

GLOBALIZING FASHION DESIGN AND CLOTHING TECHNOLOGY CURRICULUM FOR NATIONAL GROWTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

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Abstract

The paper examines globalization of technology education with particular reference to fashion design and clothing technology curriculum for national growth and productivity. Fashion and Clothing have become part of life existence and indispensable to national growth. Unfortunately, as an arm of knowledge its curriculum has not been given its widest scope to effect national growth. In Nigeria for instance, the curriculum is limited to polytechnic education with very few polytechnics and students offering the course. This results in the misconception that the course is all about dressmaking. The paper posits that fashion design and clothing technology is a dynamic profession that extent beyond mere sewing. It takes a firm global industrial position for national growth and productivity. It believes that globalizing its curriculum through the net with all its career opportunities connected, will sensitize people's interest for the course, enhance creativity for economic activities and consequently, national growth and productivity.

Introduction

Clothing has formed part of human existence as it is used daily for one purpose or the other protection, warmth, modesty, comfort, personal impression, etc. The arm of knowledge that deals with clothing is Fashion Design and Clothing Technology. Fashion Design and Clothing Technology is a dynamic course. It is one of the most lucrative, exciting and economically viable field in the world. Unfortunately, this course has not been given its widest scope as the curriculum is limited to only polytechnic education with very few Polytechnics and individuals offering the course, thus, relegating this economically dynamic course to the background.

The fashion industry today is very global in nature and its impact is all-pervading. Almost every country in the world depends on textile and apparel sectors as important contributors to their economy. Clothing products have been parts of international commerce for decades. The labels on our fashion design products resemble a good geographical course. People wear garments from countries that they may not be able to find on a map. Global production results from manufacturing operations in a number of different countries.

Fashion industry has long functioned in response to international events, such as the European fashion couture showings. The advances in communication and transportation systems have the world from a collection of fair independent national economics to a global economy. Globalization is a reality today. Companies and individuals can no longer think in terms of only a domestic market. Those who do will be left behind. Every system in the world is thriving for worldwide networking. Our educational system cannot be left behind. It is the bedrock of all economic activities, national growth and productivity.

This paper therefore examines globalizing the fashion design and clothing technology curriculum for national growth and productivity.

The paper discusses the following:

- Fashion
 - Design
 - The concept of fashion Design
 - Clothing
 - Fashion Design and Clothing Technology
 - Careers in Fashion Design and Clothing Technology
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- Globalizing the Fashion Design and Clothing Technology Curriculum for National Growth and Productivity
 - Recommendation
 - Conclusion

Fashion

Fashion may be defined as the prevailing or accepted style in dress or personal decoration established or adopted during a particular time or season. Fashion essentially involves change. Weber (1986), explains fashion not only as generally accepted style in clothing, but also hair and home decoration. Rouse (1989), perceives fashion, not mainly referring to clothing and styles of appearance, but that there

are “fashions” in other aspects of intellectual and social life, such as architecture, dancing, cookery, sociology, philosophy, etc. Fie concludes that the expectation of change which characterizes our approach to clothing styles pervades many aspects of our social and intellectual life. That fashion is part of the social world we inhabit; we constantly meet with reference to it; we are surrounded by shops which sell it; and we judge clothes by its standards.

Agins (1999), sees fashion as news and big business. Fashion as news: That for instance, international and British fashion, shows the styles young people wear, street fashion, the clothes of famous people are all given coverage on television, radio and in the press. Articles about fashion are featured regularly in most national and local newspapers, as well as constituting a major subject area of most magazines for women. He however observes that despite its profile in media, fashion is not generally regarded as a topic serious enough to appear on the real news pages. Fashion as big business: That the fashion industry is enormous: a network of designers, manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers who make fashionable clothes available and a network of public relations officers, journalists and advertising agencies who promote them. It is a global business. It has indeed become global in all aspects - design, production and distribution. In the process, it has made the whole world a collection of garment centres. No fashion really succeeds until it is generally accepted and adopted by people.

Design

The dictionary definition of design includes words and phrases, such as, plans, purpose, sketches, established form of a product, make preliminary picture/plans/sketches, etc. According to Barnett (1997), Design is all about having ideas and the ability to invent something new or make innovations.

The Concept of Fashion Design

Fashion design has to do with creativity and ability to develop ideas visually, using shapes, colours, textures to produce effective and workable new clothing styles.

Clothing

Clothing is a general term used for the things we wear or coverings designed to protect or adorn the human body, such as dresses, jackets, parts or trousers, etc. It may be made of woven manmade or natural fibre of animal skin, fur, or even the special type of paper, known as bark-cloth. According to Rouse (1989), clothing is an important factor in the assessment of attractiveness. That various studies have shown that the same individual, when in different outfits, is assessed quite differently and meets with different responses. That during the process of socialization, people learn to correct ways of dressing for various social situations and the inability to dress in the normal way can cause the individual to feel socially uncomfortable or ill at ease, even depressed and frustrated. And that loss of our clothing props may have important consequence for our sense of identity. In support of this, he relates the following story of a woman who went for a fashion show.

“One woman in her early thirty had persistently refused to enter any socializing activities and had even been unwilling to use her privilege for going out in the grounds. She finally admitted that she was ashamed of her appearance and said she never went to parties or dances, because she “looked so terrible”. After being fitted with proper foundation garments, she looked in a mirror and said, “My, I look so different”. At the fashion show she went on stage in her new dress, looking confident and happy.”.

This simply shows the relevance of clothing. New and pleasant clothes do boost morale and self-image. Clothing and physical appearance acts upon the individual. They contribute to establishing and maintaining identification with social roles, to the formation of a self-image and to a sense of self-esteem.

Fashion Design and Clothing Technology

Fashion Design and Clothing production must work together to produce the variety and quality of garments demanded by consumers. This cooperation is the basis of clothing technology and the successful marketing of garments. The clothing designer recommends appropriate clothing to the fashion designer. For instance, if the trend is toward a tailored or structured look, firm fabrications are required and whereas, soft, light fabrics are needed for a flowing or layered look. According to Dickson (2003), the clothing technology corporation has developed by scanning technology to help fashion manufacturers procure garments that are customized to fit the customer.

Fashion design and clothing technology as a profession covers all raw materials and processes involved in the production and marketing of clothing and fashion goods. The fashion design and clothing technology education is designed to help prepare students for a vocational or professional career which will gain them a livelihood and at the same time enable them perform a service to the society.

Careers in Fashion Design and Clothing Technology

The careers in fashion design and clothing technology are in the following areas:

Textile Technology

This has to do with all aspects of making fabric. Those who work in this area are called textile technologists. A textile technologist according to (Tortora 1992), performs various laboratory tests on fabrics, yarns, fibre and garments to determine colour fastness, washability, shrinkage. Analysis of fibre content, finishing properties, data compilation and preparation of reports on findings.

Fashion Illustration

This deals with the drawing of figures. A fashion illustrator is a specialist in the fashion industry who draws the human figure in a stylized manner. Weber (1986), notes that the figures are taller, with longer arms and legs, and have more elegant faces than real life figure drawings of people. Leddell (1981), states that fashion illustrators may work for advertising agencies, retail store manufacturers, textile and fibre houses, pattern companies, display houses and publications.

Clothing Pattern Making/Grading

Campbell (2003), defines pattern drafting as the drawing of patterns for clothing construction based on the measurement of a known figure. Vanderhoff, Frank, Campbell (1985), state that the responsibility of a pattern maker is to make necessary changes in a pattern and draw the master pattern for every garment. That every sample garment is examined by the pattern maker for fit and appearance before the final pattern is made. They explain further that a pattern grader must know how each change made in the pattern will affect the finished garment.

Fashion Designing

The people in this field are called fashion designers. The fashion designers are responsible for creating original designs or abstracting new variations from existing designs (Vanderhoff, et al (1985).

Fashion Accessories

Fashion accessories are the finishing touches we add to a simple outfit, which make it more colourful, classy and glamorous. They include hand bags, shoes, belts, hats, jewelries etc. Hazel

(2000), states that fashion accessories are playing an increasingly important part in today's fashion, that the actual accessory items to be seen with, vary from season to season.

Fashion Marketing and Merchandising

Riddle (2001), defines merchandising to include all the decisions that go into the selling of a product. These decisions include what to be sold, who it will be sold to, how it will be produced, packaged, and at what price it will be sold. He emphasizes that the largest area of employment in the world of clothing is in merchandising and this includes all the phases of buying and selling clothing and accessories.

Fashion Modeling

Those who work in this area are called fashion models. Models are used by designers to showcase new fashions. They make people know what is new in clothing and accessories and create a desire in them to buy it. Modeling is a very good way of promoting new fashions. Weber (1986), notes that there are two types of models: photography models and runway models. Photography models pose for advertisements, catalogues the fashion pages of newspapers and magazines while runway models wear clothes in fashion shows produced by designers or manufacturers. Some models however do both runway and photography work. Liddell (1981), notes that a model must be well groomed and appear good physically. That he or she must be able to wear garments for a certain size without altering them and in modeling, beauty is not as important as posture.

The Fashion Writer/Editor

A fashion writer is a journalist who specializes in writing basically fashion related columns for magazines and newspapers. Liddell (1981), reports that the fashion writer makes the intention of the manufacturer or designer about a fashion product or accessory known to the final consumers through detailed writing. Again, that a good writer must be able to accurately describe an item using few words. This is because consumers are interested in knowing as much as possible about the design and care of a garment before they can consider it. All jobs for fashion writers require a university degree.

The Fashion Coordination

People who work in this area are called fashion consultants and coordinators. A fashion consultant or coordinator is a person who has a good knowledge of the fashion business and is employed by a fashion company to give advice to, and oversee the people in the various sections of the company so that the organization works well as a whole. Dickerson (2003), stipulates that the main duty of a fashion coordinator is to promote new fashions and products, but the way this is done often varies. That he must be able to work tactfully with people, speak to a large audience, and schedule wisely.

Quality Control

People who work here and called quality control analysts. They ensure a specific level of quality is met regularly by clothing and accessory products. These specification requirements vary within products and manufacturers. Dickerson (2003), notes that, a quality control analyst in the fashion industry is an individual whose job is to examine garments (This includes fibre, texture, colour as well as sewing construction details) to see that certain product standard and specifications are met. That the person most check assembling operation, identify problems, and work with production staff and management to correct problems.

Globalizing Fashion Design and Clothing Technology Curriculum for National Growth and Productivity.

Globalization is a reality today. It is a fact of life for today's fashion industry. According to Dickerson (2003), it has become such a basic aspect of fashion and clothing industry that global activities take place in virtually every segment of the fashion industry, ranging from the textile, apparel and retail industries to the consumers. The time has arrived when consumers just anywhere in the world can order products from companies or another country. The internet permits both clothing

firms and retailers to sell to consumers anywhere in the world they can log on. For instance, garment specifications and other details can be sent online between countries.

Globalization helps in following fashion trends and being part of global activities or adjusts because of globalization effect. These means, fashion now travels more widely and quickly. Leading to other developments that contribute to a global economy and national growth. Almost every country in the world has developed at least a simple textile and apparel industry. Many nations and individuals build their dreams for a better life around textile/apparel products in the wealthier nations.

Seeing the effect of globalization in the fashion industry, the challenge remains that our educational system with regards to fashion Design and clothing technology curriculum has to be reinforced. Every individual student in Fashion Design and Clothing Technology requires the paraphernalia of his professional callings to perform optimally. The only plant form to do this is to standardize the education by globalizing the school curriculum for fashion design and clothing technology for national growth and productivity.

Recommendations

- (1) To globalize the Fashion Design and Clothing Technology curriculum, I recommend that the curriculum be prepared to function in a global or worldwide manner. The curriculum from other parts of the world should be consulted so as to be able to produce graduates that will be ready to face international challenges for economic growth and productivity.
- (2) The curriculum so produced should be on the net. There should be a worldwide web (www) fashion design page with the career opportunities all connected. This would help to popularize this lucrative arm of knowledge for national development and productivity.
- (3) Appropriate subjects should be built into the curriculum that will draw a correlation between fashion design and clothing technology and national growth and productivity.
- (4) The curriculum should include activities that will enhance networking skills and encouraging interpersonal contracts so as to further the professional, social and personal development of the students.
- (5) It should include performance objectives that require information regarding national and global trends that have an effect on the fashion industries, in order to expose the students to the fashion world.
- (6) Government should send the best fashion design students overseas for further studies in the same course and should be made to come back to Nigeria, giving a reprehensive report of his studies and be offered a lecturing job, to impact same to others.
- (7) The curriculum for this course should not be limited to National and Higher Diploma level only, but to Doctorate (PhD) level in the university so as to have a full blown professionalism in this course as do other courses.

Conclusion

This paper exerts that fashion and clothing are indispensable to human existence. That fashion design and clothing technology course is dynamic and economically viable. It emphasizes that all activities in the fashion industry have been globalize for national growth and productivity and our education cannot be left behind. The paper therefore concludes that fashion design and clothing technology curriculum must be globalize as it remains the bedrock of economic activities that is geared toward national growth and productivity.

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