

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH CREATIVITY IN FASHION DESIGN INSTITUTES IN SOUTH WEST NIGERIA

Foluso Peter Osuntayo

*Department of Fine and Applied Art,
Federal College of Education, Abeokuta,
Ogun State.*

Olowookere Peter Oladipo

*Department of Fine and Applied Art,
Federal College of Education, Abeokuta,
Ogun State.*

And

Odubiyi James Abiodun

*Department of Fine and Applied Art,
Federal College of Education, Abeokuta,
Ogun State.*

Abstract

Empowerment through creativity in fashion design institutes in South West Nigeria has the potential to change creativity delivery of the unemployed graduate. This paper is concerned with the high rate of unemployed graduate in our society. The role of creativity that will equip students for entrepreneurship and creativity driven environment. The world has become globalized and the future depends on comparative advantage and the use of local and western clothing materials available to create meaningful fashion outfit.

Keywords: Creativity, Skill acquisition, youth empowerment, economic development

Poverty and unemployment are some of the problems bedevilling the Nigerian society. The most affected groups are youth and graduates of our tertiary institution who believes that something worthwhile awaits them after graduating from their different institutions. The reason for this can be traced to global economic

meltdown which shut doors at white collar jobs. Insecurity is another reason for poverty and unemployment.

Ochiagba (1995) defined skill acquisition as the process of demonstrating the habit of achieves thinking or behaviour in a specific activity. He further stated that skill acquisition is seen as the ability to do or perform an activity that is related to some meaningful exercise, work or job. He maintained that for skill to be acquired, appropriate knowledge attitudes, habits of thought and qualities of character are learnt to enable the acquire development intellectual, emotional and moral character which prepares him/her for a brighter future.

Douli (2002) is of the view that skill acquisition is the manifestation of idea and knowledge through training which is geared towards instilling in individuals, the spirit of entrepreneurship needed for meaningful development. He stressed that if individuals are given the opportunity to acquire relevant skills needed for self-sustenance in the economy, it will promote their charisma in any work environment. He further maintains that skill acquisition increases competition and cooperation among people.

Accordingly, Magbagbeola (2004) posited that skills acquisition requires the accumulation of different skills that enhances the performance through the integration of both theoretical and practical forms of knowledge.

Acquisition of skills and youth empowerment is becoming the most viable and effective solution for economic problems faced by the country; whereby every youth empowered will be self-reliant and in some cases become employer of labour. Education enhances lives. It ends generational poverty and provides a sustainable foundation for nation's development.

Wiki encyclopaedia (2006) defines empowerment as not giving people power but letting out the power in them. If youth acquired useful skills and they are empowered to do more, the possibility for economic growth becomes apparent.

Youth empowerment according to Jimba (2006) involves the different ways the youths can be facilitated to cause positive change in their life style. He maintained that youth empowerment means a way of inculcating into the youth and spirit of transformation of ideas seen as means of exposing the youths into skills or something that makes them productive.

In line with the above view, Ogbe (1996) stated that wealth creation acquired through youth empowerment is expected to reverse the structional weakness in the economy by providing strategic focus and direction and inculcating in the youths the right ethics, discipline, values, hard work, honesty, respect and humility among others.

Fashion School Trends in Nigeria

According to Nchonwa (1981); Fashion like many other aspect of life is never static but keeps moving round and round. Incorporating some ideas discarding others

and even resurrecting old ones. After years of patronizing imported clothes, people of the south western state have come to recognize the dignity in traditional clothes being used design contemporary clothes. According to Uduma (2007) Mrs.FolorunshoAlakija former president of fashion Designers Association of Nigeria (FADAN) could be referred to as the mother of contemporary Nigerian fashion who has exhibited her works in New York in the Black Expo Exhibition using ethnic fabrics to make western styles as far back as 1993. Since then fashion industry in south Western state as continue to evolve. Before people were contended with *irobuba, sokoto and agbada, dansiki,blouse and two wrapper* and since tradition styles does not change much their creativity was not much. But after her exposure and experience her activities has helped a lot of people to becoming a fashion designers and partaking in the fashion industry faired over these years.

Fashion School Trends in South West Nigeria

Wikipedia (2009) noted that Designers have come up with a solution because people could not find it easier tying and retying the wrappers. They have brought in new ideas to make the African clothes more functional for everyday wear by eliminating the wrapper and coming up with variety of long skirts which skill gives the impression of wrapper especially for women and men. Varieties of fabrics have been used for men's wear.Adejobi (2004) stated that, the fashion industry has been revolutionized completely with unimaginable styles using Ankara. Batik or the Traditional, a Adire, Guinea brocade, Ivorian wooding, lace and any other materials one can think of to make long flowing gypsy skirts, bias skirts, fill to Bohemian skirt, bustier blouse, body hugging camisoles which were combined with various fabrics. According to Uduma (2007) Nigeria fashion through the years mentioned Olu Jimi King of Jimi King Couture who has made his name America as an African designer. He started making contemporary styles of Jackets, waist coat, modified Buba and Sokoto to suit international markets. As an artist he has translated his rich African heritage into worldly accepted fashion. His fabrics are hand dyed and printed using ancient traditional Yoruba techniques. His show rooms are in Atlanta Georgia and Ogunlana drive, Surulere, Lagos. UdakUmondak of colours label, designs unusual and electrifying outfit especially for the rich, she uses exotic silk threads especially to make Aso-Oke, Shauntung silk for her Boubou and very expensive laces for her blouses and finds African fabrics and styles more exciting. Also labanella owned by Princess Abba Folowuyo. She makes free flowing gowns and caters for the elderly and middle aged women. She uses Brocade, print cotton, silk and tries to combine them to suit her clients. Adewale (2006) explain that DavidaOkpara is the lady behind Davida skirts whose latest collections are filled with Victoria era details like frills and draw strings along the empire lines wrap – around sash, notched collars and double tribe darts with felinity with emphasis on the front, breath taking details like triangular cuts, contrasting button holes, stitching slimmer button, cuffs with flounces,

flamenco frills and ties. Ade Bakare was also mentioned as the owner of Ade Bakare Couture runs a male line that caters for that casual and occasional look of discerning styles and class. He works with silk Dupian, Geogette, Chiffons, Duchess satin and laces. Other lines include shoes bags, jewellery and scarves.

Haute couture: The type of fashion design which predominated until the 1950s was “made – to – measure” or haute couture. (French for high – fashion). The term made – to – measure may be used for any garment that is created for a specific client. Haute couture, however, is a protected term which can only be officially used by companies that meet certain well defined standards set by the Chamber Syndic ale de la Couture. Nonetheless, many ready – to – wear, and even mass market labels, claim to produce haute couture, when in fact, according to established standards, they do not. A couture garment is made to order for an individual customer, and is usually made from high – quality, expensive fabric, sewn with extreme attention to detail and finish, often using time – consuming, hand – executed techniques. Look and fit take priority over the cost of materials and the time it takes to make.

Ready – to – wear: Ready – to – wear clothes are a cross between haute couture and mass market. They are not made for individual customers, but great care is taken in the choice and cut of the fabric. Clothes are made in small quantities to guarantee exclusivity, so they are rather expensive. Ready – to – wear collections are usually presented by fashion houses each season during a period known as Fashion Week. This takes place on a city – wide basis and occurs twice per year.

Mass market: These days the fashion industry relies more on mass market sale. The mass market caters for a wide range of customers, producing ready – to – wear clothes in large quantities and standard sizes. Cheap materials, creatively used, produce affordable fashion. Mass market designers generally adapt the trends set by the famous in fashion. They often wait around a season to make sure a style is going to catch on before producing their own visions of the original look. In order to save money and time, they use cheaper fabrics and simpler production techniques which can easily be done by machine. The end product can therefore be sold much more cheaply.

Areas of Fashion Design in Fashion School

Ojo (2006) observed that many professional fashion designers start off by specializing in a particular area of fashion. The smaller and the more specific the market, the more likely a company is to get the right look and feel to their clothes. It is also easier to establish oneself in the fashion industry if a company is known for one type of product, rather than several products. Once a fashion company becomes established (that is, has regular buyers and is well – known by both the trade and the

public), it may decide to expand into a new area. If the firm has made a name for the clothes it already produces, this helps to sell the new line. It is usually safe for a company to expend into an area similar to the one it already known. For example, a designer of women's sportswear might expend into men's sportswear. The chart below show the areas in which many designers choose to specialize.

AREA	BRIEF	MARKET
Women's Day wear	Practical, comfortable, fashion	Haute couture, ready – to – wear, mass market
Women's Evening wear	Glamorous, sophisticated, apt for the occasion	Haute couture, ready – to – wear, mass market
Women's Lingerie	Glamorous, comfortable, washable	Haute couture, ready – to – wear, mass market
Women's Day wear	Casual, practical, comfortable	Tailoring, ready – to – wear, mass market
Men's Evening wear	Smart, elegant, Formal, apt for the occasion	Tailoring, ready – to – wear, mass market
Girl's wear	Pretty, colourful, practical, washable, inexpensive	Ready – to – wear, mass market
Teenage wear	Highly fashion – conscious, comfortable, inexpensive	Ready – to – wear, mass market
Sportswear	Comfortable, practical, well ventilated, washable	Ready – to – wear, mass market
Knitwear	Right weight and colour for the season	Ready – to – wear, mass market
Outerwear	Stylish, warm, right weight and colour for the season	Ready – to – wear, mass market
Bridal wear	Sumptuous, glamorous, classic	Haute couture, ready – to – wear, mass market
Accessories	Striking, fashionable	Haute couture, ready – to wear, mass market

Fashion Design Terms

A fashion designer conceives garment combinations of line, proportion, colour, and texture. Whilst sewing and pattern – making skills are beneficial, they are not a pre – requisite of successful fashion. Most fashion designers are formally trained or apprenticed.

A pattern maker (or pattern cutter) drafts the shapes and sizes of a garment's pieces; this may be done manually with paper and measuring tools or by using an AutoCAD computer software program. Another method is to drape fabric directly onto a dress form. The resulting pattern pieces can be constructed to produce the intended design of the garment and required size. Formal required size. Formal training is usually required for working as a pattern maker.

A **tailor** makes custom designed garments made to the client's measure; especially suits (coats and trousers, jacket and skirt, et cetera). Tailors usually undergo an apprenticeship or other formal training.

A **textile designer** designs fabric weaves and prints for clothes and furnishing. Most textile designers are formally trained as apprentices and in school.

A **stylist** co-ordinates the clothes, jewellery, and accessories used in fashion photography and catwalk presentations. A stylist may also work with an individual client to design a coordinated wardrobe of garments. Many styles are trained in fashion design. However, many are not and simply have a knack for pulling great looks together. They are also referred to as personal shoppers.

Ogunduyile (2004) observe that art has gone through many stages and a lot of techniques have been introduced to meet the demands of the individuals. In Nigeria, the production of textile has been noted as one of the oldest industries that catered for the fundamental need of the individuals in the aspect of clothing, protection and decoration. Although, the traditional craftsmen were not tutored in the rudimentary of European design principles, but with their creativity, dexterity, practice, they were able to take conscious artistic decisions.

Textile in Nigerian Community is seen as a dynamic social activities and the end products are often unique, beautiful and of high quality. Though the textile craftsmen understand the process of fabrics production that is: planting, Harvesting, collection of fabrics, ginning, carding, spinning, and weaving; he also know the technology of preparing dyes and bonding them together with the minerals in such a way that they do not damage.

Akinrujoku (2002) notes that: the traditional woven textile as made it possible for high chiefs in the community to be recognized in their prestigious local woven fabrics. Various traditional festivals, traditional society and their ritual enhance.

Ogunduyile (2001) points out the traditional textiles wear has been an age long practice in Nigeria and these existed in every part of the country as far back as the 10th century, which have the use of looms (vertical and horizontal). For any wear to achieve its aims and objectives there must be a good serviceable loom with adequate space and sufficient yarns, where the weaver uses technical – know – how to consider the length and width of the weaver, number of colours to be the weaving fabric, the threading order and the lifting plan.

Horizontal looms are narrow band loom with heddles and treadles known as Sudanese loom with a wide distribution in West Africa. There are variations in horizontal looms which includes, heddles beaters, pulley and foot loops. Horizontal looms re used by men, while vertical looms are used by women. Verticals looms are fixed with frame, a heddle stick and no treadle, but the origin of the technology is not clear, some authorities suggested that it came from Congo Basin, Syria and Palestine areas. The loom is of less sophistication in technology than the horizontal loom, though there are variations in structural details. The production of such loom varies

according to geographical locations but the method has the same basic apparatus. The weaver makes use of horizontal narrow loom for *Aso – Oke* with its end product used for *Agbada, Gbarye, Dansiki, Kembe, Akwete, Onigoriga, etc.*

Ochiagba (1995) defined skill acquisition as the process of demonstrating the habit of achieves thinking or behaviour in a specific activity. He further stated that skill acquisition is seen as the ability to do or perform an activity that is related to some meaningful exercise, work or job. He maintained that for skill to be acquired, appropriate knowledge attitudes, habits of thought and qualities of character are learnt to enable the acquire development intellectual, emotional and moral character which prepares him/her for a brighter future.

Accordingly, Magbagbeola (2004) posited that skills acquisition requires the accumulation of different skills that enhances the performance through the integration of both theoretical and practical forms of knowledge. Douli (2002) is of the view that skill acquisition is the manifestation of idea and knowledge through training which is geared towards instilling in individuals, the spirit of entrepreneurship needed for meaningful development. He stressed that if individuals are given the opportunity to acquire relevant skills needed for self-sustenance in the economy, it will promote their charisma in any work environment. He further maintains that skill acquisition increases competition and cooperation among people.

Youth Empowerment

Jimba (2006) involves the different ways the youths can be facilitated to cause positive change in their life style. He maintained that youth empowerment means a way of inculcating into the youth and spirit of transformation of ideas seen as means of exposing the youths into skills or something that makes them productive. It encompasses different ways youth can be exposed into different trades that may make them to engage in sustainable paid and self – employment.

The purpose of skill acquisition programme as means of youth empowerment according to Ogundolowo (1998) is to prepare and equip the youths with appropriate skills that can be beneficial to them in future. He maintained that the ideal skill acquired is capable of ensuring the value re – orientation among the youth and transforming them into creator of wealth and employment instead of job seekers. Basically, the creation of wealth and employment will lead to poverty reduction and increase of welfare status of an individual in the country. In line with the above view Ogbe (1996) stated that wealth creation acquired through youth empowerment is expected to reverse the structural weakness and imbalance in the economy by providing strategy focus and direction and inculcating in the youth the right ethics, discipline, values, hard work, honesty, respect and humility among others. To meet up with these challenges facing the youths, different skill acquisition programme were initiated and put in place by federal and state government throughout the country is still in them the habit of acting through repetition and practice.

There are Three-Skills Approach to Vocational Education Development with Analysis of Interventionist Agencies: This approach based not on what good vocational are (their innate traits and characteristics) but rather on what they do (the kind of skills), which they exhibit in their strategic management approach towards vocational development. A skill implies an ability which can be developed, not necessary inborn, and which is manifested in performance, not merely in potential. “so the principal criterion of skilfulness must be effective action under varying condition” (Wehrich and Koontz (2005) the approach suggest that effective vocational development in Nigeria rest on three basic development skill which obviate the need for identifying specific traits and which may provide a useful way of looking at and understanding the vocational process. There has been a long-held that successive entrepreneur’s pose innate trait that drives their behaviour (Amaechi, 2007, Kassicieh, Padosevich and Banbury 1997). However, no one has ever been able to identify even a single innate characteristic that found across the entire population of successful vocational. A compelling literature has emerged that that suggests that vocational are made rather than born (Fiet 2002).

Instead of focusing on descriptive characteristic of vocational, which can be misleading or unhelpful when it comes to vocational development, attention should paid to their level of skills and how they can advance that level. Skill can be cultivated or developed (Lichtenstei and Lyons 1996, Fiet 2002). In this section, an attempt has been made to define and demonstrate what these three skills are, namely: Conceptual skill, Human skill, Technical skill, which an analysis of government interventionist agencies established to encourage entrepreneurial development in Nigeria. It is assumed avocational is one who directs achieving certain objectives through these government efforts. Within this definition, successful vocational development appears to rest on these three basic skills. It would be unrealistic to assert that these skills are not interrelated: yet there may be real merit in examining each one separately, and assess the extent of government interventionist agencies had on entrepreneurial development in Nigeria.

Conceptual Skill

Conceptual skill involves the ability to see the enterprise as a whole. It include recognizing how the various function of the organization in Nigeria depend on one another and how, changes in anyone part affect all the others and it extent to visualizing the relationship of the individual business to the industry, the community, and the political, social and economic forces of the nation as a whole, recognizing this relationship and perceiving the significant element in any situation. The vocational should then be able to act in a way which advances the over-all welfare of the total organization. Hence the success of the strategic decision-making, depend on the conceptual skill of the vocational who makes the decision and those who put it in action. When for example an important change in making policy is made: it is critical

that the effects on the production, control, finance, research, and the people involve be considered. And it remains he knew policy is successfully implemented.

Consequently, the changes for succeeding are greatly increased, the policy makers aware of this were able to initiate developmental policies and established interventionist agencies to ensure vocational development in Nigeria (Imaga 2004). Not only does the effective coordination of the various parts of the business depends; on the conceptual skill of the vocational involved, but so does the whole future direction and tone of the organization. The attitude of the vocational colours the whole character of the organization's response and determines the "corporate personality, which distinguishes one company's way of doing business from another's. These attitudes are reflection of the entrepreneurs' conceptual skill (referred to by some as his "creative ability")

Human Skill

Human skill is the vocational ability to work effectively as group member and develop cooperative effort within the terms he leads. As technical Skill is primarily concern with "things" (processes or physical objects), so human skill is primarily concern with working with people. This skill is demonstrated in a way the individual perceives and recognizes the perception of others (people).

The vocational with high developed human skill is aware of his own assumptions, and belief about other individuals and group, he is able to see the usefulness and limitation of these feelings. "By accepting the existence of viewpoints, perception and beliefs which are different from his own, he skilled in understanding what others really mean by their words and belief and behaviour (Wehrich et al 2005). Because human skill is so vital a part of strategic management of an enterprise, the vocational must develop his own skill, rather than learn on advice of others. This will enable him to recognize the feeling and sentiment which he bring to a situation, have an attitude about his own experience which will enable him to re-evaluate and learn from them, develop the ability in understanding what other by their actions and words (explicit and implicit) are trying to communicate with him, develop the ability in successful communicating his idea to others to effectively actualize the development of human skill potentials in our youth and government made and sustain effort directed at inculcating the spirit of vocational in young people and introduce EDP into the curriculum of higher educational institutions in Nigeria.

Technical Skill

Technical skills implies an understanding of, and proficiency in, a specific kind of vocational activity, particularly one involving methods, processes, procedures, or techniques. Technical skill involves specialized knowledge and technical ability within that specialty, and facility in the use of the tools and techniques of the specific discipline of the three skills described in this paper, technical skill is perhaps the most

familiar because it is the most concrete, and because in our age of specialization, it is the skill required of the greatest number of entrepreneurs. Most of our vocational and on-the-job training programs are largely concern with developing this specialized technical skill. This led Federal Government to establish various interventionist agencies to improve the vocational skill of the Nigerian youths towards solving the growing unemployment problem of the economy.

Types of an Empowerment

The various youth empowerment programme can be classified into four main types' namely economic empowerment, productive empowerment, marketing empowerment and skill acquisition empowerment.

- **Economic empowerment**

Economic empowerment, according to Ogbe is the way of motivating individuals in the society to be productive and self-dependent by inculcating into the individual's entrepreneurship skills as personal business initiatives and basic skills in business development. In fact, the best foundation for any business success is to have several possibilities for creating profits. However, point creation is determined by the choice of the business, self-concept interest resources, and aspirations which in turn would enable the person to achieve self-development, self-actualization and self-fulfilment.

- **Production empowerment**

Production empowerment, according to Idachab (2006) is a basic focus of entrepreneurship initiatives. It is determine by what the person trained wants to produce, how to produce and to whom those goods are produced. Personal trait and initiative will instinct in the person on what to produce which depends on the resource available. How to the goods depends on the factors of production available to him. Finally to whom such goods are to produced depends on the market. Knowledge of the factors of production which determined how the goods are to be produced and to who they are to be produced can be imbibe mostly through training and marketing strategies.

- **Marketing empowerment**

Marketing of goods and services produced in any economic according to Magbagbeola (2004) is one of the crucial attribute of a businessman. This is because it create in a businessmen or women the ability to convince a customer that what have been producing is the best. Acquisition of adequate marketing skill through training enables the entrepreneurs to market their product easily. Usually, different marketing strategies are learnt and are applied to convince the customers of the need to purchase the products. The marketing strategies include effective communication self-confidence and self-esteem.

- **Skill development empowerment**

Skills are acquired as ability for individual or group of individuals to acquire more skills for the resolution of a particular status. Youth empowerment as an act of skill development therefore signifies different creative measure of developing basic ideas through training in skills that are relevant to the social and economic survival of the nation (Ochiagha 1995). The above empowerment strategies are expected to imbibe in the youths the spirit of craftsmanship and entrepreneurship which makes them job creators instead of job seekers. However, most youths in the country fall short of this empowerment either because they fail to participate in the youth empowerment schemes or because of the flaws in the implementation of the empowerment schemes which may include the followings:

- **Location of skill acquisition workshop:**

Most of the skill acquisition workshops are located in the major cities of the country which may be far from the house of abode of most unemployed youths. This means that most of them who are not residence of that environment or location are expected to rent rooms to live alone. Living alone and living far away from homes may constitute a lot of problems for the youths and the scheme all over the country.

- **Problems of instructors:**

Lack of trained and competent instructors to handle the workshops is another problem that might constitute a lot of threat to the smooth running of the scheme. According to Ogundowolo (1988) most instructors recruited for the scheme are neither experienced nor well trained to handle the scheme.

Consequently, most of them cannot competently handle the programme.

- **Lack of money to start – up – kits:**

Lack of money according to Ozoga (1985) is one of the major problems confronting the youths in the scheme. This is because most of the youths may lack pocket money and that reduce their interests in the scheme. Also provision of money and start – up – kits for take – off among the graduating apprentices might be problematic to many homes and that may militate against the youths joining the scheme.

- **Interest of the youths:**

One thing about a project is who and who is interested and who will benefit what? To be able to ascertain who among youths is interested in the scheme, actual census of the youth who are interested unemployed and who are interested in the scheme is expected to be conducted annually to make sure that the benefiting youths are discriminated against in the recruitment of participants.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made in order to address the problems and reposition the entrepreneurial skills acquisition in fashion design in the study areas:

1. Employment of more resource personnel into the fashion schools especially government owned fashion schools;
2. Public awareness and enlightenment on the recent creativity in fashion schools to encourage more youth and public patronage;
3. provision of essential fashion design facilities into the fashion schools to equip the students and to be able to compete at international level;
4. government should provide alternative cheaper source of power to the schools in the study areas;
5. alternative sources of power supply should be made available by the Donors, NGOs and all stake holderto overcome the problem of epileptic power supply in the study areas;
6. More funds should be allocated to the fashion schools going by the importance of clothing in human life.

Acknowledgement

It is in view of the objectives of Federal College of Education, Abeokuta that the research team sought and obtained the approval of the Institution to undertake research survey and give report of the assessment contributions constraints and recommendations to empower creativity tendencies in Fashion Design Institute in South West Nigeria. To improve and maintain cultural dress code. To undertake this Research Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) assistance was sought through the Institution which was granted in April 2017 hence, with the TETFUND support and together with the research team and CEO, HOD of the Fashion Institutes to undertake the exercise whose findings & recommendations are contained in this report. It is our sincere hope that the Institution will find the report useful in designing and implementing programme on empowerment through creativity in tackling unemployment in South West Nigeria, and the Nation at large.



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