

INFUSING VOCATIONAL SKILLS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM TOWARDS PROMOTING YOUTHS' EMPLOYABILITY IN CALABAR CROSS RIVER STATE

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Abstract

The study examined the impact of infusing vocational curriculum in secondary schools on youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose this study, two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Relevant literature was reviewed according to the variables of the study. The research design adopted for this study was the Ex-post facto research design. The sampling technique that was adopted for this study is cross-sectional survey involving multi-stage sampling technique. The Samples of the study comprised of 310 youths with occupation ranging from: shoe making, hairdressing, fashion designing etc. "Vocational Skills Acquisition and Youths Employment Opportunity Questionnaire (VSAYEQ)" was the instrument employed for data collection based on the vocational population. To test the hypotheses formulated to guide the study, simple linear regression was used. The results obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypotheses in the study revealed that there was a significant impact of infusion of vocational skill into secondary school curriculum and youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. It was concluded that successful infusion of vocational skill into secondary school curriculum will go a long way in creating job opportunities to the teaming youths. Based on these findings it was recommended among others that the government should reintroduces the vocational skill curriculum into secondary school curriculum (especially in the area of shoe making and fashion designing) and employ trained teachers to teach the subject to enhance employability of the students after their secondary education

Keywords: Vocational, skills, curriculum, secondary, school, promoting, youths' employability, Calabar, Cross River State



Introduction

The problem of youth restiveness is traceable to the unemployed youths who refused to engage themselves in any skill acquisition initiatives but only wait for white collar jobs from

government. National Bureau of statistics (NBS) (2013) reiterates that the massive unemployment of young graduates in the country is traceable to the disequilibrium between labour market requirement and lack of essential employable skills. Youth's skills acquisition initiative can give rise to high rate of youth's development. This is because youth development is a vital tool for building human capital that allows young people to stay away from crime, poverty and possibly live a more comfortable life. According to Akpama, Essang, Asor and Osang (2011) in Danyaro (2018), acquisition of vocational skills leads to a significant reduction of unemployment and poverty among young adults. Entrepreneurial studies are inter-disciplinary training that focuses on the tools needed to start business or vocational training.

The Federal Government of Nigeria in 1973 introduced the industrial training fund (ITF) to provide skills which were lacking among the technical workforce. In 1974 the students industrial work experience scheme (SIWES) came into existence and was funded by the industrial. Training fund (ITF) The SIWES programme according to Oyeniyi (2016) helps students to harness their full potentials and utilize the skill acquired for enhanced economic status and self-sustenance. The industrial training fund Oyeniyi (2016) outline the objectives of (SIWES) programme as follows: To provide an avenue for students in institutions of higher learning to acquire industrial skills and experience in their course of study, to prepare students for industrial work situation they are to meet after graduation; to expose students to work methods and techniques in handling equipment and machinery that may not be available in their institution; to make the transition from school to the world of work easier and enhance students contacts to later job placement and; to enlist and strengthen employers involvement in the entire educational sector.

Sequel to this background the researcher was poised to examined the impact of infusing vocational curriculum in secondary schools on youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. Variables such as show making skills acquisition and fashion designing skill acquisition were raises as a point of call to ascertain its relevance in Secondary school curriculum.

Shoe making is another lucrative skill that is trendy at all times and season, it is the process of making footwear, the producers can be addressed as a cobbler, cordwainer or soler; it is a person who makes or mends shoe, popularly called shoemaker. Celebrities always wants to make a difference with their designer shoes. The shoe making business is highly profitable (Ajibade, Osho & Ogunnode, 2016).

Fashion designing on one hand 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 acquisitions 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 were 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)

Theoretical background

- **General system theory by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy (1950)**

The general system theory was propounded by Bertalanffy in 1950. The theory stated that a system is defined as an organized whole made up of set of interdependent parts which interact in a way different from their interaction with other entities towards their accomplishment of some purpose (Bertalanffy 1950). The basic assumption of the theory is that a system has functional identifiable components which interact differently within the organized whole and also, their various interactions affect each other. Thus, if a given component within the organized whole ceases to function effectively, the nature of such a given system is likely to

change as well. According to Tsvara (2013) a system can be viewed as having inputs processes, outputs and outcomes. Examples of each are stated as follows: *Inputs*, Raw materials, money, technologies and human beings; *Processes*, Planning, organizing, motivating, supervising and controlling; *Outputs*, Products/services and; *Outcomes*, Enhanced quality of life/enhance productivity levels of clients/customers. It is worthy of note that within a given system, feedback is always shared amongst the aforementioned aspects of the system.

The relevance of the theory to the present study is on the premise that Systems thinking can be a powerful vocational tool, giving learners a participatory role in the learning process. By viewing teaching through a system thinking lens, vocational skill trainers can help learners recognize how seemingly disparate systems interact, identifying meaningful connections in the world around them. Therefore, the concept of employment could be viewed as a system having adequate feedback between the various aspects of the systems that meant to ensure youths employment opportunities towards the accomplishment of the purpose which they are established for

Literature review

Infusing shoe making into secondary school curriculum.

The secondary school curriculum needs to be enhanced by bringing some vocational skill acquisition curriculum to bust the already programmed entrepreneurial subjects such as agricultural science as this will made them develop some skill that will help them as they grow into a youth school level (Chigunta, 2017) . According to Carolin, Karon and Claudia (2013) on the maximizing the impact of youth indicated that many young people finds it difficult to obtain a job in the formal sector and concluded that youth entrepreneurship is a key tool to develop the human capital necessary to advance the future for sustainable economic growth. Acheampong (2016) in his study of why Africa's young Entrepreneurs are the key to diversified growth, indicated that many African countries have begun the initiative of using the youths to diversify the economy through mobile technology and agricultural production. This has tremendously improved their standard of living he asserted.

Shoes are seen as an essential part of comprehensive foot care and is likely to be regarded as an important consideration in the clinical management of many foot disorders ((Vernon, 2017). Rith-Najarian (2000) and Chantelau and Haage (2014), indicate that regular use of therapeutic footwear is an effective means of protecting the high-risk foot from injury, and has been associated with an approximately 50 percent reduction in ulceration rates. Advancements in manufacturing processes, technology innovation, modern trends and comfortable shoes are being continuously developed at reasonable prices in order to keep pace with the growing demand for these product.

Shoemaker's design and make footwear using hand and machine tools. They will stay up-to-date with fashion trends and new styles, anticipating what will be in fashion in coming seasons. Some shoemakers run their own businesses, handmaking their own collections and custom or limited-edition shoes for clients. Shoemakers might also work for larger fashion houses, or focus on footwear design and collaborate with manufacturers to create a finished product (Ugwuanyi, 2015). Eriki (2006) in his work on —Financing a business Venture|| laid emphasis on the source of fund for the business, how to plan for the acquisition of such desired fund, and control strategies that needs to be put in place to avoid financial recklessness and waste of fund that may crash the business. In his submission, entrepreneurs require basic knowledge and information, skills, attitudes about credit control and management of input factors. The Influence of Vocational Education on Youth Unemployment Entrepreneurship education and training plays a vital role in the development of entrepreneurial skills, attitudes and abilities (Li, Zhang and Matlay, 2003) and European Commission (2002). Entrepreneurial consciousness to undertake business is achieved through education (Agu, Anidiobu and Ezinwa,

2016). Training and education is one good way of inculcating entrepreneurial skills to our youths, but may not be of any value if they are not financed and empowered

Infusing fashion designing skill into secondary school curriculum

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 acquisitions 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 were applied into commercial use. Fashion designers work in a number of ways designing clothing and accessories such as brackets and necklaces.

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 immediate past 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. 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

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 graduate's participation in fashion designing skills and lifelong learning increases their participation in labour force, thereby increasing their income, which in turn empowers them economically.

Statement of the problem

It is well known now that unemployment in Calabar Cross River States just like any other place in Nigeria has been in the increase. Hence, there is no industry or meaningful company for youths to rely on. Graduates and youths in Calabar rather engage in deviant behaviours such as armed robbery, kidnapping, hire killers, thuggery, land disputes and other social vices for survival. Many young people in our society today cannot find job anywhere, which is as a result of lack of employment opportunities and increase in population. The situation became worse with the economic recession. It is hoped that job creation through technical innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship education and infrastructural development will revive the economic prospect to reduce the level of unemployment and will boost the living standard of the youths and reduce drastically to a very low level.

Despite government efforts through National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS) in addition to introduction of many vocational centers for training of youths in entrepreneurial skills, there have been no considerable achievement in skill acquisition for self-employment. Hence this study therefore considered it necessary to fill this gap by examining the extent to which infusing vocational curriculum (such as shoe making and fashion designing) in secondary schools could enhance youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State.

Objectives of the study

The objective of this study was to explain the the impact of infusing vocational curriculum in secondary schools on youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. Ascertain the extent to which shoe making skill acquisition curriculum relate to youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State.
2. Ascertain the extent to which fashion designing skill acquisition curriculum relate to youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State.

Research questions

1. To what extent to does shoe making skill acquisition curriculum relate to youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State?
2. To what extent does fashion designing skill acquisition curriculum relate to youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between shoe making skill acquisition curriculum and youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State
2. There is no significant relationship between fashion designing skill acquisition curriculum and youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State

Methodology

Sampling technique

The data used in this study were collected from a cross-sectional survey of shoe making enterprises and fashion designing/tailoring stores, in Calabar Cross River State. The respondents were selected using accidental sampling method. By accidental it means the instrument was given to the respondents the researcher met and were willing to be part of the research when the researcher visited their shops and skill acquisitions centers based on the individual skill selected in this study. This administration of instruments was carried out smoothly by the researcher and his trained research assistants after they had formerly introduced themselves the different vocational workshops (show making shops and fashion designing shops) and clearly explained the reason of the study which is just for educational purpose and not to indict the respondents, the vocational firm or the entire community

Research design

This study made use of correlational research design. This was to ensure that the sample has the characteristic of representing the entire population of the study and both the dependent and independent variables are correlated independently. The data collected were analyzed with Pearson Product moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) at 0.05 significance level and degreed 308 degrees of freedom.

Results

Hypotheses 1: There is no significant relationship between shoe making skill acquisition curriculum and youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State. The result of the analysis is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) of relationship between shoe making skill acquisition curriculum and youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State (N=310)

Variables	\bar{x}	SD	r-ratio	Df	p-level
Shoe making skill acquisition (X)	17.15	3.33			
			.421**	308	.000
Youths' employability in Calabar (Y).	25.17	3.15			

*Significant at .05 level; $p < .05$.

To analyse the data in Table 1 Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis was used. The finding showed that Shoe making skill acquisition curriculum had a mean score of 17.15 with a standard deviation of 3.33 while youths' employability in Calabar had a mean score of 25.17 with standard deviation of 3.15. The result further showed that the r-calculated value of 0.413 is greater than critical-r value of 0.062, tested at .05 level of significance and 308 degrees of freedom. Also, the $p < .000$ is less than $p < .05$. Hence, null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between shoe making skill acquisition curriculum and youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State. was rejected indicating that there is a significant relationship between shoe making skill acquisition curriculum and youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State.

Hypotheses 2: There is no significant relationship between fashion designing skill acquisition curriculum and youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State. The result of the analysis is shown in Table 2.

Table 1

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) of relationship between fashion designing skill acquisition curriculum and youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State (N=310)

Variables	\bar{x}	SD	r-ratio	Df	p-level
Fashion designing skill acquisition (X)	18.27	3.09			
			.512**	308	.000
Youths' employability in Calabar (Y).	25.17	3.15			

*Significant at .05 level; $p < .05$.

To analyse the data in Table 2 Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis was used. The finding showed that fashion designing skill acquisition had a mean score of 18.27 with a standard deviation of 3.09 while youths' employability in Calabar had a mean score of 25.17 with standard deviation of 3.15. The result further showed that the r-calculated value of 0.512 is greater than critical-r value of 0.062, tested at .05 level of significance and 308 degrees of freedom. Also, the $p < .000$ is less than $p < .05$. Hence, null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between fashion designing skill acquisition curriculum and youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State. Was rejected indicating that there is a significant relationship between fashion designing skill acquisition curriculum and youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State

Discussion of findings

Data in Table 1 determined whether there is no significant relationship between shoe making skill acquisition curriculum and youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State. The first hypothesis result showed that indeed there is no significant relationship between shoe making skill acquisition curriculum and youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of Carolin, Karon and Claudia (2013) who stated that the secondary school curriculum needs to be enhanced by bringing some vocational skill acquisition curriculum to bust the already programmed entrepreneurial subjects such as agricultural science as this will made them develop some skill that will help them as they grow into a youth school level. According to Carolin, Karon and Claudia (2013) on the maximizing the impact of youth indicated that many young people find it difficult to obtain a job in the formal sector and concluded that youth entrepreneurship is a key tool to develop the human capital necessary to advance the future for sustainable economic growth.

Data in Table 2 determined whether there is no significant relationship between fashion designing skill acquisition curriculum and youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State. The second hypothesis result showed that indeed there is no significant relationship between fashion designing skill acquisition curriculum and youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State. This conclusion is consistent with Yarghese (2010) who 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 graduate's participation in fashion designing skills and lifelong learning increases their participation in labour force, thereby increasing their income, which in turn empowers them economically

Conclusion

In view of the findings of the study the researcher arrived at the conclusion that there is a significant relationship between shoe making skill acquisition curriculum and youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State and there is a significant relationship between fashion designing skill acquisition curriculum and youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State. It was therefor right to say that infusing vocational curriculum in secondary schools will promote youths' employability in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were given by the researcher

1. Government through development banks should help in empowering the youths to take up entrepreneurial vocation such as shoe making through giving low interest credit facilities as loans and subsidies
2. Every school should make it compulsory to have regular vocational skill acquisition study or discipline available to every senior secondary school students especially in the area of fashion designing skill acquisition to further increase the employability of the teeming graduates produces yearly

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