

Brief Research Report



Freehand Cutting Technique in Dressmaking as an Entrepreneurial Skill among Secondary School Students in Port Harcourt Metropolis

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Abstract: The present study investigated freehand cutting technique in dressmaking as an entrepreneurial skill among secondary school students for sustainable development in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The researcher employed a descriptive survey research design. The study was conducted in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The population for the study included all students in eight government secondary schools in Rivers State. A sample of 25 students was randomly selected from each of the schools, resulting in a total of 200 respondents. The researcher created a self-made questionnaire. The results emphasized the importance of teaching freehand cutting technique in dressmaking in secondary schools, as well as the need to provide Nigerian youths with training in various skills, such as creativity and innovation, entrepreneurship skills, managerial experience, and record keeping.

Keywords: Dressmaking, Entrepreneurial Skill, Freehand Technique, Students, Sustainable Development

1. Introduction

Sustainable development has been a dominant topic in education and other sectors. It refers to development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). In 2015, countries adopted a set of goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda. The three pillars of sustainable development are economic growth, environmental stewardship, and social inclusion (Barron et al., 2023). Economic growth involves satisfying human needs and aspirations as the main objective of development. However, many people in developing countries are not having their basic needs met, and they also have legitimate aspirations for an improved quality of life. A world with endemic poverty and inequity will always be prone to ecological and other crises. Sustainable development requires meeting the basic needs of all and providing opportunities for a better life for everyone. Education, whether formal or informal, plays a major role in achieving sustainable development. In developing countries like Nigeria, where unemployment and underemployment rates are high, the educational curriculum has been designed to meet the demands of economic development through the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. A growing number of students aspire to receive entrepreneurship training, which aims to educate individuals on how to create job opportunities for themselves after school. The economic development of a country relies heavily on its entrepreneurs. An entrepreneur is an individual with knowledge, skills, initiative, drive, and a spirit of innovation who aims to achieve goals (Modak, 2020). Studies suggest that entrepreneurship training provides vocational training to individuals who lack employable skills, helping them gain sustainable employment and contribute to development (e.g., Alozie & Ekumankama, 2022; Eseadi et al.; 2023; Owoh, 2022; Victor-Aigbodion, 2023). However, there is a serious deficiency in the present public educational system, as vocational education and training are often neglected. Many Senior High School certificate holders are unable to gain admission to tertiary institutions annually, resulting in a lack of opportunities for vocational education graduates. Vocational education is supposed to provide graduates with technical and vocational training, preparing them for the world of work and promoting enterprise creation in areas like Clothing and Textile.

Clothing is a major need for individuals, influencing their health, wellness, and status (Arubayi, 2009). Clothing and Textile education aims to help learners acquire knowledge, skills, and techniques to meet personal and societal clothing needs (Onyeche & Angelina, 2022; Ugwu et al., 2023). The curriculum teaches learners how to strategically plan and use available resources in their environment to improve their clothing needs, leading to sustainable development (Osifeso, 2004). Clothing and Textile skills are not only needed for the home and classroom but also for the job market. Students are supposed to learn practical skills that would make them successful entrepreneurs, emphasizing self-reliance and income generation activities (Gera, 2022; Nhundu, 1997). Entrepreneurship is the process of designing, launching, and running a new business, often initially a small business. Entrepreneurs are the people who create these businesses. The word "entrepreneur" originated from French in the 1700s and refers to someone who undertakes a venture, particularly starting a new business. Nowadays, an entrepreneur is known as a person who makes money by running a business, especially when it involves taking financial risks. Entrepreneurs should be self-confident, innovative, creative, hardworking, goal-oriented, and willing to take risks in financial investment (Hornby, 2000; Indeed Editorial Team, 2022; Kantiok, 2020). Entrepreneurship is generally defined as the process of creating something different with value,

devoting the necessary time, assuming accompanying financial, psychological, and social risks, and reaping personal satisfaction (Hisrich et al. in Buzza & Mosca, 2009, p.114). The goal of entrepreneurial skills education is to prepare students for self-reliance if wage-earning jobs become inaccessible. Clothing and Textile education at the tertiary and university level emphasizes skill acquisition for graduates to enhance their capacity for self-employment ventures (Gera, 2022; Abiamuwe et al., 2022).

Clothing and Textile education is a branch of Home Economics education that focuses on the acquisition and development of practical skills. The objective of Nigerian education is to produce skilled individuals who can contribute effectively to national economic and technological growth and development (Lemchi, 2001). Textile education is working to lead and skillfully prepare young people as future dressmaking experts (Ekumankama, 2022). By learning these skills, students gain an advantage in meeting their daily needs and the needs of others. The field seeks to provide students with knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills related to dressmaking such as freehand cutting. Freehand cutting is an aspect of Clothing and Textile education that involves garment construction without using a commercial pattern. It is based on personal measurements and is considered more organic than other cutting methods. With the increasing freedom of movement and labor within the international community, the study of Clothing and Textiles has the potential to enhance cultural integration. For example, the rise in tourism has led to increased interest in buying traditional Nigerian textiles and clothing, benefiting the Nigerian economy (Nhundu, 1997). Despite the feasibility and value of teaching Clothing and Textiles, issues such as student attitudes, teacher quality, instructional materials, and curriculum hinder the study of the subject in Nigeria. If these problems are not addressed, the effectiveness of clothing and textiles as a means for global survival will be compromised.

1.1. Statement of Problem

In recent years, the government, parents, and the general public have expressed considerable anxiety over the unemployment situations of graduates in Nigeria. Some may blame the low performance of graduates from higher education institutions in the labor market, while others emphasize that many Nigerian graduates are not employable in the outside world (Otu & Omeje, 2021). These graduates lack business development awareness and relevant skills to establish small-scale businesses that would enable them to earn a livelihood. In the face of rising youth unemployment and the resulting restlessness among young people, stakeholders seem to have little knowledge of the importance of entrepreneurial skill development in the clothing and textiles industry. This is partly because secondary school students have low interest and enrollment in clothing and textiles as a subject. Lemchi (2001) noted that some students have no interest in the subject, which has negatively affected the utilization of prospects inherent in freehand dressmaking. Attitudes associated with Home Economics also appear to impact students' enrollment in Clothing and Textiles as a subject and their performance in the subject. Also, many home economics teachers teach Clothing and Textiles without instructional materials or workshop facilities (Mberengwa, 1999). The quality of teachers, facilities, and laboratories in this field is grossly inadequate and obsolete. Owolabi et al. (1991) also indicated that there is a serious disconnect between Clothing and Textile training in secondary schools and the needs of the labor market. Students who do not proceed to higher education have been found to be incompetent in the field of work. Furthermore, the lack of research in the area of clothing and textiles has also hindered the sector's progress towards

sustainable development. Previous studies have mainly focused on clothing and textiles in general, with little attention paid to freehand dressmaking. This gap is what the present study aims to fill.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine how the freehand cutting technique in dressmaking can be an entrepreneurial skill for secondary school students in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, with the goal of promoting sustainable development. Specifically, the study aims to investigate the following:

- (a) The mean ratings of developed styles that are unique, consistent, and innovative as entrepreneurial skills for senior secondary school students.
- (b) The mean ratings of the impact of planning workshops or training for apprenticeship development in freehand dressmaking on entrepreneurial skills.
- (c) The mean ratings of mean ratings on how management and marketing strategies of dresses made by free hand technique influence entrepreneurial skills.

1.3. Research Questions

The following research question guided the study:

- (a) What are the mean ratings of developed styles that are unique, consistent, and innovative as entrepreneurial skills for senior secondary school students?
- (b) What are the mean ratings of the impact of planning workshops or training for apprenticeship development in freehand dressmaking on entrepreneurial skills?
- (c) What are the mean ratings of mean ratings on how management and marketing strategies of dresses made by free hand technique influence entrepreneurial skills?

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Design for the Study

The researcher employed a descriptive survey research design.

2.1.1. Ethics Statement

The ethical permission to conduct this study was granted by the Department of Home Economic, Hospitality & Tourism, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Ethical permission was further granted by the sampled boarding schools while the boarding school students gave their assents to take part in this study.

2.2. Area of the Study

The area of the study is Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Port Harcourt is the capital and largest city in Rivers State, Nigeria. It lies along the Bonny River and is located in the Niger Delta region of the country.

2.3. Population and Sample

The population for the study included all students in eight government secondary schools in Rivers State. The total number of registered secondary school students in PHALGA and Obio/Akpor L.G.A is 7,889 and 14,784 respectively. A sample of 25 students each was randomly selected from each of the schools, making a total number of 200 respondents. The reason for choosing this population, SS3 students, was because they will soon come out from secondary school education to face the world.

2.4. Instrument for Data Collection and Study Procedure

The researcher designed a self-made questionnaire titled "Dressmaking as an Entrepreneurial

Skill among Secondary School Students for Sustainable Development" (HDESSSSSD). The questionnaire was made up of two sections – A and B. Section A had to do with demographic data, while section B data was analyzed on a 5-point Likert scale of measurement: strongly agree (SA – 5), agree (A – 4), strongly disagree (SD – 3), disagree (D -2), undecided (UD – 1). The instrument of study, HDESSSSSD, was taken to experts in statistics and the Home Economics department of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, for validation. The instrument was also verified by the supervisor. The validators certified the work and approved it as good and satisfactory, respectively. HDESSSSSD was subjected to trial testing using a Guidance and Counselling lecture at the University of Port Harcourt. The subjects used for the trial did not take part in the main study. The responses were analyzed to determine the degree of internal consistency of the questionnaire items using Cronbach's coefficient Alpha. The reason for the use of this method is that it required a single administration of the instrument to establish the internal consistency estimate of the items.

2.5. Data Collection Technique

Permission of the Heads of Department was sought before giving the questionnaires to the respondents. The questionnaires were personally distributed to the participants by the researcher, who also collected the completed questionnaires after completion. All 200 copies were completed, retrieved, and used for statistical analysis.

2.6. Data Analysis Technique

Mean scores were used in analyzing the research questions. Since a 5-point rating scale was used for the instruments, the decision rule was based on the midpoint for the scales, which was 3.0. Therefore, only mean scores of 3.0 and above were accepted as indications of acceptance, while mean scores below 3.0 were regarded as rejected.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Research Question 1: What are the mean ratings of developed styles that are unique, consistent, and innovative as entrepreneurial skills for senior secondary school students?

Table 1: Mean ratings of developed styles that are unique, consistent, and innovative as entrepreneurial skills for senior secondary school students

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1	A-line dress	3.23	Agree
2	Off-the-shoulder dress	3.53	Agree
3	Bodycon dress	3.40	Agree
4	High-low dress	3.39	Agree

The results in Table 1 showed that the participants reacted positively to items 1-4, with mean scores well above 3.0. This indicates that there is potential for the development of distinctive, consistent, and new entrepreneurial skills in freehand dressmaking technique. The mean scores for items 1, 2, 3, and 4 were 3.23, 3.53, 3.40, and 3.39, respectively. These scores demonstrate that the participants agreed with these items.

3.2. Research Question 2: What are the mean ratings of the impact of planning workshops or training for apprenticeship development in freehand dressmaking on entrepreneurial skills?

Table 2: Mean ratings of the impact of planning workshops or training for apprenticeship development in freehand dressmaking on entrepreneurial skills

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1	It facilitate poverty alleviation	3.84	Agree
2	It encourages youth entrepreneurship	3.41	Agree
3	It reinforces self-sufficiency	3.24	Agree
4	It helps to improve their skills	3.22	Agree
5	It provides life and occupational skill that will enhance the potentials of individuals	3.52	Agree

The results in Table 2 also showed positive reactions from the participants to items 1-5, with mean scores well above 3.0. This indicates the extent to which planning workshops or training for apprenticeship development in freehand dressmaking influence entrepreneurial skills. The mean scores for items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 were 3.84, 3.41, 3.24, 3.22, and 3.52, respectively. Therefore, it can be concluded that the participants agree with these items.

3.3. Research Question 3: What are the mean ratings of mean ratings on how management and marketing strategies of dresses made by free hand technique influence entrepreneurial skills?

Table 3: Mean ratings on how management and marketing strategies of dresses made by free hand technique influence entrepreneurial skills

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1	It creates awareness for people	3.51	Agree
2	It popularizes cloths made with freehand cutting technique	3.75	Agree
3	It increases demand thereby making more people to indicate interest	3.80	Agree
4	It increases profit	3.22	Agree
5	It maintains the existing market and explores the new one	3.17	Agree

The results in Table 3 revealed positive reactions from the participants to items 1-5, with mean scores well above 3.0. This indicates the ways in which management and marketing strategies of dresses made by freehand technique influence entrepreneurial skills. The mean scores for items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 were 3.51, 3.75, 3.80, 3.22, and 3.17, respectively. Therefore, it can be concluded that the participants agree with these items.

The findings showed the importance of understanding freehand in secondary schools. Institutions can organize entrepreneurship workshops, seminars, and vocational training courses for youths to further develop their skills in freehand dressmaking. This study aligns with Arogundade's (2011) assertion that entrepreneurship involves seeking investment opportunities and establishing enterprises based on identified opportunities. Therefore, the youthful period is a critical time for training in freehand dressmaking, as it provides a positive alternative to the self-destructive and aggressive behaviors often associated with adolescents and young adults. Bala et al. (2000) and Woolfik (1998) also echoed the importance of teaching youths the idea of entrepreneurship during this critical age, as it helps them learn about wealth creation. The responses further highlighted the relevance of freehand dressmaking technique for sustainable development. It can enhance individuals' life and occupational skills, facilitate poverty alleviation, encourage youth

entrepreneurship, promote self-sufficiency, and reorient existing education programs to address sustainable development. Akpomi (2008) and Murega and Nnubia (2022) observed that entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in driving the economy, as small dressmaking stores started by entrepreneurial individuals create wealth and a significant number of jobs. People exposed to entrepreneurship often report having more opportunities to exercise freedom, higher self-esteem, and a greater sense of control over their lives. The responses emphasized ways to market dresses made using the freehand dressmaking technique. These include proper advertisement and fashion shows, making dresses affordable for both the rich and the poor, and encouraging people to buy homemade dresses. The acquisition of the freehand cutting technique in dressmaking holds potential for endowing secondary school students in the Port Harcourt Metropolis with entrepreneurial prowess. This technique, as an entrepreneurial ability, possesses potential for secondary school students. Further research on dressmaking can make a contribution to the development of a curriculum that nurtures entrepreneurial skills among students in the Port Harcourt Metropolis.

4. Conclusion

The focus of this paper is on freehand technique in dressmaking as an entrepreneurial skill among secondary school students for sustainable development in Port Harcourt. The paper emphasizes the importance of encouraging the teaching of freehand techniques in dressmaking in secondary schools. The government should ensure that educational programs at all levels are relevant and functional for students who want to acquire freehand technique in dressmaking skills. In order to promote entrepreneurship in Nigerian schools, the entrepreneurial activities of students should be well-financed and supported. It is also important to teach freehand techniques at an early age.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declare no conflict of interest.

Author Contributions

The study's conceptualization, methodology, writing, data collection, analysis and revision were solely performed by PJ.

Data Availability Statement

The dataset used for this study is available on request. For further inquiries can consult the authors.

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