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**FASHION DESIGNING SKILLS' ACQUISITION AND EMPLOYABILITY OF  
SOCIAL STUDIES GRADUATES IN LABOUR MARKETS IN CALABAR  
EDUCATION ZONE OF CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA**

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**Keywords:** Fashion designing skills acquisition, Employability, Social Studies  
graduates, Labour market, Students.

**Abstract:**

This main essence of the study was to examine the influence of fashion designing skills acquisition on employability of Social Studies graduates in labour market in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. One specific purpose of the study and one null hypothesis was used in the study. Literature was reviewed based on the variable under study. The survey research design was adopted for the study. A sample of 133 students was used for the study. An instrument named "Fashion designing skills' acquisition and employability of Social Studies graduates in labour market Questionnaire was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was determined using split half reliability method at .75. Data collected were analyzed using One way Analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings from the results revealed that the outcomes of this study showed that fashion designing skill acquisition do significantly influence employability of social studies graduates in labour market. It was recommended based on the analysis of the study that graduates of these skill acquisition programmes should be provided with more credits facilities/grants to facilitate the establishment of business and self employment.

## **Introduction:**

Over the years, several factors may be blamed for the prevalence of youths unemployment in Nigeria. There is a high population growth rate 3.5 percent per annum which accompanies an already large national population of over 167 million people. In addition, deficient school curricula and poor teacher training have contributed to the failure of educational institutions to provide their students the appropriate skills to make them employable. In addition to these supply factors, there is a lack of vibrant industries to absorb competent graduates. This obstacle was in part caused by an infrastructural deficit and a debilitating Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) implemented by Nigeria in the 1980s, which led to the closure of many industries and from which the country is yet to fully recover. It is also well-known that the youth unemployment situation has been aggravated by flawed and inconsistent public policies on employment.

The current government of President Muhamadu Buhari has initiated and established entrepreneurial programmes to boost employment which includes: include Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agencies (SMEDA), National Poverty Eradicate Programme (NAPEP), National Apprenticeship Scheme (NAS), Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YOUWIN), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution (GR), Peoples' Empowerment Programme Initiative (PEPI), Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P), the Osun State Youth Employment Scheme (O'YES), among others. One of the most successful schemes of the SURE-P is the Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS), which offers unemployed graduates the opportunity to undergo a one-year internship in Firms, Banks, Ministries, Government Departments and Agencies, as well as in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), such as catering, hairdressing, fashion designing, computer and farming skill acquisition relevant to beneficiaries' disciplines.

Fashion design is the art of applying design, aesthetics and natural beauty to clothing and its accessories. It is influenced by cultural and social attitudes, and has varied over time and place. Fashion designing has been identified as one of the major entrepreneurial skills acquisition among unemployed youths. Most skill acquisition programmes organized by the government and non governmental agencies includes sewing. It is an acquired skill which leaves with the individual unto ages and can generate income where applied into commercial use. Fashion designers work in a number of ways designing clothing and accessories such as brackets and necklaces.

Government and non-governmental agencies have equipped unemployed youths with the capacity to participate in entrepreneurial skills acquisition programmes to become self-employed. These programmes are meant to help Social Studies Graduates to acquire the appropriate skills and practical knowledge that will make them more suitable for the job market that will bring about youth self-employment and boost the economy of the country. The scheme also provides a series of employment opportunities for participants as caterers, hairdressers, fashion designers, computer operators/maintenance, farmers and other works and services.

Despite these policies and programmes put in place by government and non-governmental organizations, graduates unemployment remains a major challenge to the developmental process of the Nigerian economy. Graduate unemployment appears to be shooting up the sky as many Nigerians lack appropriate skills that will make them to be self-employed after graduation from schools. Based on this, this study sought to investigate if fashion designing

skills acquisition influence the employability of Social Studies graduates in labour market in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the study:**

The main purpose of the study was to examine fashion designing skills acquisition and employability of Social Studies graduates in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of hypothesis:**

The statement of hypothesis states that fashion designing skills' acquisition does not significantly influence self-employability of Social Studies graduates in labour market.

### **Literature review:**

Fashion design is the art of applying of design, aesthetics and beauty to clothing accessories. Fashion design is influenced by cultural and social attitudes and has varied over time and place. Fashion designing has been identified as one of the major entrepreneurial skills acquisition among unemployed youths. Most skill acquisition programmes organized by the government and non governmental agencies includes sewing. It is an acquired skill which leaves with the individual unto ages and can generate income where applied into commercial use. Fashion designers work in a number of ways designing clothing and accessories such as brackets and necklaces. Because of the time required to bring a garment into the market, designers must at times anticipate changes to consumer tastes (Olabisi, 2017). Acquisition of fashion design skills requires little or no level of formal education for an individual to be trained, or to influence his or her ability to understand and acquire the skills to become self-employed. Thus, Osaji (2015) further added that, learning to sew bridges the gap between the literate and illiterate in terms of qualification to be trained.

Nsifon (2014) conducted a study in Eket local government area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria to examine poverty alleviation strategies. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. A sample of 150 subject were randomly selected through the simple random sampling technique for the study. Questionnaire was the only instrument used for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. The result shows that sewing was one of the identified programmes to be embarked upon. Policy planners involved in the programme planning identified it as a major form of human development. Nsifon (2014) further argued that it is less capital intensive in terms of facilities needed for the training and thus increase participation of unemployed youths.

Osuala (2015) carried out a study on fashion design skills acquisition with Ibadan adopted the descriptive survey research design. A sample of 155 youths was randomly selected through the simple random sampling technique for the study. A questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. From the result, the author opined that the aim of sewing programme is to reduce unemployment and promote participation of youth skill acquisition programmes. Any student that successfully completes sewing or patternmaking course will be able to work in a clothing factory or start his/her own sewing business. In the basic sewing class, the students learn the technology of a sewing machine, how to use sewing machine, how to cut and how to complete a garment. In the pattern making class, they learn how to manually draft a pattern. One

of the most intriguing factors that currently sustain entrepreneurial growth is the percentage of women involved in fashion designing entrepreneurial ventures.

However, Yarghese (2010) conducted a study on fashion design skill acquisition programme and employability of youths in Benue State, Nigeria. The researcher adopted a survey research design. A sample of 160 respondents was randomly selected through the simple random sampling technique and accidental sampling technique for the study. A questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. The result of the analysis revealed that fashion designing training is very central and expedient for acquisition of skills, abilities, values, attitudes and competences. Based on the results, it was recommended among others that adequate funding should be allocated to entrepreneurial skills acquisition programmes in order to promote employability of youths.

International Labour Organization (ILO) (2017) asserted that graduates participation in fashion designing skills and lifelong learning increases their participation in labour force, thereby increasing their income, which in turn empowers them economically. Narayan (2017) conducted a study on fashion design skills acquisition and poverty reduction among youths of southern Kaduna State, of Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted. A sample of 160 respondents was randomly selected through the sample and purposive random sampling technique for the study. A questionnaire titled: Fashion Design Skills Acquisition and Poverty Reduction Questionnaire (FDSAPRQ) was the main instrument used for data collection. Data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis revealed that fashion designing skills acquisition training is very central and expedient for acquisition of skills abilities, values, attitudes and competences essential for purposes of employment on the improvement as well as enhancement of youths in the study area.

The author also pointed out that there is need to evolve training programme on entrepreneurial education outside the formal school, which are based on the need in both urban and rural areas where both adults and women will acquire knowledge and realize their potential for community development. However, the purpose of such training is to improve the ability of people to perform better in the occupations they are engaged in, and also by developing and improving their skills they enter the pool of human resources which are adapted to a wide selection of rural occupation.

Ironbar (2012) carried out a study on fashion designing accessory skill acquisition programme and poverty reduction in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The researcher adopted ex-post facto research design. The population of the study was 1348 while the sample of the study was 376 adult learners centre. The researcher adopted simple random sampling techniques. The instrument used for data collection titled Fashion Design Skill Acquisition Programme and Poverty Reduction Questionnaire (FSAPPRQ). The statistical analysis was Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. The hypothesis was subjected to testing at 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that, fashion design/accessory skills acquisition programmes significantly relate to poverty reduction. Based on findings of the study, it was recommended among others that government should be involved in training programmes on entrepreneurial education outside the formal school.

Efe-Inafidon, Ade-Adeniji, Umukoro and Ajitemisan (2017) conducted a study on entrepreneurial skill acquisition as a facilitator of self-employability among Nigerian youths. The objective of this research was to present argument in favour of the concept of entrepreneurial skill acquisition as a panacea for unemployment among youths in Nigeria. The study examined

strategies industries in which youths should focus efforts in developing innovative skills that can stimulate self-employment, create jobs and enhance economic growth and development. The implication of this study to Nigerian youth showed that there are presently strategic industrial sectors in Nigeria that contribute to the GDP asides the oil sector. The researchers recommended among other things that facilitators of entrepreneurial skill training and workshop programmes must ensure that skill being taught to the youths match the requirements of the strategic industries in Nigeria.

### **Methodology:**

The research design utilized was ex-post facto plan. The zone of the study is Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The zone is arranged inside extension  $50^{\circ} 32^1$  and  $40^{\circ} 22^1$  North of the equator and longitude  $70^{\circ} 50^1$  and  $90^{\circ} 28^1$ , East of the Greenwich meridian and is more than 21, 481 sqkm<sup>2</sup>, in estimation.

The area of the study has three universities namely: University of Calabar, Arthur Jarvis University, Cross River University of Technology, College of Education, Akamkpa and Cross River College of Health Technology, Calabar. Also, it is blessed with Hope Waddel Training Institute (HWTI) and other government and private schools. The study area also consist of tourist sites such as Tinapa, Marina Resort, National Park, Mary Slessor Round About and Home at Akpap Okonyong, National Museum, Millennium Park, Southern Cross River State is the seat of government.

The population of the investigation was 133 Social Studies graduates in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. The testing procedure that was embraced for the investigation, was purposive sampling (evaluation) system. The method was picked on the grounds that it focuses on sampling techniques where the individuals that are examined depend on the judgment of the analyst and for the most part the example being researched is very little, consequently the whole populace of 133 Social Studies graduates was utilized for the examination.

With the method employed above, the entire population of the study, that is, 133 Social Studies graduates were used as the sample of the study. Two research tools were utilized for information accumulation. Namely, a questionnaire titled: Fashion designing Skill Acquisition Questionnaire (FDSAQ) and Employability of Social Studies Graduate Questionnaire (ESSGQ). The first tool was separated into two areas 'A' and 'B'. Segment A of the tool looked for information on respondents'. While segment B comprised of ten items of four point adjusted Likert type scale intended to gauge the one major variable of entrepreneurial skills acquisition. The second instrument is ESSGQ. It is a ten item questionnaire seeking information from Social Studies Graduate who are gainfully employed. The statistical tool used for data analysis at .05 level of significance was a one way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

### **Finding:**

There is no significant influence of fashion and designing skill acquisition on employability of social studies graduates in labour market. The independent variable of this hypothesis is the fashion and designing skills acquisition classified into Low, Average and High level of acquisition. The classification was done using subjects' responses to the questionnaire items. Scorers below the mean were considered as saying that they had low level of fashion and designing skill acquisition, those above the mean were considered as saying that they had high level of fashion and designing skill acquisition, while scorers about the mean were considered as

saying that they had average or moderate level of fashion and designing skill acquisition. The dependent variable in this hypothesis is employability of social studies graduates in labour market. The test statistic used in testing the hypothesis is One-Way Analysis of Variance. The results are presented in Table 10.

Results of analysis in Table 6 show that the calculated F-ratio of 67.629 is greater than the critical F-ratio of 3.06 at .05 level of significance with 2 and 130 degrees of freedom. This means that, the level of fashion and designing skill acquisition do significantly influence employability of social studies graduates in labour market in Calabar education zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Based on these results, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate upheld. Since the results showed significant influence, a post hoc comparison test among group means was carried out to ascertain the pair wise mean difference responsible for the significant influence. Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) method was used in carrying out the test. Results of the analysis are presented in Table 11.

**TABLE 9: Summary of analysis of variance of the influence of the fashion and designing skill acquisition on employability of social studies graduate in labour market (N=133)**

**Level of skill acquisition:**

	N	X	S.D	
Low:	5	16.40	5.89	
Average:	53	27.09	5.26	
High:	75	33.68	3.06	
	Total			
	133	30.41	5.93	
Source of variation:	sums of square	df	Mean Square	F.
Between groups	2366.027	2	1183.013	67.629*
Within groups	2274.048	130	17.493	
Total	4640.075		132	

\*p<.05; critical F-Ratio = 3.06

**TABLE 10: Summary of Fisher's LSD for the influence of fashion and designing skill acquisition on employability of social studies graduates in labour market**

Level of skill acquisition:	Low (n=5)	Average (n=53)	High (n=75)
Low:	16.40	10.69	17.28
Average:	5.45*	27.09	6.59
High:	8.95*	8.79*	33.68
(MSW=17.493)			

\*p<.05

- Group means are along the principal diagonal
- Mean differences are above the principal diagonal

c) t-values are below the principal diagonal

Results of analysis in Table 11 show significant pair-wise group mean differences as follows: Low versus Average ( $t=5.45$ ,  $p<.05$ ); Low versus High ( $t=8.95$ ,  $p<.05$ ); and Average versus High ( $t=8.79$ ,  $p<.05$ ). The results indicate that, it was social studies graduates who had high level of fashion and designing skill acquisition that were more employable ( $X=33.68$ ), followed by their counterparts who had average level of fashion and designing skill acquisition ( $X=27.09$ ), and then by those who had low level of fashion and designing skill acquisition ( $X=16.40$ ). That is, the higher the level of fashion and designing skill acquisition, the higher the level of employability of social studies graduates in labour market in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **Discussion of findings:**

The result of the hypothesis states that there is no significant influence of fashion designing skill acquisition on employability of social studies graduates in labour market. The findings of the result is in line with Nsifon (2014) who agrees that sewing was one of the identified programmes to be embarked upon. Policy planners involved in the programme planning identified it as a major form of human development. This result is in line with Nsifon (2014) who further agree that it is less capital intensive in terms of facilities needed for the training and thus increase participation of unemployed youths.

The finding also agrees with Osuala (2015) who stated that the aim of sewing programme is to reduce unemployment and promote participation of youth skill acquisition programmes. Any student that successfully completes sewing or patternmaking course will be able to work in a clothing factory or start his/her own sewing business. In the basic sewing class the students learn the technology of a sewing machine, how to use sewing machine, how to cut and how to complete a garment. In the pattern making class, they learn how to manually draft a pattern. One of the most intriguing factors that currently sustain entrepreneurial growth is the percentage of women involved in fashion designing entrepreneurial ventures.

Yarghese (2010) result revealed that fashion designing training is very central and expedient for acquisition of skills, abilities, values, attitudes and competences. Based on the results, it was recommended among others that adequate funding should be allocated to entrepreneurial skills acquisition programmes in order to promote employability of youths.

The result of the findings is in line with Narayan (2017) who agrees that fashion designing skills acquisition training is very central and expedient for acquisition of skills abilities, values, attitudes and competences essential for purposes of employment on the improvement as well as enhancement of youth in the study area. That the facilitators of entrepreneurial skill training and workshop programmes must ensure that skill being taught to the youth match the requirements of the strategic industries in Nigeria.

### **Conclusion:**

The outcomes of this study showed that fashion designing skill acquisition do significantly influence employability of social studies graduates in labour market.

### **Recommendation:**

It was recommended based on the analysis of the study that graduates of these skill acquisition programmes should be provided with more credits facilities/grants to facilitate the establishment of business and self employment.

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