

## **Strategies for Improving Students' Skill Acquisition in Clothing and Textiles in Tertiary Institutions in Lagos State**

**Abiamuwe, N.O.; Seriki-Mosadolorun, J. S.**

Department of Vocational Education, School of Technical Education,  
Yaba College of Technology, Yaba, Lagos.

and

**Lemon, A.B**

Department of Fashion Designing, School of Arts, Design and Printing,  
Yaba College of Technology, Yaba, Lagos.

### **Abstract**

This study examined the problems hindering students' skill acquisition as well as the strategies for improving skill acquisition in Clothing and Textiles courses in Tertiary Institutions in Lagos State. Descriptive design was adopted. The population comprised of all Home Economics lecturers and students in four tertiary Institutions in Lagos State. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Data were analysed using mean. Results revealed, among others, that there are no tools and equipment in the clothing and textiles laboratories in the schools and the course was not properly funded. It was therefore recommended, among others, that students' practical classes should be funded by the school; exhibition fashion shows should be organized to motivate the students.

**Key Words:** Clothing, Textiles, Motivation, Strategies, Skill, Acquisition.

### **Introduction**

Clothing and Textiles is one of the three major areas of Home Economics taught in tertiary institutions in Lagos State. Uko-Aviomoh (2005) described Clothing and Textiles programme as an entrepreneurial-based and skill oriented field of study that is expected to equip learners with saleable skills that make for self-reliance and paid employment. It equips students with skills and helps in development of creativity and artistic abilities. Osifeso (2004) opined that the aim of clothing and textiles curricular at the tertiary level is to teach the learners how to strategically plan and use available resources in their environment to improve their homes, families and societal clothing needs. Arubayi (2010) asserted that

clothing and textiles is characteristically skill and activity oriented which when properly taught with relevant tools and equipment will equip the learner with saleable skills needed for self-reliance.

Sarpong, Howard and Amankwah (2012) observed that lecturers of Clothing and Textiles are expected to equip students with key skills and knowledge that will make their graduates employable and self-reliance, thus reduce unemployment and poverty. One of the eight Nigerian Millennium Development Goals is to eradicate extreme poverty. Nwazor (2012) stated that for Nigeria to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, capacity building of students through adequate skill acquisition in various fields of study

especially in Vocational Technical Education is mandatory because it is an essential tool to any nation's growth and development. Azikiwe (2012) defined capacity building as the process by which individuals, irrespective of sex, are equipped with skills and knowledge they need to perform effectively and efficiently in their different callings. Nwazor (2012) also noted that capacity building could also be seen as the ability that enables people to make use of their creative potentials, intellectual capacities and leadership abilities for personal as well as national growth and development.

Quigley, Marshall, Deaton, Cook, & Padilla, (2011) asserted that teachers have the great challenge and responsibility of helping students learn so that they develop the skills and knowledge needed to function in today's world. There is need to help students move beyond being passive recipients of knowledge to become knowledge builders, capable of generating creative and innovative solutions to problems.

Arubayi and Obunadike (2011) stated that the teacher has enormous role to play in motivating and imparting knowledge in clothing and textiles to students. The effectiveness of the teacher depends on the application and transfer of technical and professional skills, knowledge and competencies to the learner and the management of the learning environment. Sarpong, Howard and Amankwah (2012) contend that the demand for teaching in higher education involves learning processes which require lecturers to set clear and precise aims and objectives with proper understanding of the knowledge and skills they transfer. Instructional strategies and materials that lecturers use influence their success. Lecturers who use

greater variety of instructional techniques and support their teaching with instructional materials are more likely to promote greater learning among students.

World Bank Report (2012) noted that unless government and the Ministries of Education tackle the problems created by inadequate supplies of books and equipment, the reforms in education and students capacity building, no matter how far reaching, are unlikely to be effective. Mberengwa (2004) had earlier on pointed out the need for upgrading of laboratories as priority especially with technology equipment.

Arubayi 2014 mentioned that funding is the life-wire of any educational programme and the bed rock for any effective acquisition of practical skills. No practical skill can be acquired without the provision of funds for procurement of consumables and non-consumable resource materials. If Clothing and Textiles is to meet the national goals as stipulated in the policy document on Education (2004), the programme should be properly funded. Funds are required for the provision of facilities such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, workshops, furniture and the maintenance of these facilities. The Clothing and Textiles laboratories need equipment suitable for the skill to be acquired in such laboratories. The laboratories need to be equipped with consumables and non-consumables for practical purposes.

Most graduates of Home Economics cannot draft, cut and sew a good dress, skirt/trouser or a blouse without assistance. This shows that there is a problem among the students in skill acquisition. The implication is that adequate teaching and learning has not taken place in schools. This paper

empirically examined the motivational strategies for improving skill acquisition of clothing and textiles students in tertiary institutions in Lagos State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The major purpose of this study was to determine the motivational strategies that can improve students' skill acquisition in Clothing and Textiles courses in tertiary institutions in Lagos State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. identify the problems hindering students' skill acquisition in Clothing and Textiles courses.
2. determine strategies for motivating students in clothing and textiles for skill acquisition.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are problems hindering students' skill acquisition in clothing and textiles courses?
2. What are the motivational strategies for enhancing students' skill acquisition in clothing and textiles courses?

### **Methodology**

**Design and area of the Study:** The study adopted descriptive research design. The area of the study was Lagos State. There were only four tertiary institutions offering Home Economics Education in Lagos State at the time of the study.

**Population for the Study:** The total population was one hundred and eighty (180) which consisted of all Home Economics students and lecturers in four tertiary institutions in Lagos State. In University of Lagos (Unilag), there are three (3) lecturers in Home Economics unit and fifty (50) students; in Federal College of Education (Technical) Akoka [FCE(T)A],

there are nine (9) lecturers in Home Economics unit and fifty-seven (57) students; in Adeniran Ogunsaya College of Education (AOCOED), there are five (5) lecturers and thirty-seven (37) students while in Yaba College of Technology, affiliated to University of Nigeria, Nsukka [YCT(UNN)], there are three (3) lecturers in Home Economics Unit and sixteen (16) students. This population was considered small and manageable, so the entire population was studied. There was no sampling.

### **Instrument for Data Collection:**

Questionnaire and interview schedule were used for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A dealt with demographic data of the respondents while section B dealt with the purposes of the study. It had a 4-point scale of: Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4, Agreed (A) = 3, Disagreed (D) = 2, Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1. Three Home Economics lecturers in Yaba College of Technology, Yaba, Lagos; University of Lagos and Federal College of Education (Technical) Akoka, Lagos, validated the instrument. Cronbach Alpha method was used in determining the internal consistency of the instrument and it yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.92.

**Method of Data Collection:** One hundred and eighty copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the lecturers and students. Efforts were made to ensure that the items were filled correctly without omitting any of the needed information. The questionnaires were retrieved immediately. All the questionnaires were returned showing 100% return rate.

**Method of Data Analysis:** Data were analyzed using mean. Mean ratings from 2.5 and above were considered as agreed

upon while mean ratings of 2.49 and below were considered as disagreed upon.

### Findings of the Study

**Personal Data of Respondents:** Result showed that the lecturers in Home Economics Department in the four tertiary institutions in Lagos State are all females. Data on the qualification of lecturers teaching clothing and textiles' courses

indicated that three had MSc., two had MEd. and one had BSc.(Ed). The lecturer's years of experience showed that two had 20 years and above teaching experiences while four had 5-10 years teaching experiences.

### Problem Hindering Skill acquisition in Clothing and Textiles

**Table 1: Mean Responses on Problems Hindering Students' Skill Acquisition in Clothing and Textiles.**

S/N	Problems hindering Students' Skill Acquisition in Clothing and Textiles	X	Decision
1	Method of teaching may demotivate student's performance in clothing and textiles.	3.51	Agreed
2	Inadequate facilities and infrastructures may affect student's skill acquisition rate.	3.76	Agreed
3	Inadequate time for practical will affect students' performance in clothing and textile.	3.48	Agreed
4	Lack of instructional materials may not affect students' performance.	2.14	Disagreed
5	Inadequate tools and equipment makes it hard for students to acquire skills and perform better in clothing and textiles.	3.55	Agreed
6	Inadequate laboratories, workshop demotivates students' performance in clothing and textiles.	3.54	Agreed
7	Inadequate qualified teachers could motivate students' interest in clothing and textiles.	2.00	Disagreed

Table 1 shows that almost all the respondents agreed with the items listed as problems hindering students' skill acquisition in clothing and textiles.

Information generated from interview on problems hindering students' skill acquisition in clothing and textiles was summarized as:

(i) Lack of technology tools and equipment in the schools. These technology tools include Computer Aided Pattern Drafting software, computerized sewing machines for industrial designs and embroidery, specialized machine accessories for sewing bags, shoes, caps and duvet.

(ii) Lack of machines for knitting and looms for weaving.

(iii) Inadequate funding and lack of incentives and subsidized materials for practicals.

(iv) Lack of storage space in clothing laboratories and the cumbersome nature of carrying brown papers and calico used for pattern drafting, alteration and adaptation.

(v) Poor perception of the course. Respondents mentioned that people still feel that Home Economics is meant for those who are academically weak. Some of the students stated that they found themselves in Home Economics

Department because other departments refused them admission.  
 (vi) Inadequate manpower and specialists in Clothing and Textiles.

**Strategies for Improving Students' Skill Acquisition**

**Table 2: Mean Responses on Motivational Strategies for Improving Students' Skill Acquisition in Clothing and Textile Courses.**

S/N	Strategies for Improving Students' skill Acquisition in Clothing and Textile Courses.	X	Decision
1	Lecturers should adopt teaching methods that can impart the needed skills and knowledge to the students	3.51	Agreed
2	Inadequate facilities and infrastructure may affect student's skill acquisition rates	3.76	Agreed
3	Inadequate practical will affect student's skill acquisition rates in clothing and textiles	3.48	Agreed
4	Lack of instructional material may not affect student's skill acquisition rates	2.14	Disagreed
5	Inadequate tools and equipment makes it difficult for students to acquire the needed skills in clothing and textiles courses.	3.55	Agreed
6	Ill equipped laboratories will demotivate students and affect their skill acquisition rates.	3.54	Agreed
7	Provision of functional tools and equipment for effective teaching and learning would motivate students and improve their performances in clothing and textiles courses.	3.59	Agreed
8	Exhibiting the items produced by the students would help to encourage and motivate students	3.66	Agreed
9	In-service training should be provided for lecturers to help up-date their knowledge	3.65	Agreed
10	Professionally trained clothing and textiles personnel should be employed to teach the courses.	3.34	Agreed
11	Clothing and textiles teachers should take students out on field trips to textile industries and sewing institutes to motivate the students.	3.07	Agreed
12	Practical classes should be held always to support the theoretical aspects for better skill acquisition.	3.58	Agreed
13	Students should be encouraged to develop interest in clothing and textiles through positive reinforcement	3.16	Agreed
14	Fashion shows should be organised in schools to arouse students' interest in clothing and textiles courses	3.57	Agreed
15	Lecturers should always make their lessons learner centered.	3.52	Agreed
16	Students should have free access to clothing and textiles laboratories and studios for continuous practice.	3.53	Agreed
17	Government should fund clothing and textiles practical classes so as to motivate students and increase their skill acquisition.	3.53	Agreed

Table 2 reveals that the respondents agreed to improve students' skill acquisition in clothing and textiles courses with the 17 strategies that would help to

Information from interview on ways of improving students' skill acquisition was summarized as:

- (i) Need for change in the nomenclature of Home Economics.
- (ii) Provision of clothing and textiles laboratories equipped with technology tools and equipment.
- (iii) Provision of incentives such as calico and brown papers for students practicals.
- (iv) Employment of Clothing and Textiles Specialists to teach the course.
- (v) Lecturers teaching with suitable methods and techniques that increases students' participation and skill acquisition rate.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The study revealed that the problems hindering students' skill acquisition in clothing and textiles include inadequate tools and equipment which makes it difficult for students to acquire the needed skills in clothing and textiles. This is in line with Arubayi (2011) who mentioned that the major problem impeding skill acquisition in clothing and textiles is ill equipped laboratories. This implies that if students are to acquire the basic skills needed for self-reliance and national development, they need to be taught with the right tools and equipment. In the same vein, Omoniyi (1999) asserted that the use of specialized laboratories, workshops, tools and equipment are essential in teaching and acquisition of skills in clothing and textiles. The learning process is facilitated and made more meaningful when students study in classrooms that are well ventilated and adequately equipped. Also in support of this finding, Arubayi (2010) asserted that clothing and textiles is characteristically skill and activity oriented

which when properly taught with relevant tools and equipment will equip the learner with saleable skills needed for self-reliance.

Respondents mentioned that their schools have no machines for knitting and looms for weaving. Knitting machines are needed to enable the students acquire skills on how to knit cardigans, baby's set (bootees, mitten, cap, trouser, top, flannel and pants), shawls, toys, table sets and household linen. Looms for weaving on the other hand, would enable students acquire skills on how to weave clothing articles such as "Asho oke", "Akwaete" and "Anioma". These machines are needed in tertiary institutions offering clothing and textiles so as to equip students adequately so that they can easily set up business of their own and be employers of labour. Knitting and weaving of various clothing articles are very lucrative businesses in Nigeria. Home Economics graduates with such skills can make and supply cardigans to schools, make and supply customized "Asho oke" or "Anioma" for "Asho-ebi" used for parties in Nigeria. In line with this finding, Adeyemo (2009) defined skill as an act of having practical knowledge acquired through learning. Although skill depends essentially on learning, it is thought of as a quality of performance which does not depend solely upon a person's fundamental, innate capacities but must be developed through training, practice and experience. Effective acquisition of skills can only take place when learners are taught with adequate tools and equipment. To further buttress this finding, Sarpong, Howard and Amankwah (2012) mentioned that lecturers teaching Clothing and Textiles are expected to equip students with key skills and knowledge that will make their graduates employable and self-

reliance which will help reduce unemployment and poverty.

Findings revealed that there are no technology tools and equipment in the schools. These technology tools include Computer Aided Pattern Drafting software, computerized sewing machines for industrial designs and embroidery, specialized machine accessories for sewing bags, shoes, caps and duvet. These technology tools and equipment are needed to equip students with clothing skills needed in the present society. In line with this finding, Mberengwa (2004) mentioned that upgrading of clothing and textiles laboratories is a priority especially in technology equipment. Quigley, Marshall, Deaton, Cook, & Padilla, (2011) asserted that educators are charged with the great challenge and responsibility of engaging students in learning so that they develop the skills and knowledge needed to function in today's world. Also in support of the finding, World Bank Report (2012) stated that to produce well trained graduates with excellent skills, further and higher education institutions must be able to bring together the minimal inputs necessary for successful performance and skill acquisition.

The study also revealed that methods of teaching may demotivate students' skill acquisition in clothing and textiles courses. This finding corroborates Arubayi and Obunadike (2011), who stated that the teacher has enormous role to play in motivating and imparting knowledge in clothing and textiles to students. The effectiveness of the teacher depends on the application and transfer of technical and professional skills, knowledge and competencies to the learner and the management of the learning environment. The finding is also in line with Ogwu and

Oranu (2006) that methods of teaching, lack of utilization of teaching aids constituted problems to the teaching and learning of clothing and textiles courses.

Respondents complained that inadequate funding is a major problem facing skill acquisition in Clothing and Textiles. Clothing and Textile as a skill oriented course is capital intensive. Students are faced with the problem of buying commercial patterns, brown papers and calico for pattern drafting, alteration and adaptation practical. However, when there is proper funding and provision of adequate tools and equipment, students' interest and skill acquisition rates will be increased. In support of this finding, Arubayi (2014) mentioned that funding is the life-wire of any educational program and the bed rock for any effective acquisition of practical skills. No practical skill can be acquired without the provision of funds for procurement of consumables and non-consumable resource materials. If Clothing and Textiles is to meet the national goals as stipulated in the policy document on Education (2004), the programme should be properly funded.

### **Conclusion**

Clothing and Textiles is a practical oriented course with emphasis on skill acquisition. Skill is the ability to perform some tasks creditably. Skill acquisition depends essentially on learning which must be developed through training, practice and experience. The desired objectives of Clothing and Textiles cannot be achieved without making provision for basic technology resources necessary for skill acquisition. Lecturers need to expose students to strategies and techniques that will assist them to acquire life skills and competences to maximize their potentials

for successful employment and self-reliance.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- There should be provision of well-equipped laboratories with technology tools and equipment.
- Lecturers teaching clothing and textiles courses should adopt teaching methods that can impart the needed skills and knowledge to the students.
- Clothing articles produced by the students should be exhibited to encourage and motivate the students.
- Students' practical classes should be funded by the school to motivate the students.
- Fashion shows should be organized to motivate the students.
- Clothing and textiles lecturers should take their students on field trips to textile industries and sewing institutes to motivate the students and increase their interest.

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