

# MANAGEMENT OF CLOTHING AND TEXTILES FACILITIES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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## **Abstract**

Clothing and Textiles are vital components of Home Economic Education. It is a vocation-oriented course that demands adequate facilities for its effectiveness in an institution. However, there is poor management of the available facilities in clothing and textiles laboratories in most of the secondary schools in Nigeria. This leads to undesirable consequences that affect national development. This paper posits that effective management of these facilities for proper utilization among the youths in secondary schools would lead to national development. Hence, the paper concludes and recommends that, there should be regular maintenance services of the equipment and tools to enhance maximum utilization,

## **Introduction**

Formal education in Nigeria consists of three levels namely: Primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Secondary education is the form of education children receive after primary Education, before they enter into the tertiary; Education at the secondary level according to the new National Policy on education (2004) should among other things aim at:

- a. Equipping students to live effectively in our modern age of science and technology
- b. Catering for the differences in talents, opportunities and roles possessed or open to students after their secondary course.

The form of education which seeks to satisfy the above stated aims is vocational education. Vocational education according to Okoro (1993), is any form of education whose primary purpose is to prepare persons for employment in recognized occupation. It provides skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for effective employment in specific occupations.- Skill acquisition is very important among our youths because it helps in developing intrinsic potentials in individuals.

Skill is the ability to do something expertly and well. It is an organized sequence of actions, proficiency, executed and usually displaying a flexible but systematic temporal patterning (Okorie, 2000). According to Njoku (2002), to possess skill is to demonstrate the habit of acting, thinking and behaving in a specific activity in such a way that the process becomes natural to the individual through repetition or practice. The development of skill is an important function of educational institutions especially among secondary school students. To these effects, the national policy on education (2004) opined that there are roles vocational education can play in individual in satisfying the manpower needs of the nation, hence the inclusion of vocational subjects like Home Economics.

Home Economics according to Byrd (as cited in Anyakoha, 1993), helps the individuals to learn to make a living and to learn to live a better quality life. Home Economics as a field of study includes the following: Child Development, Home Management, Consumer Education, Food and Nutrition and Clothing and Textile. At senior secondary school level, three areas of Home Economics are available to the students. Food and Nutrition, Home Management and Clothing and Textiles. These are offered as single subjects at this level.

Clothing and Textiles as a component of Home Economics is viewed by Igbo (1994), as a subject that is concerned with knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to design and sew clothes. It is

an important aspect of Home Economics education, that skills oriented subjects are taught at all levels in the Nigerian educational system. It helps to develop in individuals the needed skills which will lead to their personal development as well as national development. Clothing and Textiles is concerned with teaching the students' characteristics of different fabrics, designing, sewing and reasons for choice of clothes. It also involves the knowledge of the different textiles, principles of clothing selection and maintenance, interior decoration etc.

According to Oranu and Anyakoha (1992), clothing and textiles is an aspect of Home Economics which prepares individuals for employment opportunities in occupations relating to clothing selection,

clothing construction, costume designing, clothing care, craft work as well as clothing economics. It is also a course that is rich with varieties of saleable skills for self-reliance and national development. Clothing and Textiles is a major branch of Home Economics education that prepares students towards self-reliance in creativity and artistic skills. It is a skill-oriented subject that practical work constitutes a vital component for its effectiveness. Therefore, management of facilities in clothing and textiles laboratory to foster skills among these youth is paramount.

### **Availability, Adequacy and Relevance of Facilities for Teaching Clothing and Textiles in Secondary Schools**

School facilities and equipment are the bedrock in conducting any educational programme. -The present Nigerian educational system calls for adequate provision and utilization of instructional materials especially in science and vocational subjects such as Home Economic education. Instructional aids have astonishing power of attracting and holding students' attention. Colley.(1982, p. 42), supported this fact when they said, "Students' interest can be captured and learning is facilitated when appropriate facilities are used in conjunction with the teachers' presentation", j

Availability of Clothing and Textile facilities therefore aid the teachers in achieving effective teaching by helping to secure students' attention and stimulate their imagination and active thinking. Okafor (1994), explains that, through the use of teaching materials, the teacher succeeds in appealing to various senses of learning such as sense of sight, touch and smell. They appeal to many sensories known as the multi-sensory approach which ensure vivid teaching on the part of the teachers and vivid learning on the part of the students. However, majority of Nigerian secondary schools today,. particularly in Benue State lack basic facilities in Clothing and Textiles such as sewing machines, weaving machines, embroidery machines etc, which are indispensable in enhancing the acquisition of practical experiences needed in this programme.

Writing on the importance of instructional materials in teaching, Colley (1982), states that if can help the students grasp relationships pick out similarities and differences so that they are led to generalize, discriminate and organize their knowledge. According to him, the teacher who makes a balance appeal to the sense by using verbal, visual and practical methods is accommodating students' individual differences. Richard (1981), relates the suggestion that we remember 10% of what we hear 50% of what we hear and see, and over 80% of what we hear and do. Adajai, (as cited in Anyakoha 1994), stresses that instructional materials reduce the difficulties in understanding of a skill and facilitate practice. Thus, Clothing and Textiles materials aid the teacher in achieving effective teaching by helping to secure students attention and by helping to stimulate their imagination.

Nevertheless, the issue of adequacy and relevance of Clothing and Textiles facilities is still neglected in many secondary schools today. Some secondary schools that offer Home Economics do not have a laboratory for Clothing and Textiles, then how would such schools install their facilities for use and safety. Majority of the institutions that offer Home Economics have problem of basic instructional facilities in Clothing and Textiles. Even sewing machines, side cupboard, irons (Electric

and charcoal), drafting tables which for most people constitute the mental picture of Clothing and Textiles Laboratory are lacking, dysfunctional equipment lying about are a common sight. The laboratory only bear the labels on the blocks of the building. The relevant and adequate equipment and tools are not there, due to poor handling and management.

### **Management of Clothing and Textiles Facilities**

The term "management" itself comes from the verb to manage which could mean to handle, to control, to make and keep submissive, to organize, to alter by manipulation and to carry out for a purpose.

Nwachukwu (1988, P. 44), defines management as "the coordination of all the resources of an organization through the process of planning, organizing, and controlling in order to attain organizational objectives".

According to Koontz and Wehrich (1990), management is the process of designing and maintaining an environment in which individuals working to gather in groups, efficiently accomplish selected aims. Here, management is described as an "art" that involves the application of techniques in human and public relations. The techniques in Clothing and Textiles are developed in Clothing and Textiles Laboratory (Workshop) equipped with tools and equipment. These tools and equipments have to be properly managed

for effective teaching and learning of the subject

Uzoagulu (1992), warned that, where equipment and tools are not functional or adequately provided, vocational training programmes will suffer and will lead to the production of highly unskilled personnel who will become unemployed and unproductive. He was of the view that functional tools and equipment enable secondary school students to achieve functional educational objectives. In this regard, functional equipment shall be ensured through proper maintenance and management of such facilities.

Okafor (1994), sees maintenance as a planned action or activity to ensure that a given piece of capital assets or equipment function as specified by the manufacturer. Considering the status of Clothing and textiles and the availability of its equipment in Nigerian schools. It becomes explicit that effective and adequate material maintenance in Clothing and Textiles laboratories in secondary schools is one of the challenges in the Nigerian technological growth. The problem of maintenance through, proper management should be a source of great concern to government and school administrators for the procurement of tools and equipment for clothing and Textiles programmes. These 'tools and equipment are very expensive and many schools offering Home Economics (both government and private) cannot afford to buy most of the equipment nor provide adequate numbers for students because of lack of funds. Odu (1992) and Okafor (1994), pointed out that, lack of maintenance of equipment could be due to lack of funds to purchase spare parts, lack of periodic checks of equipment, inability of equipment operators to effect' minor repairs, dishonesty and non-challant attitudes of most Nigerians towards the handling of government property.

The above statement made by Odu (1992), is very true in relation to Clothing and textiles in secondary schools in Benue state particularly. As at now material management and maintenance in Clothing and textiles suffers neglect in most of our secondary schools. This is evident by the fact that, most of these materials remain locked up in their containers, some were stolen while others were misused and destroyed. Hence, students do not have the opportunity to acquire the skills they need in Clothing and Textiles because of inability of some Home Economics teachers who lack the psychomotor skills in sewing and therefore could not effectively operate these equipment in order to teach these students.

Therefore, to ensure good management of these equipment demands instructional supervision, instructional supervision is a key factor in effective school administration. Nnabuo (1996), emphasizes the need for effective supervision and inspection in modern school management for the achievement of overall goals of the school. When there is a good supervision, it would examine the maintenance and the usage-of Clothing and textiles facilities for proper procurement of such facilities.

### **The Role Of Clothing and Textiles in National Development**

Clothing and Textiles has played a substantial role in national development. Economic growth model takes explicit account of the national investment of human beings and it was stated that clothing has a great impact on productivity. Coller (1974), opined that in the history of man, our great grandparents knowing the importance of clothing were using local spinning to get yarns for weaving. And in the process of weaving, women were using lesser scale and long shuttles locally, while men used harder scale, and short shuttle, which could be tiring and boring. With the knowledge of textile industries, through the process of industrialization, variety of clothes are made within a short time and exposed to the public, through advertisement and market displays. Subsequently, Clothing and Textiles also help in the selection and sewing of these cloths into styles, through fashion designs and fabric demonstration.

Clothing styles is a characteristic or distinctive form of dress; it possess certain recognized qualities or features which distinguish it from other forms. The styling of a garment refers to its design or cut, a quality that can be described in terms of its line, form or proportion. Thus, there are styles of coat, (box, redingote, wrap-around) etc styles of sleeve (bishop, dolman, kimono, raglan) styles of fit (tight, moderate or free etc).

In our present world, a person's first judgment of others is based on clothing styles. The rest, including appreciation comes only second. According to Ozongwu and Anyakoha (2005), "two theoretical perspectives are useful in explaining communication via clothing, these includes; symbolic interaction theory and impression formation theory. They explained that symbolic interaction theory emphasises the importance of social interaction as a basis of minimal outward cues. They also stated that as viewer perceives another person he gathers information about the other and processes this

information in his mind to form a coherent impression that enables a definition of the characteristic of the observed person.

Clothing serves as a non-verbal communicator and message centre (Vanderhoff, 1988). It tells who we are in the society, what we want, our talent, our needs, our personality and dispositions. All these characteristics of clothing centre around the attribute of socialization which in turn lead to national development. Although clothing messages may sometimes be misinterpreted and falsified, however, all situations and occasions have parameter of clothing that are expected and accepted by the norms of that social group. People are in most cases, judged on the appropriateness of the clothing they wear for each occasion and activities. These are enormous challenges, opportunities and prospects on our teeming youth, that demand effective teaching through appropriate usage of facilities. This may also foster national development as well as a linkage to global market.

Clothing and textiles as an aspect of Home Economics education can also train an individual for gainful employment either on part-time or full-time basis as fashion and clothing adviser, fabric demonstrator, professional dress maker, dry cleaners, wardrobe specialist, textile production worker etc, to limit the problems of unemployment in the country which is an indicator of national development. Igbo (1994), has identified many job opportunities for youths in the area of clothing and Textiles. According to him, Clothing and Textiles industries in Nigeria is the largest employer of labour. He emphasizes that, there is a great demand for manpower from the factory to the managerial

level. The above illustration given by Igbo (1994), is ideal because the knowledge of clothing and textiles actually equip secondary school students in Nigeria with job entry skills with which they can be readily employable.

### **Handicraft And Needlework**

These are also vital aspects of clothing and Textiles to raise economic standard in the nation. Some of the examples of needlework are embroideries, smoked baby dress, quilted bed spread, table lines and mats, count work, crocheting, knitting of cardigans, shawls, making of foot rugs etc while Handicrafts includes making of bead bags, basket making, weaving of mats, mouldings and painting of objects, pottery and woodwork, etc. most of the materials used in the production are the available local resources in our community. They are very cheap and easy to handle. These encourage the home maker to be more skillful in handicraft in order to raise the standard of household resources in the family, community, and to the nation at large, to increase economic development. And this is national development.

Therefore, for our society to be productive in national development, effective management of clothing and Textiles facilities to ensure students' academic performance in this vocational course should not be neglected.

### **Recommendations**

1. Staff and students should be careful in handling the facilities to ensure proper management and maintenance of available tools and equipment.
2. Home Economics teachers should be encouraged to acquire further education in order to gain more knowledge of the job. Workshops and conferences should be organized for them at both state and Federal levels to upgrade their teaching/learning abilities
3. There should be regular maintenance services of the facilities to ensure maximum utilization of the equipment.
4. School administrators or proprietors should ensure that sufficient funds are available for necessary maintenance cost
5. Management should also ensure that only versed operators should operate the machines.
6. Honesty and good attitude towards government properties should be encouraged,

### **Conclusion**

Maintenance and management of tools and equipment are very important in order to promote skill development in Clothing and Textiles laboratory. Most Clothing and Textiles laboratories in many secondary schools in Nigeria and Benue State in particular had very few equipment for their students. These tools and equipment should not be allowed to break down due to lack of maintenance and poor management.

For effective management of these facilities, it is important that maintenance service is carried out regularly to enhance maximum utilization of the equipment. This will in turn enhance teaching and

adequate skill acquisition in Clothing and Textiles laboratories. When proper management is given to these tools and equipment it would ensure that appropriate transformation of skills in Clothing and Textiles would be given to students and the objectives of meeting the challenges of our contemporary society in national development would be achieved.

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