

Nigerian Youths' Development and Self-Reliance Through Textile Design

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ABSTRACT

The Paper examines Textile Design in Nigeria as a panacea for youth and industrial development. The rising unemployment rate in Nigeria and its associated socio-economic vices have in recent times been one of the major problems both the federal and state governments are seeking their lasting solutions. The paper provides needed solutions by exploring skills acquisition in textile design which includes leather production, beads making, batik, tie and dye, fashion design as necessary tools for self-reliance. The paper exposes the numerous opportunities that can be harnessed by youths with the desired skills in textile design.

Keywords: Textile Design, Entrepreneurship, Unemployment, Development.

Introduction

Textile designers engage in the practice of drawing patterns or motifs which involves abstracts, geometric shapes, animate or inanimate objects on drawing sheet or cartage paper. The designers may also transfer the motifs directly onto the fabric as the case may be, that include tie-dye or batik and printing. The designers produce various designs as real wax, java and Africa print for their respective customers.

Textile design is an area of entrepreneurship that can create youth empowerment. According to Odia and Ochie 2013, textile design skills can be obtained through various avenues which include attending entrepreneurial training classes, development programmes, seminars, workshops, universities, polytechnics, job rotation, special training, apprenticeship, organisational learning, research and development institutions. Maigida *et al.*, 2013, states that competency of individual's entrepreneurial skills acquisition in technical vocational education and training (textile design) are tailored in a way that it will bring self-employment, employment generation and economic self-sufficiency to Nigerian youth.

Major areas in Textiles Design for Development

The textile design entrepreneurship skills acquisition is to improve productivity, raise income levels, in order to improve access to employment opportunities as it has been recognised throughout the world and Nigeria in particular (Bennell, 1999). This requires higher

skills as well as developments among workers in modern entrepreneurship to micro, small and medium entrepreneurship (SME). This skill development education encompasses textile design entrepreneurship skill such as dyeing as practiced in Kano and Abeokuta. Chinedu, 1998, explained that various colours produced from cassava roots, guinea husk, guava leaves to mention but a few are commonly used for dyeing fabric.

The dyeing skill techniques are as follows:

Tie and Dye: The designers use this method of dyeing to prevent the dye from reaching certain areas of the fabric being dyed. This was practiced by the Yoruba's to be known as 'adire' (Ada, 2010). This has been commercialized, used in various institutions, such as universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and numerous skill acquisition centres to eradicate youth unemployment.

The design in plate 1 is closely related to the tie and dye method. The designer creates the patterns by forming a folding pattern, twisting, pleating or sewing the fabric to be dyed. The fabric is then dipped in pot or dye-pit. Thereafter, the fabric is allowed to dry and the stitches are removed. So, beautiful and pleasant designs are formed on the fabric and the designers can repeat the process if desired with various colours.

Batik (Adire-Eleko): The designer designs the fabric by cutting his design into stencils using zinc, wood, or very thick rubber or carton. The

fabric to be dyed is stretched on a flat or smooth surface. The stencil is then placed on the fabric as desired, with the designer having accuracy in mind. Furthermore, the boiled starch mixed with alum is spread over the fabric with the aid of piece of wood or metal. The designer repeats the processes several time or until the desired areas of the fabric are covered. The starch is allowed to dry properly on the fabric, before it is dipped into the dye pit or pot. The resist substance (starch) is removed from hot water after dyeing with cold solutions. This will create fine designs on the fabric. Candle wax could be used to form the resist patterns, as it creates crackles on the fabric after the dyeing take place (Egbefo, 2017).

Printing Techniques on Fabrics: The printing method include making desired patterns or designs on a stamp. Thereafter, the fabric is spread on a wooden flat surface. The stamp is dipped into the pigment and pressed on the fabric. The repeat pattern is optional (Efe *et al.*, 2017).

On the other way screen printing can be used for decorating fabric. This includes enforcing printing paste through stretched mesh on a partial frame on the fabric surface. The pattern or design is exposed on the mesh by manual process or photo screen methods. The materials include the use of lacquer, sensitizer, as well as sodium-dichromate that were used to coat the mesh in the dark-room. It will be allowed to dry and it will be exposed for two or three minutes alongside with the motifs on the mesh, the mesh is washed with water, to allow the design on the mesh. The particular areas that resist printings has the blue lacquer, the areas that the ink will penetrate on the fabric will be opened. Therefore, it noted that, there are both positive and negative parts on the mesh, thereby ink of desired colour penetrate on the positive areas to the fabric.

Weaving: Weaving is the interlacing of warp and weft yarns to produce a fabric. Woven fabrics were used in Nigeria for different purposes such as festivals, worship purposes, dress fabric for fashion. Weaving of fabrics has created job opportunity for weavers.

Weaving can be further put into loom techniques and off loom production methods. The off loom consists of mat, hats and bags using raffia and man-made types. Examples of Nigerian indigenous weaving used for cultural purpose include; the Idoma, Nupe, Aso Oke for the Yoruba, Akwete, Okene and the Hausa respectively.

The materials needed for production are the loom with their accessories and yarns of various counts (Yusuf, 2014).

Embroidery: The embroidery of textiles in Nigeria commonly includes caps and garment decorations. The materials needed for this group of production are threads of assorted colour, needles and embroidery. Embroidery is generally practiced in most part of the world. In Nigeria, the three major tribes, the Hausas, Igbos and Yoruba generally practice it in their communities as craft. Embroidery work serve as decorative stitches in various styles which have influenced the social, cultural and economic value and lives of Nigerians (Maiwada, 2010).

Today, embroidery work is widely practised in various parts of the country. This trade has been recognised beyond local market as many people resell the products abroad. Embroidery works of people can serve as small scale industry for economic development in Nigeria.

Beads Work: Beads can be defined as small round or cylindrical wood, glass or plastic discs with holes through them for threading together. Beads can be used for cultural, environmental, social and aesthetics purposes. Africa societies have rich cultural art values of which beads are inclusive. For example, the Igbo-ukwu archaeological excavation dated 900 AD discovered various coloured beads tied to metal objects. The Benin's rich art tradition has coral beads in abundance, while the ancient Ife tradition produced glass beads (Gwari, 2010). Bida people also engage in bead production. Ilorin is known as home of stone bead culture. There are various types of beads that can be used for skill acquisition for entrepreneurship in Nigeria which are cowries, ostrich shells, stone beads and the popular Nigerian glass beads. Culturally, kings make use of beads in some parts of Nigeria. Traditionally, women wear beads round their waist to give prominence and protection to their waist/hips (Olugbamigbe, 2010).

Modern day designers use beads for the production of door and window blinds, flower vase, portraiture and wall hungers of various designs. For example, the Kogi state polytechnic, (KSP) textile unit produced the portraiture of the pioneer staff of Department of Industrial Design and the portraiture of the Head of Departments, various flower vases and blinds, wall hungers for aesthetic using beads.

Alesagba E. Igbekele et al., 2020: *Nigerian Youths' Development and Self-Reliance Through Textile Design Publishing House Abraka, Delta State.* 152-155.

Basketry: Basketry is the art of making different types of baskets from certain grasses, palm fronds and canes. Basketry raw materials are commonly available in Nigeria and there is hardly any ethnic group in the country that does not make basket. It is part of the local life of the people in buying and selling and mothers give it to their daughters as marriage gift (Chinedu, 1998).

Raffia palm, bamboo, split palm fronds are raw materials commonly used for making baskets. Common techniques used for basketry are: weaving, coiling and plaiting.

The most beautiful ones are the circular covers for food bowls. The coiled basketry method is used for making them, while the weaving method is used for fans, trays, caps and hats. The Urhobo, Ibibio and the Igbo of the south of Nigeria are very skilful in cane works. They make different types of cane baskets of which the outstanding ones are the hand basket carried to the market by women which are woven in different styles some of them are decorated with paints and dyes. Apart from the cane baskets, they also make beautiful cane chairs, stools, tables and shelves (Ogunduyile, 2008).

Conclusion

Textile design will empower Nigerian youths and promote them to be self-employed. This will create entrepreneurial ventures that will add to the growth of the national economy. The art will significantly provide direct and indirect jobs that will gainfully employ the time and energy of the unemployed. This will greatly reduce unemployment in Nigeria and the socio-economic vices associated with it.

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