
Perception of Undergraduate Graphic Design Students on the Adequacy of Training for Self Employment in South-Western Nigeria

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Abstract

Graduates from Nigerian art schools still seek for paid employment from either the government or private organizations. The training received from these institutions of learning should be sufficient enough for a take off in various careers especially in the current dearth of paid employment. This study was designed to determine the perception of students towards the adequacy of the training received for self employment in the area of graphic design. Ninety-three final year undergraduate graphic design students were randomly selected from five purposively selected Nigeria Universities in South Western Nigeria and used for the study. Copies of structure validated and pretested questionnaire were used to collect data from the respondents. The results showed that most of the students anticipated for self employment in graphic design. Only a third agreed that the training provided was good and useful. However, they had unfavorable dispositions to the practical aspect of computer graphic training provided. Identified constraints towards self employment in graphic design by the students include: lack of adequate equipments and facilities for effective practical teaching and learning.

Graphic Design, as a major component of industrial art, is a professional discipline that continues to attract attention of a substantial number of visual communicators with a view to using various techniques in turning verbal graphic language into ideas that help sell the merchandise we buy and publication we read. Commenting on the current trend in graphic design practice as a profession, Poggenpoh (1993), Arnston (1993) and Baggett (1989) noted that it involves a lot of artistic intricacies such as, accuracy, creativity and originality. Therefore, the process of integrating the various communication tools such as text, typography and illustrations for the production of visual message with the use of intuition and other relevant design

tools point to the need for adequate exposure to the use of varieties techniques and tools for effective professionalism.

According to Ajakaiye (1986), activities in graphic design involve developing cognitive skills, aesthetic and craft. She noted that over the past decade ever before art schools existed, these activities were generally based on traditional approach while its education developed spontaneously at the first phase of its professional development. However, a lot of developments have taken place since this assertion. Before the attainment of Nigeria's independence in 1960, formal training in graphic design was initially based on apprenticeship. This later developed into a full programme of study at various tertiary institutions in Nigeria

The important role graphic design plays in the development of the socio-economic, political and communication status of many nations makes it imperative for adequate attention to be given to the various factors and issues that are directly or indirectly linked with a sustainable increase in graphic products and consequently, for the enhancement of the industrialization of the nation. Indeed, graphic design as a profession has been noted as a major source for self employment in Nigeria (Haruna, 1986). In spite of this, Nigeria consistently experiences unemployment among high and middle level manpower which calls for vocational focused curriculum for higher educational training.

Nkuma (1997) defined vocational careers as "all the planned learning experiences designed to equip the learner with all the necessary skills, attitudes. Knowledge and understanding required for entrance into, and maintenance of job in the vast range of vocational occupations." These occupations include self-employment in graphic design which could be seen as a solution to the widespread unemployment among graduates. Abdul and Mohazar (1996) noted that two types of pre-service training are available for two categories of entry points. These are: degree levels (at least a bachelor of fine and applied Arts or related field which is usual offered for five years by a university and secondly, the polytechnic, which award National/Higher diplomas to their students.

Despite the fact that these institutions train graphic design professional, both at middle and high levels, various authors and concerned scholars: Olaitan (1997), Nkuna (1997), Anyakoha (1994), Ikeoji (2004) have all lamented the loss of the battle being fought to get Nigerian youths adequately involved in vocational carrier such as graphic design studio practice. Adeboyeje and Akolo(1986) noted that the national objectives of art and design education are:

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1. to develop students according to their differing capabilities, so that by the time they leave school, each will be able to contribute to the national economy,
2. to train students so that they will enhance their self-employment capabilities after leaving school by creating more jobs for themselves and,
3. to train students to strive at economic independence at doing things themselves.
4. for the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community; and

It can therefore be deduced that the schools of graphic design should also reflect these stated objectives with the current prevailing critical unemployment situation in Nigeria. In achieving this, the adequacy or otherwise of the training given to the graphic design professionals should be brought into focus. Statement of the Problem Nigeria is currently experiencing widespread unemployment especially among high and middle level manpower. One of the proffered solutions is to encourage self-employment among graduates (Adegeye, 1991). Omololu (1990) revealed that graduates in self-employment have been able to provide direct and indirect employment opportunities for themselves as well as for others. Also these graduates possess a comparable socio-economic status with their counterparts in paid formal employment. There is therefore a need for re-orientation for art and design institutions of learning to tailor their training to produce graduates who will have proper perception of self-employment in graphic design and who will eventually be skilled professional graphic designers in practice in view of the dearth of white collar jobs.

For training to be effective, Akinboye (2002) stated that it should focus on needs which should include societal needs in particular. Olumola (2003) also stated that, unfortunately, all the educational institutions in Nigeria share one thing in common, which is “teaching and learning for white collar jobs”. Today, it is feared that between 15 and 20 million youths are still unemployed. Research showed that only 10 percent of about 1.11 million graduates (111,000) got formal employment between 1990 and 2000. There is need for a concise employment policy for these trying times. Basic education or training should aim at producing graduates who would be independent and self-employed. The general objective of the study is to determine the perception of students’ on the adequacy of the training towards self-employment in graphic design and the specific objectives comprise the following ensuring points:

1. Determination of selected personal characteristics of the students,
2. Assessment of students’ perception of self-employment in graphic design,
3. Determine students’ perception of the adequacy of training and training facilities for employment in graphic design practice and

4. Ascertaining students' perceived constraints to being self-employed in graphic design.

Methodology

The population for the study comprised Undergraduate graphic design students at their final year of study in schools of art and design selected from South Western Nigeria. This is because they have acquired a considerable amount of training and are about to be launched into the world of employment. The five selected Universities that offer graphic design as a major course of study in South Western Nigeria are:

- i. Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomomso, Oyo State.
- ii. Federal University of Technology, of Technology Akure , Ondo State
- iii. Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile- Ife, Osun State.
- iv. University of Lagos, Lagos, Lagos State.
- v. University of Benin, Benin City.

From all the universities in South Western Nigeria, only five were purposively selected. The selected universities are: Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomomso, Federal University of Technology, of Technology Akure, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile- Ife, University of Lagos, Lagos, University of Benin.

Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The total population of the final year students in the selected art and design schools was 93 as indicated below:

Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomomso	= 15 students
Federal University of Technology, of Technology Akure	= 37 students.
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile- Ife	= 11 students.
University of Lagos, Lagos	= 10 students.
University of Benin, Benin City	= 20 students
Total	= 93 students

Table 1: Final Sample Size Selection Procedure

Schools of Arts		Departments	Registered Students	Sample (60%)
Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomomso.	University	Fine & Applied Arts	15	21
Federal University of Technology, of Technology Akure .	University	Industrial Design	37	40
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile- Ife	University	Fine Arts	11	10

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University of Lagos, Lagos	Creative Arts	10	9
University of Benin, Benin City	Fine Arts	20	12
	Total	93	93

Source: Field survey 2010

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected through field survey using carefully developed structured and pre-tested questionnaire designed to elicit information on respondents' perception of self employment in graphic design, adequacy of training and their personal characteristics. The dependent variable for this study is self-employment in graphic design. This was measured by obtaining the student's perception of the construct. The respondents were asked to respond to 10 attitudinal statements concerning self-employment in graphic design by selecting only one of the following possible responses: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). These ratings were scored 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively for positively worded statements and vice versa for negatively worded statements. A range of scores 10 – 50 was obtained with 10 and 50 representing the minimum and highest total number of scores obtainable respectively by an individual. Individual perception was determined by the score obtained using the following intervals. Scores of 10 – 23 = Poor, 24 – 37 = Fair and 38 – 50 = Good.

The independent variables measured include: age, sex, marital status, parents' occupation, students' background in Art and Design before admission to the University, interest in self employment, and perception on adequacy of training, adequacy of facilities and severity of constraints.

Results and Discussion

Personal Characteristics of the Respondents

The personal characteristics of the respondents considered were age, sex, marital status, occupation of parents and art and design background.

Age

Age is an important demographic characteristic in this study. This is because self-employment in graphic design requires people of mature age groups and active. The results showed that 34.4% of the total respondents were between ages 20 and 24 years. Also, 58.3% had their age range between 25 and 29 years, while 7.3% were between ages 30 and 34 years. The mean age was 26.3 years. This showed that most of the respondents are in their prime age, which means that, if they could opt for self-employment at this early stage of life, they are likely to make a successful and

sustainable career. Also, this young age might be of immense advantage to self-employment in graphic design studio practice since contribution of new technology to industrial growth can only be realized when and if the new technology is widely diffused and used (Bronwyn & Beethika, 2003).

Sex

Graphic design studio practice has always been perceived to be more of male dominated enterprise. This may be as a result of the intensively and the running around nature of the work involved. Females generally are referred to as the weaker sex who may not be able to face this squarely. Gender affects the type and extent of women's involvement in graphic design studio practice (Saito & Spurling, 1992). For this study, 67.7% of the respondents were males and 32.3% females. The male dominance however, may be advantageous to self-employment in graphic design studio practice because males are able to cope with the drudgery and tedious nature of the work involved more than females.

Marital Status

While marital status of an individual may not influence an individual perception of self-employment in graphic design studio practice, it could influence commitment to it as a career. Generally, married people are believed to be more responsible and committed to their chosen careers than singles. In this study, only 20.8% of the total respondents were married, while 79.2% were single. This could be as a result of the male dominance obtained because it is known that men generally marry at later ages than women. It is hoped that a high level of devotion to the vacation might be expected from the unmarried students when they are married after graduation.

Occupation of Parents

Parents generally have a say in issues relating to their children's career and this could go a long way to influence them. Parents in non-art professions are likely to have less favourable attitude towards self-employment in graphic design studio practice because studies have shown that in most cases, families, parents and guardians in particular, play a significant role in the occupational aspirations and career goal development of their children (Otto, 2000). These non-art parents may discourage their children from making graphic design studio practice a career.

Results in Table 2 on Occupation of Parents revealed that 37.5% of the respondents had parents who were engaged in art-related jobs, while 62.5% had parents in non-art related jobs. This showed most of the respondents have parents that are in other sectors of the economy. Nevertheless, students that are determined and are highly interested in the career may still have favourable attitude to self employment in graphic design studio practice despite the high rate of parents in non-art related jobs.

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Students Art Background

Family background and experience help arouse interests in a chosen career. Formation in art and creativity may not be unconnected with previous exposure to art at home or at school.

Table 2 presents the background of the respondents in art and design. Almost half of the respondents (46.9%) had no background in art and design before admission, while 53.1% had a previous background in art and design. This may be a good motivating factor for taking up self-employment in art and design studio practice especially as most of them are not entirely new in the field.

Table 2: Personal Characteristics of the Respondents

Personal Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age:		
20 – 24	33	34.4
25 – 29	53	58.3
30 – 34	7	7.3
Total	93	100.0
Sex:		
Male	62	67.7
Female	31	32.3
Total	93	100.0
Marital Status:		
Married	20	20.8
Single	73	79.2
Total	93	100.0
Parents Occupation:		
Art and Design Related	33	37.5
Non-Art and Design Related	60	62.5
Total	93	100.0
Students Art and Design Background:		
No Art. Background	42	46.9
With Art. Background	51	53.1
Total	93	100.0

Interest in Self-Employment	Frequency	Percentage
Interested	91	97.9
Uninterested	2	2.1
Total	93	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2010

Interest in Self-Employment

A person's perception is formed from his attitude. Interests in a particular concept or phenomenon go a long way to dictate what a person's attitude towards the concept would be. The respondents were asked to indicate their interest in taking up self-employment after school. Majority (97.9%) signified their interest, while only 2.1% of the total respondents were not interested (Table 2). This showed the readiness of the respondents to take up self-employment after school. This may be as a result of the fact that over 70 percent of graduates from Nigerian universities and various tertiary institutions has difficulty in getting jobs (Akano, 2008).

Area of Interest within the Art and Design Career

Results in Table 3 reveals that majority of the respondents (66.7%) had preference for Computer graphics/ Digital photography. This is followed by Printing productions (29.3%) and various aspects of Advertising design concepts (10.3%). printmaking techniques production was the least preferred as indicated by only 9.2% of the respondents. This skewed result may be caused by various factors which may include the area of concentration in the training given to the students. The training therefore, should be channeled in such a way that other aspects of self-employment in graphic design are catered for.

Table 3: Responses on preferred Area of Interest for Self-Employment in Graphic Design

S/N	Major Areas of Interest	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Printing productions	9	9.3
2.	Advertising design concepts	8	8.3
3.	Illustrators	7	7.3
4.	Computer graphics/	64	66.7
5.	Digital photography	4	4.2
6.	Printmaking Techniques	4	4.2
	Total	96	100.0

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 Source: Field Survey 2010

Perception of Self-Employment in Graphic Design

Perception is known to influence attitudinal behavior. A favourable perception results in a favourable disposition towards a particular idea, concepts or phenomenon. Thus, the perception of students towards self-employment in graphic design was determined. The findings from this study, using the pooled scores showed that 15.6% had a poor perception, while 38.5% and 45.9% had a fair and good perception respectively (Table 4). The result revealed a favourable disposition to being self-employed in graphic design studio practice because only 15.6% had a poor perception about it. This invariably implies that the students do not mind taking up careers that might involve various skills in graphic design studio practice.

Table 4: Perception of Respondents towards Self-Employment in Graphic Design and Adequacy of Training (n = 96)

	Good		Fair		Poor	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Self Employment in graphic design	44	45.9	42	38.5	9	15.6
Adequacy of Training	29	30.2	51	53.1	13	16.7

Source Field Survey 2010

Perception on Adequacy of Training

A well organized training should produce desired changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes. If adequate, it should help to give the trainee the proper perception of the world of work. The results revealed that only 16.7% had poor perception of the adequacy of training received towards self-employment in graphic design. More than half (53.1%) considered it to be fair, while 30.2% perceived the training to be good . In general, the results showed that although there is a fair disposition to self-employment, there is still room for improvement. The training should therefore be reviewed and further enhanced to turn out graduates that will have a good disposition on the adequacy of training towards self-employment in graphic design.

Adequacy of Facilities

Facilities provided for institutions of learning are intended to give a suitable environment for students to learn and be adequately trained. All the facilities that will enhance the teaching-learning process should be provided during the training period. They are needed to prepare the students for easy learning and arouse their interest in

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self-employment in graphic design. The respondents were requested to give their opinion on the adequacy of the facilities provided. Specifically, the respondents perceived the following facilities as adequate: number of teaching staff (64.4%), teaching staff performance (81.2%), course content (82.3%), library services (60.4%), and teaching facilities (61.5%) and to some extent computer graphics inputs (52.1%) (Table 5).

Table 5: Rating of the Facilities by the Respondents (n = 96)

Facilities	Adequate		Undecided		Inadequate	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Number of teaching staff	55	60.4	6	5.2	33	34.4
Teaching staff performance	75	81.2	6	6.3	12	12.5
Materials/ equipment for practical	40	43.8	6	7.3	47	48.9
Course content	76	82.3	5	5.2	9	12.5
Library services	55	60.4	9	9.4	29	30.2
Teaching facilities	56	61.5	5	5.2	32	33.3

Source: Field Survey 2010

However, most of the respondents (82.3%) perceived computer graphics facilities inadequate. Similarly, about half perceived teaching materials for practical demonstration (48.9%), Space and equipment (46.9%), studio facilities (47.9%) as inadequate (Table 5). These results showed that only half of the listed facilities were rated as adequate, while half were also rated inadequate. The importance of these listed facilities cannot be over emphasized in teaching-learning process. Therefore, these basic facilities are highly essential and should be put in place to enhance teaching-learning process, which in turn, is likely to arouse their interest in self-employment in graphic design in these institutions.

Perceived Constrains

A constraint is known to be everything that limits or restricts. Determining the perceived constraints of the respondents in these Arts schools can help to eliminate or reduce all limitations to being self-employed in graphic design. The respondents were asked to indicate whether a situation could be regarded as a mild, severe or not a constraint. Those regarded as mild constraints were inadequacy of training (64.6%), risks and uncertainties involved in the course (60.4%), drudgery in graphic design (58.3%), instability of electricity supply (50.0%), unavailability of design materials (46.9%) instability of government policy (44.8%), high cost of design equipments and societal value (42.7%), natural hazards (42.7%) lack of capital or fund (40.6%).

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Those regarded as severe constraints by the respondents were high cost of design equipments such as; electronic tools to compliment the conventional approaches (56.3%), unavailability of design materials (47.9), poor electricity status (40.7%) and instability of government policy (41.7%).(Table 6). If these severe or mild constraints are not removed or minimized, it may prevent students from being self-employed in graphic design practice. Therefore measures should be put in place to minimize and eradicate the constraints altogether.

Perception could be affected by various emotional situations, and prevalent circumstances of the perceivers (the respondents). In this study, PPMC was used to determine the relationship between adequacy of training received, and perception of self employment in graphic design. The result was significant ($r = 0.53, p = 0.001$), indicating that if the training given to students is improved; their perception of self-employment in graphic design will be enhanced. However, the relationship between facilities provided and perception of self-employment in graphic design was not significant ($r = 0.1710, p = 0.0958$). Hence the facilities in place have no significant effect on perception of self-employment in graphic design. Also, constraints did not significantly affect perception in self-employment in graphic design although negatively correlated ($r = -0.00002, p = 0.998$).

Table 6: Rating of the Constraints by the Respondents (n = 96)

S/N	Facilities	Adequate		Undecided		Inadequate	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Inadequacy of training	3	3.1	62	64.6	31	32.3
2.	Lack of capital/fund	24	25.0	39	40.6	33	34.4
3.	Risks and uncertainties	19	19.8	58	60.4	16	16.7
4.	Poor patronage Status	21	21.9	34	35.4	39	40.6
5.	Drudgery in graphic design	19	19.8	56	58.3	20	20.8
6.	High cost of design equipments	15	15.6	41	42.7	38	39.6
7.	Instability of government policy	10	10.5	43	44.8	40	41.7

Source: Field Survey 2010

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that students at the undergraduate level have a good perception of self-employment in graphic design and a fair perception on the adequacy of the training given to them towards self-employment in graphic design. Also, adequacy of training has a significant relationship with perception of self-employment in graphic design. From the above conclusion, the

following recommendations are made to improve the possibility of taking up self-employment in graphic design among graduates of art and design of tertiary institutions.

Since self-employment is significantly affected by the adequacy of training, this could be intensified to better prepare the students for self-employment in various areas of graphic design. Also the training given to the students should also focus on all possible areas of self-employment in graphic design studio practice and not only the theoretical aspects of graphic design.

Finally, the Federal Government of Nigeria should maintain stable vocational policy and improve the facilities provided for the various Schools of art and design at tertiary level to facilitate the teaching-learning process.

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