

## **Ogun State Employment Generation Programme and Poverty Status of Interior Decoration Skills Beneficiaries**

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### **Abstract**

This study examined Ogun State Employment Generation Programme (OGEGEP) and the poverty status of interior decoration skills beneficiaries. Population was made up of beneficiaries of OGEGEP training. Data were collected using questionnaire containing information on respondents' poverty status before and after training and other relevant variables. Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, and mean. Results indicate that beneficiaries were 25 years old. Majority female (67.3%), single (71.4%), parent-sponsored (85.7%) and their extent of material utilization in interior decoration skills were high (57.1%). Almost half (46.9%) of the beneficiaries had their poverty index ranged between the average of ₦19,861.00 and a maximum of ₦199,000.00 per annum. Their poverty status was categorized as better off because the beneficiaries' economic worth improved post-training. It was recommended that subsequent Ogun state governments should nurture and not neglect the goals of OGEGEP; rather they should improve on them, even if they want to initiate new programmes.

**Keywords:** OGEGEP, Interior, Decoration, Skills, Poverty, Beneficiaries.

### **Introduction**

The multifaceted perspective of poverty makes a definite and universally accepted definition of poverty difficult, largely because it affects many aspects of the human conditions, including physical, moral and psychological.

Khan (2000) stated that poverty is not only a state of existence but a process with many dimensions and complexities. Furthermore, Olatomide (2012) opined that different criteria have been used to conceptualize poverty, most analyses follow the

conventional view of poverty as a result of insufficient income for securing basic goods and services. Akinyemi and Torimiro (2008) posited that poverty is a state of having little or no money or other endowments and not being able to get the necessities of life. Adeola and Ayoade (2012) also asserted that poverty is a condition of insufficient resources or income, a violation of human welfare or dignity.

Poverty in Nigeria manifests in many ways such as unemployment, resulting into high incidence of many forms of social ills such as arm robbery, political thuggery, child labour, human trafficking, prostitution, internet fraud, cultism, corruption, riot, hooliganism, touting, sycophancy and terrorism that is currently disturbing global and national peace (Olaosebikan, 2014; Adeniji 2010). Substantial evidences have shown that nations and individuals that had their rate of poverty reduced invest greatly in skill development and vocational training for creating jobs as well as increasing national productivity. Ezeoguine and Ukpore (2011) asserted that vocational and technical skills are basic and instrumental to technological advancement of any nation.

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and indeed the black nation of the world with a population of 140 million people, based on 2006 National population Census and 163

million based on National Commission's estimates (NNP, 2012). Furthermore, the World Bank opined approximately 184 million inhabitants Nigeria accounts for 47% of West Africa's population, and has the largest population of youth in the world (World Bank, 2017). However, poverty reduction and job creation have not kept pace with population growth implying progress towards fulfilling many of the Sustainable Development Goals has been slow. Moreover, Nigeria ranked 153 out of 186 countries of the 2013 United Nations Human Development Index (Bangudu, 2013). Fnae, Adeniji, & Adu, 2008; Okafor, 2011; Kakwagh & Ikuba, 2010 stated that unemployment is as a result of rapid growth in population, rural-urban migration, wrong perception of policy makers, lack of employable skills and lack of entrepreneurial training. Babalola (2011) posited that sufficient attention is not given to skill training for youths and adults. Hence many graduates in Nigeria lack entrepreneurial skills to facilitate self employment (Oladele, Akeke and Oladunjoye, 2011). The goals of wealth creation or generation, poverty reduction and value re-orientation can only be attained and sustained through efficient education systems which impact the relevant skills in knowledge, capacities, attitudes and values. (Agi and Yellowe, 2013).

Nigerian government focused on poverty alleviation as part of the activities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in response to increasing poverty situation thus committed lots of resources to programmes and projects aimed at alleviating poverty. Ogun State Employment Generation Programme (OGEGEP) is one of the programmes in Ogun State set up to tackle unemployment challenge in the state. OGEGEP was established in 2003 by Ogun State government in Abeokuta, to train unemployed youth on various agricultural and non agricultural related vocations. Some priority areas for intervention are agricultural activities, agro allied, processing, and craftsmanship, including dressmaking, interior decoration, indigenous resist fabric production and general services. A weekly stipend of a thousand naira was given to each trainee by the Ogun State government. The form obtained by the beneficiaries to register for the training was free. The training lasts for a period of three months. Thereafter, a certificate of training is offered to the graduates by the Bureau of Employment. The intervention mandate was to mobilize resources from all tiers of government in the state for economic empowerment. Resources generated are being used to spur the economic activities at the grassroots thereby promoting the wellbeing of the

people and ensuring sustainability (Bureau of Employment, 2008).

In spite of the government's interest in initiating programmes and projects for the improvement of the living standard of Nigerians, there has been increase in the poverty level. These alarming indicators made Ogun State government to review the existing poverty alleviation scheme with a view to harmonizing and improving on them. Thus there is the need to check if the interior decoration skills acquired by the beneficiaries have improved their poverty status (economic worth) hence bring about a sustainable livelihood.

Onwuasoanya (2010) opined that the need for man to create for himself pleasant environment has brought about the conscious effort by artists to design and produce a wide range of interior decorative fabrics. She stressed that some materials have been produced to enhance and add interest to general appearance of his home and environment. Therefore man has explored with materials such as fiber, beads, wood, paper, wool to mention few. Interior decoration has become a popular vocation and more people are involved in it.

Interior decoration is an art of beautifying rooms and other indoor areas of the house so that they become attractive, comfortable and useful. Floors, walls, and ceilings are often

decorated using furniture and fixtures, carpets and rugs, draperies or curtains, lighting, paint, wall coverings, hangings, flowers as well as many other items that may contribute to the creation of an interior that is beautiful (Anyakoha, 2015). Moreover, Forster (2014) defined interior decoration as the production of soft furnishings for homes and offices. That corroborated the findings of Onwuasoanya (2010) who posited that textile materials were being used to decorate the home. Their products range from curtains, window dressing, cushion covers right down to flowers. An interior decorator is responsible for selecting suitable textile, lighting and an overall colour scheme for rooms.

### **Research objectives**

The broad objective of this study was to evaluate the influence of employment generation programme on poverty status of interior decoration skills beneficiaries in Ogun State. Specifically, this study:

1. described the personal characteristics of OGE GEP beneficiaries in interior decoration skills;
2. determined the extent of utilization of the materials in acquiring interior decoration skills;
3. determined the change in the poverty status of OGE GEP beneficiaries in interior decoration

skills before and after the programme.

### **Methodology**

**Study area:** The study was carried out in Ogun State, Nigeria. Geographically, Ogun State lies between latitude 6°N and 8°N and longitude 2°E and 5°E. It is located in the southwestern rainforest zone of Nigeria. The state is bounded on the west by the Republic of Benin and on the east by Ondo State. To the north of the State are Oyo and Osun State while Lagos State and the Atlantic Ocean lie south. With the relative geographical setting of the State, it shares international boundary with the Republic of Benin particularly Idi Iroko through which it has enjoyed tremendous association with other West African countries. Ogun State serves as the entry point for goods from these countries into Nigeria, hence it is called gateway to Nigeria. Agriculture remains the mainstay of the state. The people of Ogun State are mainly farmers producing food and cash crops such as cassava, maize, melon, cocoyam, yam, cowpea, rice, cocoa, kola, oil palm, rubber, citrus, plantain, and coffee.

**Population for the study:** The population for this study included all the 94 beneficiaries of Ogun State Employment Generation Programme in interior decoration skills acquisition.

***Sampling procedure and sampling size:***

A two-stage sampling procedure was used in selecting respondents. In the first stage, purposive sampling method was used to select interior decoration skills beneficiaries from all the different skills acquisition of OGESEP intervention because they were the focused beneficiaries of this study and had a high number of beneficiaries (94). In the second stage, snow ball method was used to reach the interior decoration skills beneficiaries as they were not located in one place. Therefore, few of them were identified and were used to locate other interior decoration beneficiaries. In all, a total of 49 beneficiaries (more than 50% of the beneficiaries) were eventually reached.

***Instrument for data collection:*** Primary data were collected using well-structured questionnaire. Variables measured were: respondents' personal characteristics; the extent of utilization of the materials in acquiring interior decoration skills; and the change in poverty status of interior decoration skills beneficiaries before and after the intervention. The respondents' personal characteristics such as their age, household size and year of enrolment were measured at interval level. Moreover, their sex, religion, educational level, and sponsorship were measured at nominal level. The extent of utilization of the materials in acquiring the interior decoration skills

were determined by making a list of the different indigenous and contemporary materials utilized by the beneficiaries. These were operationalised as: to a greater extent, to a lesser extent, or not at all and scores of 2, 1, and 0 were assigned respectively. Each of the respondents had a score for utilization. The highest obtainable score was 32 and the lowest obtainable score was zero (0). An index for utilization was obtained for each of the respondents from which the mean utilization scores were computed. This was used to categorize respondents into high (Scores greater or equal to mean) and low (Scores less than mean). s

The change in poverty status of the beneficiaries was determined by asking the respondents to state their annual income, and expenditure on items such as food, drug, rent (house and shop), electricity, social event, transportation, toiletries, before and after the programme. Their poverty index before and after the programme was determined. Poverty index= (Income-expenditure)/number of household. The change in poverty index was determined. The minimum value, maximum value and the mean of the change in poverty status was also obtained. These were used to categorize the level of change in poverty status into worse off (minimum value to - 0.01), moderately improved (0.01 to < mean), and better off ( $\geq$  mean to

maximum value). Data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and mean.

## Results

**Table 1:** Distribution of respondents' selected personal characteristics (n=49)

Variables	Interior decoration beneficiaries	
	F (%)	$\bar{x}$
<b>Age (years)</b>		
≤ 20	10 (20.4)	25.5
21-30	34 (69.3)	
31-40	3 (6.1)	
41-50	2 (4.0)	
Total	49 (100.0)	
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	16 (32.7)	
Female	33 (67.3)	
Total	49 (100.0)	
<b>Religion</b>		
Islam	21 (42.9)	
Christianity	28 (57.1)	
Traditional	0 (0.0)	
Total	49 (100.0)	
<b>Educational level</b>		
Primary school	1 (2.0)	
Secondary school	15 (30.6)	
NCE	13 (26.5)	
OND	10 (20.4)	
HND	1 (2.0)	
B. Sc	9 (18.4)	
Total	49 (100.0)	

Variables	Interior decoration beneficiaries	
	F (%)	$\bar{x}$
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	35 (71.4)	
Married	14 (28.6)	
Separated	0 (0.0)	
Widowed	0 (0.0)	
Total	49 (100.0)	
<b>Household size</b>		
1-3	33 (67.3)	3.6
4-6	16 (32.6)	
>6	0 (0.00)	
Total	49 (100.0)	
<b>Sponsorship</b>		
Parent	42 (85.7)	
Guardian	4 (8.2)	
Self	3 (6.1)	
Government	0 (0.0)	
Total	49 (100.0)	
<b>What year did you enroll for the programme?</b>		
2003-2006	1 (2.0)	
2007-2010	7 (14.3)	
2011-2014	41 (83.7)	
Total	49 (100.0)	
<b>How many months did you spend?</b>		
3-5	7 (14.3)	
6-8	35 (71.4)	
9-11	1 (2.0)	
12-14	6 (12.2)	
Total	49 (100.0)	

Source: Field survey, 2015.

**Table 2.1:** Distribution of respondents based on extent of utilization of materials in acquiring interior decoration skills (n=49)

Activities	Not at all	To a lesser extent	To a greater extent
<b>Indigenous materials</b>			
Ofi	15 (30.6)	22 (44.9)	12 (24.5)
Ankara	7 (14.3)	16 (32.7)	26 (53.1)
Kente	21 (42.9)	19 (38.8)	9 (53.1)
Adire	6 (12.2)	22 (44.9)	21 (42.9)
Calabash	7 (14.3)	28 (57.1)	14 (28.6)
Mat	11 (22.4)	21 (42.9)	17 (34.7)
Beads	11 (22.4)	12 (24.5)	26 (53.1)
Horsetail	20 (40.8)	19 (38.8)	10 (20.4)
<b>Contemporary materials</b>			
Cotton	6 (12.2)	14 (28.6)	29 (59.2)
Poplin	18 (36.7)	20 (40.8)	11 (22.4)
Chiffon	11 (22.4)	18 (36.7)	20 (40.8)
Satin	8 (16.3)	15 (30.6)	26 (53.1)
Linen	7 (14.3)	17 (34.7)	25 (51.0)
Rug	8 (16.3)	15 (30.6)	26 (53.1)
Artificial flowers	5 (10.2)	16 (32.7)	28 (57.1)
Lights	5 (10.2)	18 (36.7)	26 (53.1)

Source: Field survey, 2015.

Figures in parentheses are percentages

**Table 2.2:** Categorization of respondents based on extent of utilization of materials in acquiring interior decoration skills (n=49)

Utilization score	Frequency	Percentage	Range
Low	21	42.9	0-0.93
High	28	57.1	0.94-1.87
Total	49	100	

Source: Field survey, 2015.

Mean: 0.94

Standard deviation: 0.75.

**Table 3:** Distribution of interior decoration respondents according to their level of change in poverty status

Category of change in poverty status	Category of change in poverty status/ Poverty index score(₦)	Frequency (%)
Worse off	-214,866.67 to -0.01	18 (36.7)
Moderately improved	0.01 to 19,860.00	8 (16.3)
Better off	19,861.00 to 199,000.00	23 (46.9)
Total		49 (100.0)

Source: Field survey, 2015. Mean: ₦19,860.58 Standard deviation: ₦59,776.87

### Discussion

Table 1 shows that the interior decoration skills beneficiaries had the mean age of 25.5 years, with majority (69.3%) within the age bracket of 21 to 30 years. This indicated that majority of the beneficiaries were active and adventurous and would probably put to practice the various skills acquired. There were more females (67.3%) than males (32.7%), majority were Christians (57.1%), had secondary school education (30.6%), implying majority of the beneficiaries were literate. Zeardon (2000) stressed that better educated members have access to any training skills on offer and are more likely to establish their enterprises. About 71.4% of the beneficiaries were single, 85.7% parent-sponsored; this result contradicts Bureau of Employment Generation (2008) that the beneficiaries were sponsored by the government. 71.4% spent 6 to 8 months, 83.7% enrolled within the year 2011 to 2014, and they had a mean household size of 3.6 persons.

Table 2.1 presents a list of various indigenous and contemporary materials with the distribution of extent of utilization in acquiring interior decoration skills by the beneficiaries. Although indigenous materials like ofi (24.5%), ankara (53.1%), kente (18.4%), adire (42.9%), calabash (28.6%) were used to a lesser extent, a very large proportion of the contemporary materials like cotton (59.2%), satin (53.1%), rug (53.1%), artificial flowers (57.1%), light (53.1%), were utilized to a greater extent by the beneficiaries in acquiring the interior decoration skills. This may be as a result of the higher demand for contemporary materials rather than indigenous materials for interior decoration by the customers. Although Table 2.2 further reveal that the extent of utilization of materials in acquiring interior decoration skills is high (57.1%) among majority, as corroborated by Onwuasoanya (2010) who opined that textile materials are used in decorating homes.



Nonetheless, Rogers (2001) posited the need for practical training so as to make skill acquisition more useful, hence the need for more practical training in the use of indigenous materials to enhance more of interior decoration skills utilization to a greater extent. Baiyelo and Adeyemo (2001) further stressed that if skills are given satisfactorily, the worker or beneficiary gets satisfaction in correspondence. Moreover, Darwist and Lofquist, as cited by Oduneye (2015), emphasised that if this process is sustained, it culminates in promotion, retaining and prolonged tenure that leads to productivity.

Table 3 shows the distribution according to the level of change in poverty status of the beneficiaries that acquired interior decoration skills. The findings show that more than one third (36.7%) of the beneficiaries were worse off post training because their poverty index ranged between a minimum of -₦214,886.67 and -₦0.01 per annum. Moreover, less than a quarter (16.3%) of the beneficiaries had a moderately improved poverty status as a result of their poverty index that ranged between ₦0.01.00 to an overall average of ₦19,860.00 per annum while almost half (46.9%) of the beneficiaries were categorized as better off post training. This is because apart from experiencing a positive change in poverty status (poverty status ranging from zero and

above), their poverty index ranged between the average of ₦19,861.00 and a maximum of ₦199,000.00 per annum. Hence, their poverty status is classified as better off post training since they were able to overcome the condition of poverty where there is insufficient resources or income which violated their human dignity (Adeola and Ayoade, 2012).

Furthermore, beneficiaries that were worse off were not self-reliant post training their standard of living were not improved. That was evident in their negative poverty index range (-₦214,886.67 to -₦0.01) indicating that their poverty status was worse off post training such that the sustainability of their livelihood is not guaranteed. Most of them still borrow with huge debts to pay and beg for money in order to make ends meet. These corroborated Akinyemi and Torimiro (2008) who emphasized that poverty is a condition of having little or no money or other endowments and not being able to get the necessities of life. According to Kankwenda, Gregoire, Legros and Quedraogo (2000), to be able to graduate from this poverty situation, income generated must be reasonable enough to meet daily needs and must be sustainable. This would lead to sustainable human development in the end. However, these category of respondents were not able to attain that, thus they were classified as worse

off after training. This may be due to the low (42.9%) utilization of some indigenous materials like ofi, kente, adire, mat, and calabash in acquiring interior decoration skills hence they were unable to earn enough money to improve their standard of living and ensure a sustainable livelihood.

Beneficiaries with moderately improved poverty status still need to depend on others for survival though they could afford a little bit more of nourishing meals, buy few dresses and shoes, purchase some recharge cards, spend a little on gifts, rent very cheap apartments and may struggle to save some amount of money. However, the majority of the interior decoration skills beneficiaries (46.9%) whose poverty status were better off post training became self-reliant, they had more money to spend to meet their needs thereby able to improve their standard of living, hence ensure a sustainable livelihood. They could afford more nourishing meals, buy more dresses and shoes, purchase more recharge cards, attend more functions, give more gifts, rent comfortable personal apartment and conveniently save some amount of money. That was as a result of the high (57.1%) extent of utilization of the materials in acquiring interior decoration skills.

### **Conclusion**

Most of the interior decoration skills beneficiaries were youth, female and parent-sponsored. Although the extent of utilization indigenous material was low, the extent of utilization of the materials in acquiring interior decoration skills was high among more than half of the beneficiaries, especially the use of contemporary materials. Majority of beneficiaries were better off post intervention. That is they had improved poverty status after utilizing materials to acquire interior decoration skills thus became self-reliant. A programme is beneficial when there is an improvement in status. The interior decoration skills acquired equipped the beneficiaries to exploit the wealth creating opportunities in interior decoration thus bringing about a sustainable livelihood. Also, the interior decoration skills acquired enabled them to be professionals, well sought after which was not so before the skills were acquired.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings:

1. The youths should be educated that interior decoration is not a skill that can be learnt and utilized only by females; it is a lucrative skill for both sexes.
2. More creative utilization of indigenous materials in acquiring

interior decoration skills should be promoted to foster patronage.

3. Subsequent Ogun state governments should nurture and not neglect the goals of OGE GEP; rather they should improve on them, even if they want to initiate new programmes.

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