

The Challenges and Opportunities of Textile Design Education in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examines the challenges and opportunities facing textile design education in Nigeria. While the country boasts a rich cultural heritage in textiles, the formal education system struggles with limited resources, outdated curriculums and a lack of industry collaboration. These factors hinder students' ability to develop their skills and prepare for the evolving industry demands. However, opportunities exist to leverage Nigerian cultural heritages, embrace digital technologies, promote sustainability and strengthen industry partnerships. By addressing these challenges and capitalizing on these opportunities, Nigeria can cultivate a thriving textile design sector, empowering its youth, fostering economic growth and preserving its rich cultural heritage.

Keywords: Textile, Design, Textile Design Education, Batik.

Introduction

Textile design is a crucial component of Nigeria's creative and cultural industries. It encompasses the art of creating design and pattern on textiles, which can be used in fashion, interior design and various other applications. Despite its importance, the field faces several challenges within the Nigeria education, inadequate infrastructure; outdated curricula, limited funding and a shortage of qualified instructors pose significant hurdles to the advancement of textile design education. Despite, these obstacles, there are compelling opportunities that if effectively leveraged could transform the landscape of textile education in Nigeria, Technological advancements, increased industry collaboration, a growing emphasis on sustainability and supportive government initiatives offer promising avenues for development. By addressing these challenges and capitalizing on these opportunities, Nigeria can cultivate a vibrant leveraging rich cultural heritage and local materials which can enhance textile design education and create new opportunities for students to fostering entrepreneurship among students and globally competitive textile design sector (Adeleke & Dada, 2021); Adamu, & Mohammed, 2021) and Ibrahim & Agbo, 2023).

However, Art is the product or process of deliberately arranging items, forms or motifs that influence and affect one or more of the senses, emotions and intellect. It encompasses a diverse range of human activities, creations and modes of expression, including music, literature, film, photography, sculpture, painting and applied arts like textile designs are also prominent. The meaning of art is explored in a branch of philosophy known as aesthetics, whereas, disciplines such as anthropology, sociology and psychology analyze its relationship with human and his generations.

So traditionally the term "art" was used to refer to any skill or mastery of a subject matter. This concept changed during the Romantic period, when art came to be seen as a special faculty of the human mind to be classified with religion and science. The various aspects of arts despite their role in society have consistently experienced problems. Textile design is one of those art activities important as it is, that have continued to face controversial and numerous problems like:

- (i). Lack of understanding the differences between textile design and textile science profession.
- (ii). High cost of learning and production of materials
- (iii). Inadequate teaching and learning materials
- (iv). Qualitative values between studio products and industrial textile goods
- (v). Job placement
- (vi). Inadequate funding.

In other words, some of the prospects of textile design education are identified for educational improvement in the society. However, it is needful for the people to develop and enhance textile design materials. It is also necessary for improvement socio- cultural and economic empowerment of

every individual in the communities. Job enhancement opportunities, self-reliance, encouragement and promotion of creativity in textile designs which will serve as a springboard for growth of indigenous small scale, modern textile design industries in Nigeria which will help to grow global market for sustainable development of textile in Nigeria (Ajiboye & Ogunleye, 2021); (Adewale & Ibrahim, 2022); (Nwogwugwu, 2023) and (Adeleke & Dada, 2021).

According to Agboola (1995), even before the advent of modern dye stuff, the Yoruba people are known for the use of blue indigo dye which is made from a plant called "elu". Burnt ash boils are processed to act as mordant for the dye stuff to stay. Apart from these, either pap or boiled cassava flour (lafun) could be used for making batik instead of the costly candle wax.

Banjoko (2009) stressed that fabric that has been tie-dyed plays good roles in fashion terrain of our society. From the ordinary man in the street to the political office holders and the Reverend gentlemen in our orthodox churches who now incorporate pieces of traditional fabrics into their cassock, such fabrics can equally be used to make lamp shades, table covers, window blinds, bed sheets and pillow cases, gift wraps, wall hangings, clothing and costumes. In some cases, used old clothes tie-dyed, look new and interesting to wear as its designs are related to the cultural environment that it's been planned for at that particular time and period. However, all these ideas can be included into the students syllabus for curriculum development. (Olatoye & Adepoju, 2023).

This paper is concerned with the need to determine factors that are largely responsible for the problems facing textile design education in our institutions and the poor outlook accorded it. These problems being encountered were identified with the view to suggesting and recommending ways of promoting and appreciating the ideals of textile design education in Nigeria. The specific objective of the paper therefore includes the following:

- (i) To present the appraisal of the major issues militating against better appreciation of textile design education in Nigeria.
- (ii) To bring awareness to the values of textile design education and practice to the contemporary Nigerian society.
- (iii) To identify those major factors responsible for inadequate appreciation of the value of textile design education in Nigeria.
- (iv) Setting up seminars and workshops for further promotion of textile design education and practice in the development of contemporary Nigerian society.
- (v) suggest recommendation towards better appreciation of the development of textile design education.

Consequently, any discussion on textile design education in contemporary sense simply emphasizes on teaching/ learning and production of clothes; that is clothing and its significance to mankind from traditional society to date in but technology is promoting the dignity of right now Nigeria (Chukwu & Udo, 2022).

Christian & Sarah (2002) observed that cloth has always been a vehicle for certain messages; a symbol of authority, power, an expression of personality and a maker of historical epochs or even political doctrines and relationship that had existed between two parties. They further reported that textile arts of Madagascar (Malagasy) provide a splendid opportunity to commemorate and tell the stories of other historic relationships that had been established between her and the United States of America (USA). However, the relationship of this type is based on their government policies which support the textile development (Okoro & Osagie, 2021); (Mba & Okeke, 2023) and (Niduka & Obinwanner, 2022).

Textile Design and Textile Science Education.

Textile design simply means the use of local chemicals such as dye to create motifs and designs on a piece of fabric. While Textile Science can be defined as the advancement method of using technological machines to create different patterns and motifs on a fabric, however, textile education can be framed as the educational method of impacting textile knowledge to the learners which eventually can only take place in an educational setting or platform. In view of this the three involves the use of series of motifs and designs in order to create patterns on a fabric.

Education in the various focus of art is a necessary tool for self-development, which can only be understood and appreciated when it is recognized that subjects complement each other. It is

however, noticed that there is lack of coordinated efforts between however, of various subjects and even among subjects that are teacher related in nature. Art education, for what it is and what it does for the individual must be allowed to grow and function well without bids. The artist and the scientist cannot function without the other; both of them are parts of national development. This is to say that the artist reveals the possibilities and the scientist makes them possible.

Textile design and textile science education have been wrongly understood. In fact, many people see textile design as an area just for women while textile science is also seen as an area for men. The trends and outlook in both textile design and textile science education are as a result of the general societal feelings for art education as a discipline.

Art has been perceived wrongly and people are not making enough efforts towards understanding this important subject. According to Palmer (2004), a subjective manner of expression, that is intuitive and the intellectual behaviour involved in the process has been repeatedly neglected. Apart from understanding, there are other factors that have continued to constitute problems as far as textile design education is concerned. These factors include high cost of learning and production materials, inadequate teaching and learning materials/facilities, timing of the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) Programme, job placement and the need for proper funding in textile design education.

It is true that all aspects of art education deserve such attention but textile design is more prominent in this paper and it needs certain attention to be considered for the promotion of national development as it directly affects every human being on a daily basis.

Teachers' as Facilitators for Textile Design Education

The teacher is the backbone of classroom activities. The major role of every teacher is to teach his or her discipline effectively. Apart from normal classroom teaching, he works with other staff members, the principal, students and the community at large. Judith (1987) maintained that for teaching and learning to be effective, certain assumptions should be centered on the uniqueness of the individual child and his environment. The environments of the learner include the particular society and community in which he finds himself. Judith (1987) further ascertained that, organizing space for individualized group projects and organizing more time for practical oriented skills has proved more efficient in the teaching and learning of vocational education.

Effective classroom teaching demands much from the teacher because he is expected to know the subject and how to impart knowledge. For the textile design teacher looking at the problems being faced in art education in general and textile design in particular, the teacher's tasks can be difficult. The textile design teacher needs to prove his or her worth in the society so that his products can be appreciated. A lot of influence has come to bear on the market scene and only very skilled and professional designers can stand the challenges of the moment. Textile designers generally work from basic human needs and those products that satisfy people's needs.

Uzoagba (1978) stated that modern designs should blend with the expression of utility, materials and into a visually satisfying whole. Besides, a professional textile designer should not only see himself or herself as provider of theoretical knowledge, but a provider of reputable examples in practical production of viable textile design products and services through practice.

The blending of materials and experience come from different sources that are available to the textile design profession. The only demand on the part of the vibrant textile design teacher is to explore and exploit such rich sources of design to produce aesthetic and useful designs for the society, while keeping watch with modern developments and challenges in the profession. Parts of the tasks include the ability to be resourceful when handling textile design education before the students even though, faced with the presence of scarce resources of materials. The teacher should be able to present clear demonstration of various steps in the entire lesson for easy and permanent assimilation and motivation. Another issue is inadequate funding in Nigeria education sector which almost all the academic wings in both lower and higher institutions in Nigeria do face and the textile design area is not left out.

Agbionu (2006) in his consideration for good primary education in Nigeria, observed that the financial burden on government has forced parents to be involved in funding education through one type of levy or the other despite the poor capacity of the parents. The textile design discipline is a course that requires sufficient funding because of the nature of materials. A situation where adequate

materials and equipment are not provided, both, the teachers and the learners are no longer comfortable in meaningful, teaching and learning (Textile Design Education inclusive).

Different Areas of Textile Design

The following are the different areas of Textile Design:

- (a) Tie-dye
- (b) Batik
- (c) Screen painting on Textile
- (d) Embroidery

TIE-DYE

Tie and Dye Display

Tie-dyeing is an artistic way of creating an explosion of beautiful colour. It involves a resist technique. Fabric sections are tied off, folded clamped with blocks wax to keep cloth areas from the dye. So the protected sections do not absorb the dye back ground is the result. The materials needed for tie-dyeing are 100% clean cotton fabric, strings, ropes raffia, Heat source(cooker e.t.c) Dye, plastic bowls, Rubber gloves, sticks to stir dye baths, chemical, salt, spoon and pressing iron/table.

Techniques Used In Fabric Design

- (i) Concentric squares
- (ii) Circle method
- (iii) Clump tying
- (iv) Marbling
- (v) Knotting.
- (vi) Stitching.

Procedure for Tie-Dye

- (a) Collect the necessary equipment dye bath or basin dye gloves, stirring rod thread, string or rubber band for binding the fabric, caustic soda, hydrosulphite, water, heat source, measuring utensils.
- (b) Prepare the fabric and plan the design
- (c) Dye and rinse the fabric
- (d) Retie or over tie and re-dye for subsequent colours
- (e) Untie and iron the fabric with water.

Batik

Batik is an Indonesian word, derived from the word "tik" meaning "a little bit or a drop". This refers to the tiny drops of hot melted wax used on the design to resist the dye. The batik process is another popular dye resist technique in which the design is applied to the material with a substance that will resist the action of the dye. This substance is commonly wax. So wax is applied to the cloth with a traditional tool known as a "tjanting" or brush and the cloth is then dipped or brushed with dye. The wax resists the dye, which fills the areas that are not waxed. This is a similar process to tie-dye. After dyeing, the resist (or wood) is removed from the cloth using hot water or iron. The material includes; paraffin wax/ Bees wax or candle wax, old roasting pan or empty beverages tin Heat source wax paper, cotton material, tjanting, old brushes of various sizes, plastic bucket/ bowl to mix and hold dyes, Household dyes(chemicals), Rubber gloves, lot of old newspaper and paper toweling, Electric iron and boiling water (water).

Screen Painting on Textile

It is a way of decorating fabric for garments or furnishing, using a device that properly controls the flow of coloured ink and at the same time brings about exactly the original messages or design of the artist on the fabric. Silk screen printing is a style of applying colourful designs and messages to different types of materials or objects such as paper, wood textile ceramics among others However this work is specifically concerned with printing on textile. It is more correct to call it screen

printing than silk screen printing since gone are the day when only silk is used for the preparation of the screens. Nylon, polyester, organdy, cotton, stainless, steel, copper, brass and bronze are all used in the preparation of screens for printing these days. There are different techniques in the preparation of screens that reproduce images and messages. It is the various substances used to mask out the screen that differentiate one stencil making technique from the other. The basic principle is to make a stencil on the screen fabric that will produce the design exactly when ink is forced through with squeegee. It is the squeegee that brings the openings in the screen into contact with the screen fabric into contact with the material, thus creating an impression. Stencils are created by hand etched and by the reaction light and chemicals. Each technique depends on what one is printing, finance, available materials, time space and one's stage in the craft. This work is specifically concerned with five reproduction techniques. These techniques fall under block out technique (the paper and the liquid block out) the hand cut film, usually referred to as profilm (the iron on technique) the photographic technique and the cut film photographic technique.

Embroidery

Embroidery is an art of decorating cloth with thread (coloured or uncoloured) through intricate stitching. It can be done by either hand or machine. Embroidery can be defined "as the art of producing patterns on textiles or leather in threads of wool, line, silk or metal by means of needle" (Olowo, 2006) Through embroidery decoration can be made on pants handkerchiefs, bed sheets, curtains, window, blinds, wall, cap and other household articles. All art of decorating clothing with embroidery apparently has a long tradition in Hausa and Nupe societies, and is used on many types of garments from Hausa, farmer's clothes to riding robes and ceremonial apparel (Eicher 1976). Embroidery work in fabrics is not limited to the northern parts of Africa or West Africa, the southern states also carry out embroidery works. Among the often southern enriched embroidered Yoruba dresses are the "gbariye" deeply relieved to have originated from Bornu. The motif on which is usually arranged systematically on the neck and gbarontally down the garment, this style is known as the "hoorthern knot". The two oral shaped pockets on "gbariye" are also heavily embroidered. The "agbada" which resembles the "Hausa riga" has its own style of embroidery which is also similar to the "Riga", embroidery can be made on agbada by women. Agbada can be made from different types of materials such as "aso oke, etu, "guinea brocade, damask, lace etc. However the embroidery on agbada is not symmetrical. Agbada also vary greatly in shape and size. The embroidery can either be done manually or by machine on agbada.

Four Types of Stitches used in Embroidery

- (i) Chain stitch
- (ii) Button hold stitch
- (iii) Couching Stitch
- (iv) Running stitch.

An example of embroidery design (i.e Embroidered cap) Appliqué. This is an art of cutting out a pattern (which may be floral, animate etc) from a particular coloured material or cloth and tacking or sewing it on another fabric either plain or designed. So as to add to its beauty.

They help to develop learners sense of imagination and comparison. Proper use of instructional materials will help to give first concept or impression correctly, stimulate interest, promote better understanding of the lesson and add variety to teaching methods. They may also help to promote intellectual curiosity, contribute to longer retention of learning and principles outside the range of ordinary experience (Aturamu, 2002).

Therefore, the chance of creative development in weaving is as hopeful as the insufficiencies of teaching and learning materials in the section.

According to Agbionu (2006), education should be seen as the key to unlock the door of modernization for any society. He recommends that, the state, federal and local governments should assume greater responsibilities on funding the educational sector. The issue of short period for industrial training and its effect on the learner in textile design education is a training that gears, towards industrial application and viable productivity. Ideally academic textile design studios should

be equipped with some basic materials, facilities and equipment so as to motivate learning and teaching of the subject.

Ada (2002) presented such a list which include; functional and durable floor looms with necessary accessories, assorted dyes, paper design materials, poster colour, drawing instruments, roller, printing machine, steaming, screen printing, photographic equipment, assorted colours, yarns, fabrics and laboratory facilities for dye experiments etc. Nearly all the institutions where textile design is being offered in Nigeria lack adequate laboratory facilities for dye experiment in their studio and this is serious issue for concern.

When a student of textile design goes to a good textile industry, the sections that could be found are administration, security, weaving spinning, printing, card printing, dyeing and finishing including engineering. Each of these sections have peculiar units. For instance, weaving has seizing, warping, beaming and the weaving with the looms for any meaningful acquisition of comprehensive industrial skills, it require each section to enable the student have enough three months in opportunity to each industrial knowledge, the rest of her gain indent opportunity after graduation some textile industries against textile design graduates for employment is based on the feeling that sufficient industries skills have not been acquired from those schools.

The last factor can then be used to understand the difference between textile design studio products and those from industrial sector. Observation made by this paper is that textile industries make use of high quality materials, equipment and facilities where as most studios rely on local available resources and few materials provided by the institution.

Recommendations

There is need to promote and increase the duration of the students' Industrial Training Scheme (SIWES) from three months to six months in order to assist the students acquire more skills and experience before graduation from their institutions. The government should encourage seminars, workshops to meet the modern age textile industries.

Adequate funding should be given to the institutions by the government to encourage textile students and teachers to developed their skills and knowledge.

More research and documentation must be encouraged for proper keeping of records on textile education in order to meet demands of modern technology.

Teachers teaching textile design should not base the teaching on theory alone but practical must be encouraged for self reliance. Teacher should encourage their student to participate in seminar as well as workshop for their self development. So the outcome of the students production must be monitor for national development.

In conclusion, textile education in Nigeria is in an embryonic stage and so it needs to be structured and developed. But the curriculum planning or development is a continuous cyclical process, involving constant re-planning and programming. This paper therefore outlines one way of viewing textile processes as a viable instrument of meaningful and functional education. Its main aim is to expose the differences between the textile industries and the academic institutions. This can be achieved by providing comprehensive guidance and reading within the frame work of textile design to give in readable and technical style the essential facts about textile production. The writer is concerned mainly with the problems and prospects of textile designs production and education. This paper would therefore allow the reader to be equipped with adequate knowledge of textile design education.

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