

ISSUES AFFECTING TEXTILE DESIGN IN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS IN ENUGU STATE

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Abstract

Textile Industries used to be the largest employers of labour in Nigeria after the public service, but due to certain constraints; such as smuggling, dumping, lack of access to finance and issues bordering on power over 130 textile companies have so far perished. This industry includes textile design. Textile design have many opportunities that are yet untapped forthwith. It is an area that entrepreneurs could work very well with because it has many areas untapped. One can take off from these and start with small scale industry. These areas include weaving, dyeing, printing and paper design to mention but a few. Therefore, the write up focuses on issues or factors affecting textile design and to proffer solutions to the factors in higher institutions in Enugu State.

Keynote: *Textile Design, Factors affecting textile design, Solutions and Recommendations.*

Introduction

Textile Industries used to be the largest employer of labour in Nigeria after the public service in Nigeria but due to certain constraints; such as smuggling, dumping, lack of access to finance and issues, bordering on power, over 130 textile companies have perished. Furthermore, textile used to be the core industry in Nigeria with major share in exports and almost gross domestic product. Then it provides jobs to more than 60 percent of the country's total workforce in those days. This massive contribution of textile to the economy rightly made it the core industrial hub of the nation. Textile industries have faced many problems which resulted in the stagnation of the growth of the industry (Maiwada and Elisha, 2018)

This write up discusses issues engulfing textile design, that after reading and studying, the readers and students would be able to know and understand principles and issues facing their specialized areas in textile aspect. As a specialist in textile, one should be able to know the principles and issues facing textile and how to give solutions to these issues affecting textile design.

The main objective of this study was to assess the factors affecting the condition of textile design in higher institutions in Enugu State and to proffer solutions. The study determined the following:

- Factors affecting textile design in higher institutions in Enugu State
- Challenges facing the institutions offering the course
- The role of government in textile design department
- Professional attitude in growing the area of study
- The wide gap between the old designers and the young designers

Therefore, the area of Textile Design has principles and issues taking care of its designing and production. Textile in a broad sense is classified into two basic aspects. These are Textile Design and Textile Science.

Textile science is the scientific aspect of studying textile materials. It includes its analysis and production. Textile science also takes care of properties involved in the raw materials of textile like, fiber/fabric, dyes and chemicals to use in production of textile goods. (Heaher, 2018)

Thus, this study, focuses on textile design and issues effecting textile design only. Textile design is the artistic aspect of textile. This textile design deals with aesthetic and functional productions. It also takes care of teaching and learning in this specialized area.

Textile design consists of **two** broad areas; **firstly**, production which includes, ginning of fiber, spinning or conversion of the fiber to yarns from the yarns to fabrics known as weaving **secondly** paper designs and resist-techniques. Resist-technique handles textile fabric design that is dyeing and printing. Paper design deals with prototype designs for wears, carpets, window and door blinds, bedspreadsetc, which are later printed or dyed into fabric. Weaving is the mother of textile design, it houses tapestry, embroidery, knitting. It gives the canvas of textile design productions. It is not limited to fabric weaving alone, it goes beyond, like mat, cap, basket and bag productions (Kasin 2019)

Textile design is a new area. There are many opportunities that are yet to be tapped forthwith. It is an area that entrepreneurs could work very well with, because it has many areas untapped. One can take off from these and start. These include; weaving, dyeing, printing and paper design, like wall paper or wrapping paper. This brings to mind what are the issues facing the textile design? Or what are the problems facing textile?

Factors affecting textile design

There are many factors affecting textile design. These factors could be streamlined to include; government attitude, education sector attitude, professional attitude, poor funding, lack of modern equipment/materials, lack of research and development. (Podgoomy, 2019)

Material/Equipment: Material plays a very important role in the textile Industries, In this context, textile design needs materials to progress in production. The materials in question include; equipment, instruments, fibers, fabrics, dyes, chemicals, designer brushes etc. Where these are not within reach, production would be difficult to achieve. It also leads to sub-standard textile production, for example, when fake dyes are used for fabric design production. The product would wash out when washing the fabric. Sometimes, the dyes are scarce. These are scarce because of huge taxes on importation of dyes and modern machinery. To this effect, modernization of textile becomes difficult.

As such, there is a need for textile designers to put their heads together to bring an end to the difficulty in getting the materials and the equipment. This is because if designers could not import the materials, the fabric design could be sub-standard.

Poor Funding: This is another issue affecting textile design production. Usually, funds are the heart or the engine that pulls an organization or establishment to success. Therefore, lack of funding in the textile design area which is the starting point of textile industry or factory is a problem. If specific fund is attached to this field of study, there is a lot to be achieved and produced into the society as the end users. The turnout of production of textile design would change the nation unemployment situation. Textile design demands a lot of equipment, materials, staffing, employers and upkeep of the establishment, Therefore, where there is no government supports for the textile designers and textile industries, production of textile goods would be affected. This is another challenge that needs to be taken care of. This then still calls for both government and textile designers to work together to solve the issue of poor funding in the sector.

Professional Attitude: In the case of professionalism, like funding, this has to do with individuals or group of individuals that come under one field of study. Textile design professionals like other specialized areas needs to encourage the younger textile designers. There is no encouragement from the senior designers to younger ones. There is no team work among fellow textile designers. There are issues such as hiding of knowledge by the senior ones, intimidation by senior designers, lack of respect by the upcoming designers, incompetence by the professionals both senior and young designers, non-participation in an event related to the area of specialization and no sound professional associations. If there is an existing one, then there is need to update it. The then textile institute seems to have phased out. Textile designer professional is an issue to be discussed at round table conference for the way forward.

Educational Sector: Education is the bedrock of any Nation. Where there is no proper starting of learners/designers, the turnout would be bad and deadly in the society because the

production given out by them would be half baked or not baked at all. In most educational institution in this field of study in Enugu State, for example, only three institutions are offering the course. Apart from this, access to functional facilities is difficult. Teaching aids and facilities have disappeared from the classroom. The other issue is no practical or demonstration materials in the studios and no workshops, dye rooms in the department. Quality teaching and non-teaching materials are lacking. There are no equipped studios or common rooms for enhancement of practice. There is no enough accommodation for the textile study in the higher institutions in this state.

Government Attitude: Government attitude towards textile design is nothing to write home about. Government is the father and head of any establishment. The duties of government are to provide site/space, support projects, motivate and encourage the designers, advertise textile designs and designers. They however, usually turn their back on textile design. There are no support and encouragement, no motivation, no provision of site/space from government, instead they would use the word you and I is the government.

Solutions

One is of the view that textile designers should carry out more research on local sources of getting the equipment and dyes. With this in place our textile products would be of quality standard. Also, the government should remove or reduce taxes on the of modern equipment else the designers and industries will continue with old ideas and methods of production.

Government should yearly allocate funds to the sector while the textile designers make sure the allocated funds are well used for the purpose the fund was meant for. The government can still play a major role in the growth of this field vertically and horizontally. Young designers should be provided with loans and subsidies to lure them towards this sector.

To have a reputable professional association and good team work, one would recommend that, senior designers should take the lead and connect both senior designers and younger ones to form an association of textile designers. With this in place, textile design would be highly praised in Enugu and Nigeria at large. The senior designers should also have the sportsmanship spirit to draw the younger ones close to work together as a team as other professional bodies are doing.

Therefore, officials in the educational sector should do something to upgrade this field of study and always provide them with the necessary items. There is no more teachers' and students' relationship existing in the educational sector as it used to be. The administrators and chief executives in the educational sector do look down on textile design area in allocation of items to the field of textile design field.

The educational administrators do not usually support textile field as other areas. They forget that all of them wear and use textile products every day of their life. Why then are they looking down on textile design? The factor could be specialized professionals' attitude. However, textile goes for all values, functions and aesthetics. Let textile designers stand firm to discuss issues with educational executives for them to see reasons why textile is important in the society.

Government should make law governing the society to support patronizing of local textile productions. Government should also support textile designers, buying their products turnout. In addition, government go extra miles to stop or reduce to 10 percent importation of fabrics from other countries. She should encourage cotton farmers by giving the farmers grant or light loan to enable them to cultivate cotton to increase fabric production.

Other factors

There are other factors affecting textile design. Some of these are silent such as lack of documentation, lack of directories, non-attendance to workshops and conferences, lack of participation in exhibitions, laziness to work or production, lack of practice and lack of continuous training. Each of these are explained below (Purushothama, 2019)

Lack of Practice: Those who read this course hope to be textile designers after graduation. Instead of using the knowledge acquired during the study, they would decide to put it under their beds switched off practicing their field of specialization. Take job in other area out of textile design. Their mindset is on getting rich quickly. Therefore, they prefer working in money sectors like banks, oil industries leaving the textile to be secondary in their agenda. They may not practice it at all in their life time.

Laziness to Production or Work: Textile designers are not willing to produce. It is because they have at the back of their minds that textile design is a lazy man's job. However, textile design is one of the most creative and dedicated field of study. It is also one of the most profitable ventures that one could pick up and stand by it and develop their income and self-employment in this generation.

Poor Attitude to Workshops: It is very important that professionals should attend a workshop at least once in a year. In the workshop, new things are learnt and such new ideas develop the one who attends the workshop. Non-attendance to workshops usually makes one to have a setback. No new ideas are learnt. At workshop also, one would meet with different people with different mindset and with new ideas. When these are shared, it would expand the knowledge of one. Textile designers show nonchalant attitude toward workshops, which is not good for a textile professional.

Non-Attendance to Conferences: Just as attendance to workshop is recommended to professionals, so also is conferences. Textile design professionals show nonchalant attitude to conferences. At conferences, conference theme is given, and sub-themes are given, papers are presented. Panels are set in each of the subject areas, individual presentations are done and defended. This deals more on facts mostly. But non-attendance by textile designers makes them to live by their old knowledge.

Lack of Participation in Exhibitions: An exhibition is the showcase of an individual or group of individuals' products. Here, works are exhibited, usually from all fields of art, which are painting, sculpture, graphics, ceramics and textile. But usually textile designs are hardly seen at exhibitions. Where possible, at least one textile design should be exhibited. Textile designers have areas to produce work than other art field. Why is it that textile designers do not showcase their works in an exhibition? Does it mean they are not creative minded? From weaving, knitting, paper design, tapestry, embroidery, dyeing and printing textile designer can develop himself or herself in one aspect and showcase in an exhibition. Therefore, textile designers are challenged to pick up their drawing boards, pencils, brushes, yarn to produce and exhibit.

Lack of Directories: Directories are documents that contain information on person. Textile designers as professionals need a directory that would link up the textile designers after school setting. Presently, if you ask any textile designer to mention five textile designers in Nigeria, he would not be able but would mention five painters or sculptors. Directory will help to connect old and upcoming textile designers.

Lack of Documentation/Publication: This is an important aspect that is affecting the textile field. The documentation and publication are very few and are outdated. Textile designers also run away from writing. If textile designers do not write about their products, stating the stages of how they achieved it, there would not be anything to fall back on to cite or make reference to. It has been very difficult to research and get something local textile has published because there are no documentations by early designers. Textile designers, do we allow the African textile, specifically Nigeria textile dead? 'No' is the answer

Lack of training

Majority of textile designers were not well-trained. In other words, they could be referred to as tracers. This is another major defect in this field. They are not willing to take part in continuous training and learning exercise.

Solutions

The government should make sure that every graduate stick to their field of study in time of recruiting exercises. Applicants must be qualified and placed in their areas of specialization by government enforcing the rules guiding employment in the country. The textile designers should develop self-confidence and change of their mindsets toward practising, consistent dedication in textile design production.

Textile designers should build up willingness and determination towards textile production and keep practicing and produce more items, exhibiting them for sales.

To succeed in life one, is expected to attend workshops or training workshops in one's area of study. This builds the individual and develops his knowledge. So, textile designers should take workshops and training seriously. Therefore, textile designers should also make it compulsory for members to attend workshops and training at least once in a year.

Textile designers should make it a point of duty for designers to attend and participate in professional conferences at least twice in a year. In so doing, new blood would be injected into the field of textile design.

Professional association should make it compulsory for textile designers to enroll, attend and participate in textile exhibitions regularly both in group and solo exhibitions at least once in each in a year.

Textile designers should create directories in both hard and soft copies, they should also create WhatsApp platform in other to link up their members. Always having meetings would also help in building the qualities relationship and good production are turn out.

So, textile designers are advised to pick up their pens and write not just using their brushes and colours designing only. They should start writing, making it a part of themselves. In so doing, they will help the younger designers to continue in the practice in writing texts.

The textile designers should be trained always in order to meet up with modern challenges and requirements.

Conclusion | Recommendation

The ways forward in textile design is for it to have its test of time. These are some of the summarized solutions/recommendations which have to be followed:

Positive Government Attitude: The government should develop positive thinking towards textile design. The government: should patronize the local textile design products, should provide site/space for the textile designers should encourage, motivate the textile designers. It should support and project textile designers and should create an avenue for the textile design to participate in one workshop or conference by sponsoring and assisting textile design workshops and conferences. It should provide an allocation of funding for textile; should give scholarship to students offering the course; should provide fund to any textile design graduate to enable him/her start a studio after school; should provide grant for entrepreneurial endeavours in textile design.

Educational Sector/Attitude: The educational sector should change their minds towards textile design. The educational sector should provide a good studying classroom; provide a good common-rooms; provide some conducive studios in institutions offering course. It provide teaching aids/apparatus in the various institutions; provide demonstration materials in the institutions; provide an accommodation, and create room for suggestion.

Professional attitude: The professionals should take their area of study serious.

They should attend conference and workshop at least once a year; make it a point of duty to exhibit at least once a year and encourage the younger ones. They stop intimidating the upcoming ones, help them grow; stop hiding their knowledge because knowledge not share is lost and reawaken the professional association that has existed, to stand as an avenue of meeting point. This professional association should organize conferences and workshops yearly if possible, etc.

Poor Funding: Textile design should be given a place in budgetary allocation. Textile design should be given an opportunity to look for support from some organizations that are willing to assist. Textile designer should be given the chance to produce and sell their products. They should be supported by the administration that is in charge etc.

Materials:

Sub-standard materials should not be accepted by government and professionals. Quality control personnel should make sure dyes mostly imported are not fake ones. The materials should be sourced and made available to be reached easily. Subsidize the price of the materials in textile by government. Improvising of materials should be encouraged by government.

In conclusion, textile designers could work together to use the suggestions or recommendations given above. This will go a long way to reducing the issues/factors affecting textile design. This write-up shows the factors facing textile and attempts to give suggestions that will be

needed to solve the problems backwardness in the field of art. This write-up will reawaken and lead us to the rebirth of our dead textile and this will take us back to our roots, it will help to appreciate our heritage and be proud of it. Giving of scholarship to students offering the course and provision of fund to textile design graduates to enable them start a studio after school will establish the profession.

Furthermore, government should extend their hand of assistance to textile designers to give their best to the society. Without clothing in our life, both the designers and the society will be like apes. No prestige, protection etc.

Textile Design can also solve the problem of unemployment in the society. This is the reason why the government should not turn down the request from textile industry. Textile design can also generate income for the government if well-supported.

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