair extent; while 12.7% ticked less extent. It is interesting to note that even respondents who claim their appreciation of or involvement in arts events is to a fair and less extent express their support for the arts when correlated with their responses to other questions (e.g. table 5).

**Table 2:** *Do you think that the arts are beneficial to everyone like the health, education, social welfare, etc?*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
No	15	3.5
Yes	418	96.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>100%</b>

This is a question that requires yes or no answer. Fifteen (15) respondents (3.5) do not seem believe that the arts are beneficial to everyone like the health, education, social welfare, etc. while the highest percentage (96.5%) is

recorded for those who are in support (418 respondents). The low percentage recorded for the ‘No’ option include mostly civil servants and others whose appreciation of arts event is to a less extent, suggesting that they are ignorant of the need to support the arts. A number of contradictory findings also came up. For instance, though some respondents do not think that the arts are beneficial to everyone, they seem to agree with the fact that the public should support the arts when correlated with their responses to question 5.

**Table 3:** *Do you think that the arts can play an important role such as in public education, contributing to the development of your community, having a substantial economic impact on local communities, and as an instrument for political and social change?*

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	12	2.8
Yes	421	97.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the responses of the respondents in respect of question 3 above, the potential role of the arts as an important instrument for social and political change has been duly recognized. This is in line with the submission of Hermann Glasser (1973:36) that art is in a position to produce the socio-political dynamics and flexibility which are absolutely essential for a democratic society, and which also help to create a disposition for tolerance. A significant number of respondents (421) which is 97.2% of the total number of respondents ticked ‘Yes’ while the remaining 2.8% (12 respondents) ticked ‘No’. The interesting thing is that some of those respondents who ticked ‘No’ also think that the public should support the arts. This probably points to their ignorance of the important role of the arts in the development of a society.

**Table 4:** *Do you believe in the establishment of cultural institutions as a way of promoting arts and culture of your community?*

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	16	3.7
Yes	417	96.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>100%</b>

Contrary to the view of some people that cultural institution is more of a place for idol worshippers than for the promotion of the arts and culture of a

community, a significant number of respondents have expressed their belief in the development of arts and culture through cultural institutions. Four hundred and seventeen (417) respondents (96.3% of the total number of respondents) ticked 'Yes' while 16 respondents (3.7% of the total number of respondents) ticked 'No'. Again, 3.7% might have disagree out of ignorance.

**Table 5:** *Do you think that the public should support the arts?*

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	14	3.2
Yes	419	96.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>100%</b>

In a society where there are lots of activities but nobody seems to be interested in their promotion, one would have expected to record a higher percentage of people against public support for the arts. Despite government attention to sports and other spheres of human endeavour at the expense of the arts, which of course is not a purely Nigerian phenomenon, a significant percentage (96.8% of the number of respondents) comprising 419 respondents think that the public should support the arts, while the remaining 3.2% (14 respondents) of the total number of respondents express their opposition to this view. It is perhaps for personal reasons (such as religions) that the 3.2% ticked 'No'. It thus follows that they could easily have a change of heart if they are well informed on the need for supporting the arts.

**Table 6:** *To what extent do you think public support for the arts should be given?*

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very great extent	120	27.7
Great extent	190	43.9
Fair extent	99	22.9
Less extent	11	2.5
None	13	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>100%</b>

This question provides opportunity for respondents to indicate the extent to which they think the arts should be supported; unlike the previous question 5 which is merely to state whether it deserves to be supported or not. From the table above, 27.7% of the total number of respondents made up of 120 respondents are of the opinion that public support for the arts should be to a

very great extent; 43.9% of the total number of respondents made up of 190 respondents think it should be to a great extent; 22.9% of the total number of respondents made up of 99 respondents express the view that support should be to a fair extent; 2.5% of the total number of respondents made up of 11 respondents think support should be to a less extent; and 3.0% of the total number of respondents made up of 13 respondents do not seem to be in support for the arts. These people who are mostly civil servants are those who feel it is either a waste of money or a less essential service.

**Table 7:** *How do you think society should support the arts?*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Individual	17	3.9
Private	57	13.2
Government	148	34.2
None	15	3.5
Individual/private	40	9.2
Individual/government	16	3.7
Private/government	48	11.1
All	92	21.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>100%</b>

Section 10.3.1 of the Cultural Policy for Nigeria (1988:20) provides that cultural activities shall be funded by.

- a) Government
- b) Non-government, industrial, commercial, financial and other organizations operating in Nigeria making voluntary financial contributions which shall be tax-deductible.
- c) A national endowment fund to which government, organizations and individuals shall contribute etc.

The question has again provided another opportunity for the respondents indicates which of these various ways of societal support for the arts is deemed appropriate. In response to the question, 17 respondents (3.9% of the total number of respondents) express their belief in contributions by individuals, while 57 respondents (13.2% of the total number of respondents) ticked private institutional support for the arts. Respondent were also given the freedom to tick more than one way and some actually ticked two or more ways of societal supports for the arts. Of this group of people are 40 respondents (9.2% of the total number of respondents) who ticked both

contributions by individuals and private institutional support; 16 respondents (3.7% of the total number of respondents) ticked contributions by individuals and government support; 48 respondents (11.1% of the total number of respondents) think society can support the arts through private institutions support and government support; while 92 respondents (21.2% of the total number of respondents) threw their weight behind all ways. However, the highest percentage of 34.2% of the total number of respondents (148 respondents), are those who ticked government support. Perhaps they have been guided by the Nigerian mentality that it is the government who must do everything. It is also more likely that they are not aware of the need to encourage the existence of a diversity of patrons as suggested by Michael Joyce (1983). Fifteen (15) respondents (3.5% of the total number of respondents) ticked 'None', suggestion that they are ignorant of the potential roles of the arts in the development of a society.

**Table 8:** *Who do you think should be supported?*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Cultural institutions	169	39.0
Individual artists	44	10.2
None	12	2.8
Individual artists/cultural institutions	208	48.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>100%</b>

Cultural institutions are what is made of them and that the question of whether to establish or disestablish them, to support them or to seek new alternatives, is in the final analysis, dependent upon how they function, or can be made to function, in a specific situation. On the other hand, the individual artists form the creative nexus of the culture. Thus, respondents were given the freedom to tick more than one box where necessary in answering the question: who should be supported. As it would be expected, there were those who ticked more than one box. The table shows that 169 respondents constituting 39.0% of the total number of respondents express the view that cultural institutions deserve to be supported; while 44 respondents (10.2% of the total number of respondents) think that it is the individual artists that should be supported,. The highest percentage of 48.0% (208 respondents) of the total number of respondents is recorded for those in support of both cultural institutions and individual artists. It should be noted that cultural institutions and individual artists are used to mean government establishments and privately-owned counterparts respectively in the question

8. Only 12 respondents (that is, 2.8% of the total number of respondents do not seem to support any of them. Most of the 208 respondents (with the highest percentage) who are of the view that both cultural institutions and individual artists should be supported are mostly artists.

**Table 9:** Do you support the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in support of the arts?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	14	3.2
Yes	419	96.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>100%</b>

The issue of a National Endowment for the Arts continues to generate controversy, despite its provision under section 10.3.1 (C) of the Cultural Policy for Nigeria (1988:20) which says that: consistent with the resolutions of the inter-government conference on cultural policies in Africa (Accra 1975) and the UNESCO conference on cultural policies in Mexico (1982), to which Nigeria is a signatory, cultural activities shall be funded by a national endowment fund to which government, organizations and individuals shall contribute. This is a pointer to the fact that many people's opinions about government assistance to the arts are ill-formed, weakly held, and are therefore up for grabs. Given this, it is not surprising that the NEA has become a political football. However, the question provides the opportunity for the respondents to express their opinion on the issue. A very significant 96.8% (419 respondents) of the total number of respondents express their support for the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts, though some would still not be willing to contribute probably for other personal reasons when correlated with their responses to question 10. The remaining 3.2% of the total number of respondents (14 respondents) do not seem to support the scheme because they feel either it is a waste of money or it is a less essential service.

**Table 10:** *If financially capable, would you be willing to sponsor arts event or contribute to the National Endowment for the arts if established?*

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	63	14.5
Yes	370	85.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>100%</b>

If you ask most people if they believe that government should support the arts, they are likely to tell you that they do. If you ask them if they are willing to pay more taxes so that the government can spend more money on the arts (as opposed to healthcare, or child welfare), they may respond very differently. Given this, it is not surprising that people who approve of arts funding in principle do not necessarily want more of it, especially if more would raise their taxes. In response to the question, it was observed that many respondents did not feel at ease in answering the question, especially in ticking 'yes', considering the practical nature of the question. Perhaps, if not for the clause at the beginning of the question (if financially capable) the number of respondents that would have ticked 'yes' would have been lower than the present result. From the table above, 85.5% of the total number of respondents, amounting to 370 respondents, indicates their willingness to sponsor arts events or contribute to the National Endowment for Arts, if established and if financially capable. The remaining 14.5% of the total number of respondents (63 respondents) stand for a contrary position. The next question provides them the opportunity to give reasons for their responses.

**Table 11:** *If 'No' why would you not be willing to support the arts or think the arts should not be supported?*

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Waste of money	9	2.1
Less essential service	30	6.9
Against my religion	13	3.0
Can survive without public support	8	1.8
None at all	373	86.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>100%</b>

In response to question 11 and from the table above, 2.1% of the total number of respondents (9 respondents) are of the opinion that supporting the arts is a waste of money, 6.9% of the total number of respondents (30 respondents) view the arts as a less essential service; 3.0% of the total number of respondents (13 respondents) claim that supporting the arts is against their religion while 1.8% of the total number of respondents (8 respondents) express the view that the arts can survive without public support. The highest percentage of 86.1% of the total number of respondents (373 respondents) is recorded for those who do not have any reason for the arts not to be supported. It was gathered during the opinion poll survey that

those respondents who claim it is against their religion to support the arts had negative aspects of arts and culture in mind-perhaps the aspects considered to be against the Bible or Koran teaching. There are those who do not have any reason for not willing to sponsor arts events when correlated with their response to question 10. what this means is simply lack of adequate awareness of the potential roles of the arts and the need for its support.

**Table 12:** *Who do you think should dictate the cultural pace of the society?*

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Government	102	23.6
Artist	200	46.2
None	15	3.5
Both	116	26.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>100%</b>

The issue of who should dictate the cultural pace of the society has been of paramount interest to the public, especially the artists. This has generated a controversy between the government and the artists. The government wants to be in charge, even though, despite its benevolent intentions it does not know how to play the role of patron; the bureaucrats cannot help but commission mediocre work. The artists, too, continue to clamour for involvement in the administration of culture. The question serves as a decisive point for respondents. 23.6% of the total number of respondents (102 respondents) think that the government should be in control; while 46.2% % of the total number of respondents (200 respondents) are of the opinion that the cultural pace of the society should be dictated by the artists themselves. The question also gave respondents the freedom to tick more than one box and some actually ticked more than one box. 26.8% % of the total number of respondents (116 respondents) settled for both the government and the artists in dictating the cultural pace of the society; and the remaining 3.5% % of the total number of respondents (15 respondents) is recorded for those who ticked 'None'. The interesting thing is the diverse view of the artists on this issue. Some artists feel it is the sole responsibility of the government to dictate the cultural pace of the society; others are of the opinion that the artists alone should be in charge. While it is not objectionable that the artists should be fully involved in the administration of culture, it is also important to note that the role of the government in encouraging artistic expression such as through provision of subsidies cannot be completely ignored as one is to complement the other.

**Table 13:** *What is your overall assessment of public support for the arts in Nigeria?*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Satisfactory	46	10.6
Less satisfactory	387	89.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>100%</b>

A significant 89.4% of the total number of respondents (387 respondents) expresses their dissatisfaction with the present support for the arts, while 10.6% of the total number of respondents (46 respondents) is on the opposite side. This result is an indication of lack of public awareness on the need for cultural development through supporting the arts. Thus, the respondents' response to question 13, if carefully noted and acted upon, will be of immense benefit to cultural institutions, the artists, the government and the entire citizenry.

#### **Questions that Border on the Sub-hypotheses**

Question 1 borders on sub-hypothesis (i) which is on the low level of appreciation of or involvement in artistic events. 55% claimed their level of appreciation of or involvement in artistic events is to a very great extent and to a great extent; while the remaining 45% are those whose level is to a fair and less extent. It was further observed that the latter group of respondents are mostly civil servants and others. An overview of the respondents' answers to question 1 helps to confirm sub-hypothesis (i). It might also be interesting to note that some artists belong to the fair and less extent group.

Questions 2, 3 and 4 relate to sub-hypothesis (ii) which states that the arts are an integral aspect of development. A significant 96.5% think that the arts are beneficial to everyone like the health, education, social welfare, etc (question 2); 97.2% recognize the potential role of the arts such as in public education, contributing to the development of their community, having a substantial economic impact on local communities and as an important instrument for political and social change (question 3); and 96.3% have expressed their belief in the establishment of cultural institutions as a way of promoting the arts and culture of their community (question 4). The sub-hypothesis (ii) seems to have been confirmed from the responses of respondents in respect of these questions.

Question 7, 9, 10 and 11 bear on sub-hypothesis (iii). The hypothesis states that the survival of the arts depends on subsidy. A significant percentage (51%) are of the opinion that society can support the arts through contributions by individuals, private institutions support, and government support (question 7); although the highest percentage of 34.2% of the total number of respondents think it is the sole responsibility of the government to support the arts. Respondents' answers to question 9 also record a significant percentage of 96.8% expressing their support for the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA); and 85.5% have expressed their willingness to sponsor arts events or contribute to the National Endowment for the Arts if established and financially capable (question 10). It is therefore not surprising to note that 86.1% of the total number of respondents does not have any reason for the arts not to be supported (question 11). However, a few others gave one reason or the other. For instance, some claimed it is a less essential service, or a waste of money; others claimed it is against their religion or that the arts can survive without public support. Sub-hypothesis (iii) is thus conformed that the survival of the arts depends on subsidies from the government, individual contributions and private institutional support.

Question 8 borders on sub-hypothesis (iv) which states that both the artists and cultural institutions deserve to be supported. A significant 48.0% express this view to confirm the sub-hypothesis (iv). In other words, support should go to both individual artists and government-owned cultural institutions.

Question 12 bears on sub-hypothesis (v). The hypothesis states that the government and artists should dictate the cultural pace of the society. This sub-hypothesis has not been confirmed. Only 26.8% express their support for this view as against the significant 46.2% with the highest frequency of 200 respondents who think the artists should dictate the cultural pace of the society.

Question 13 relates to sub-hypothesis (vi) which centres on the respondents' overall assessment of public support for the arts in Nigeria. The hypothesis states that public support for the arts in Nigeria is poor. A significant 89.4% are dissatisfied with the present public support for the arts. The hypothesis is therefore confirmed.

### **Conclusion**

It is evident from the answers of respondents in respect of the various sub-hypothesis and other aspects (questions 5 and 6 in particular with a

significant 96.8% and 43.9% respectively) that the main hypothesis: public support for the arts is a necessity, is confirmed, and the null hypothesis: public support for the arts is not necessary, is not confirmed. The analysis of the opinion poll survey has further confirmed the fact that people have different views on the issue of public support for the arts.

The potential roles of the arts in the development of culture have also been acknowledged despite the low level of appreciation of or involvement in artistic events. Respondents have, however, indicated the readiness to support the arts if given the right atmosphere. This is to say that the arts are bound to flourish socially and economically in a more enabling democratic environment whereby culture is given its due recognition as the basis of all development.

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