

**PRIVATE-PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERSHIP: A SYNERGY FOR  
DEVELOPING HOME ECONOMICS CLOTHING AND  
TEXTILE EDUCATION SKILLS**

**BY**

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***Abstract***

*Private-public sector partnership is needed to develop Home Economics clothing and textile education skills. Clothing and textile require different equipment for proper skill acquisition. The public sector cannot provide the required equipment alone hence the need for synergy between public and private sector. Private sector have helped in so many ways to support the public sector by providing infrastructure to schools and communities, and giving other services like staff training and re-training. Modern skills can be acquired in schools in clothing and textile if private sector supports the public sector to provide similar equipment found in textile industry. A lot of job opportunities are created in textile industry. When students are taught clothing and textile in schools, they can fit in to such jobs. This will promote workplace experience for students. It was noted that the barrier to proper education in clothing and textile among others are; lack of facilities/modern equipment, students indifferent attitude. It was also noted that Private/public sector synergy should cut across different but mutually inclusive groups of stake holders like international and non-governmental organizations to assist the public sector. It was concluded that private and public sector partnership/synergy is the way to go as certain facilities cannot be provided by the government, but can be made available by the private sector. It was also recommended among others that teachers of clothing and textile should acquaint themselves with modern trends in fashion and use of modern equipment, as these can help to promote clothing and textile education skills acquisition.*

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**Key words:** Public sector, private sector, synergy.

**Introduction**

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) cooperates with a wide variety of private sector partners such as business enterprises, including small and medium-size firms, national, international and multinational corporations. It also include; philanthropic and corporate foundations, financial institutions and private individuals to carry out its vast mandate. Current partnership with the private sector range from fund raising to strategic partnership, UNESCO is an official partner in a larger number of collaborative relationships with the private sector, intervening in various degrees from being involved in programme delivery arrangements, providing policy guidance, technical assistance

and expertise, to also, playing a strong role in promoting its core ethical and programmatic values, through advocacy and awareness-raising (UNESCO, 2015).

Private sector is the part of a country's economic system that is run by individuals and companies, rather than the government. Most private sector organization is run with the intention of making profit. It is also that part of the economy that is sometimes referred to as the citizen sector, which is run by private individuals or groups, usually, as a means of enterprise for profit venture (Haufler, 2013). Private sectors are being used to build school infrastructure and provide other services like staff training and retraining. Private

partnerships are useful ways, to increase the funding available for constructing or upgrading school buildings and facilities and often yield better value for money than the traditional (public) sector investment in Educational Institutions (World Bank, 2009). This can also apply in Home Economics clothing skill acquisition.

Education be it in skill acquisition, is widely believed to be critical for any nations economic, political, and social development. It is widely believed to help people participate more fully in society. These are few reasons why governments around the world assume the responsibility of providing and financing education (public sector). But this responsibility is large and complex for any government to meet adequately, which is why it is important for government to explore diverse ways of financing and providing educational services (World Bank, 2009), hence the need for synergy. Home Economics is a diversified field of study involving many areas like child development and care, family relationship consumer education, food and nutrition, housing and interior decoration, home management, clothing and textile (Anyakoha and Eluwa, 1991). Each of these branches requires special skills and modern equipment to achieve world standard, especially in clothing and textile. Clothing and textile is an aspect of Home Economics that deals with tailoring/fashion designing, embroidery, crocheting, weaving, knitting, tie and dye, batik dying, printing and making of other household crafts like throw Pillow, headrest, appliqué among other items (Ezeoguine, 2000; Nkwodinma and Okoh, 2011). Most schools lack manpower and facilities/equipment to teach clothing and textile in schools. Adequate facilities and modern clothing and textile equipment will help in skill acquisition, job creation and competition in the global market. To achieve this, it will require a synergy with the private sector since government cannot do it all alone Ratnakar and Yumiko (2008), see clothing and

textile as a unique industry in the global economy mainly for three reasons.

- Firstly, most developed countries of today and newly industrialized countries used this industry as the springboard for their development journey and even some least developed countries were able to step onto the development ladder on the basis of their clothing and textile industry. Millions of people, mostly women, are employed in this industry in these economies.
- Secondly, this industry has very low entry barriers. Entry does not require huge capital and factories can be set up with workers with relatively low skills. Therefore, this industry is characterized by high competition intensity
- Thirdly, this industry is the most protected of all manufacturing industries in the global economy, both in developed and developing countries as the establishment is strictly regulated to accommodate every interested country.

Against this backdrop, other parts of the paper will discuss job opportunities in clothing and textile, the challenges in clothing and textile education, synergy, private and public sector synergy in enhancing textile skill acquisition in schools, conclusion and recommendations.

### **Job Opportunities in Clothing and Textile**

The textile industry employ different kinds of workers ranging from artists, engineers, chemists to machine operators, merchandisers, managers and administrators among others. Textile industry is constantly developing new products thus, opening new opportunities. There are lots of job opportunities in textile industry that youths may wish to consider after graduation. Creative skill set (2016) identified options available in textile industry to include apprenticeship in apparel, dry-cleaning, laundry, tailoring textile, sorting, carding among others that school leavers can engage in. Igbo (2001) feels students and teachers of clothing and textile programmes should be familiar with these job opportunities and also

acquire the needed skills for effective teaching by the teacher and immediate employment for the students. Adequate education on required skills can enhance productivity.

Clothing and textile is a practical course. Therefore, students should be exposed to practical work to be well equipped with saleable skills required to enhance self-reliance and good quality life. To that effect, Olaitan and Agusiobo (1981) emphasized that any skill oriented discipline where of skills and knowledge are needed, require the intensive exposure of students to practical work experiences. In other words, a synergy with the private sector in the provision of modern clothing and textile equipment and facilities will help to facilitate and actualize this dream.

Other possible areas of job creation and areas of synergy in clothing and textile are:

The textile industry, the apparel industry, the fashion field, the education field and the communication industry, in line with the view of Nwankwo (2009), these areas are inter-connecting as;

### **The Textile Industry**

Is made up of all the people and companies that contribute the materials that are ultimately used to make the clothes upholstery and carpeting work. Mills take the natural fibres produced by farmers and manufacture yarns which they use to make fabrics or cloth. Designs are printed into fabrics in endless variations. Fabrics are treated with special finishes such as permanent press or stain-repellent finishes among other things. Finished fabrics are sold in fabric shops where they can be bought for use. It takes a whole lot of job, skills, equipment/facility and efficiency to achieve above feet. So, a synergy between the private and public sector is required. Synergy is the benefit result from combining two different groups, people, objects or processes. It is construct or collection of different elements working together to produce results not obtainable by any of the elements alone. The element or parts can

include people, hardware, software, facilities, policies, documents among others (David and Andrzej, 1997). Synergy with the private sector can make adequate facilities and equipment available in schools. It will help students to acquire the necessary skills in school and fit into the world of work. Accepting the students in industries during industrial training and provision of certain equipment in schools can make them fit in properly in such companies. As the experiences acquired in school will dove tail into work experience.

### **The Apparel Industry**

Private sector can help to provide personnel that can expose students and teachers on modern trends in textile designs, fabric selection, pattern drafting, sewing and marketing of products. Other jobs include dry cleaning, laundry alteration and repair services (Weber 1990) these will help to develop home economics clothing and textile and take it to greater heights. Such synergy will help teachers and students alike to match current trends with basic skills in apparel industry and improve on what obtains in schools.

### **The Fashion Field**

Esiowu and Igbo (2008) viewed fashion as something one uses to realize and validate oneself as she communicates her thoughts, values, attitudes or feelings to others and receives responses from others both verbally and non-verbally. Fashion is as old as time and also as new as they come. Skills in fashion education that will require synergy with the private sector include; creativity, in designs, sewing skills, fashion seminars, linking up with fashion customers and promoters, fashion competitions among others (Echemunor, 2014). This relationship will help to expose Home Economics clothing and textile students to different national and international competitions.

### **The Communication Industry**

The private sector can partner with schools to showcase their skills and products. Omon of

Belois couture emerged winner at the fashion protégé, a Nigerian reality television series. She showcased her designs at the show. The programme was created to contribute to the development of the fashion industry in Nigeria (Echemunor, 2014). This programme can also be extended to schools where clothing and textile is taught to enable students showcase their skills in fashion and market their products.

### **The Challenges in Clothing and Textile Education**

- Lack of modern equipment/clothing laboratory. Clothing and textile as a skill oriented course requires modern sewing equipment/machines in its teaching to follow the fashion trend. Spacious clothing laboratory, modern loom for fabric weaving (hand woven fabric) and electric weaving machines are required in the teaching to make textile/fabric production meaningful and useful to the larger society. Partnering with the private sector can help to achieve the desired results as they can help to provide some of the equipment. Obsigie and Orunwense (2010) observed that government in her bid to fulfill her objectives in reducing educational cost have over the years been under funding educational sectors hence science laboratories (including Home Economics) are under equipped. They also added that inadequate science equipment and laboratory in schools nationwide has led to teaching practical courses theoretically without actual experiments being carried out. Okoh (2011) emphasized that practical demonstration by Home Economics teachers should be a major focus in Home Economics teaching generally. Ekpenyong (1995) noted that for proper skill acquisition in Home Economics, there has to be enough sewing machines, embroidery machines, weaving machines, loom, weavers and spinners and other household equipment in general. She also noted that most Home Economics teachers make use of classrooms, students desks and teachers

tables during clothing class for clothing practical.

- Misconception of clothing and textile as a course is another major problem because people believe that clothing and textile is limited to just sewing and a course for the never-do-well. In line with this, Olaitan (1986) noted that the Nigerian publics have always seen vocational subjects (Home Economics inclusive) as subjects for physical maladjusted and mentally retarded people. People believe that the course (Home Economics) is meant for drop-outs who have no personal vision for education, and that clothing and textile aspect (sewing) can be acquired through road – side apprenticeship without knowing that clothing and textile does not end with ordinary sewing and even in sewing there is a difference.
- Students indifferent Attitude: Most students shy away from clothing and textile course probably because it involves creativity, time and money. Olugbamigbe (2009) noted that students rush to study food and nutrition when they have opportunity to choose their elective courses.

Adirieje (2006) recommended that a complementary role between the public and private sector should be adopted in order to bring about the development of an efficient vocational-technical education and training system. He further opined that the public sector (government) should focus on the prerequisite of initial vocational – technical education training, whereas the private sector should concentrate on skills development at the workplace. Azubuike (2007) observed that the Education Trust Fund (ETF) wishes to collaborate with Federal Government in specific project ideas and other developmental programmes in training institutions through project definitions, specifications and provision of facilities that will positively impact on education in Nigeria, while training and

capacity building has to do with enhancing the intellectual, administrative, professional and managerial ability of personnel in the education sector. Such activities will include staff training and development programmes, workshop attendance/laboratory attendance, provision of experts and assistance in curriculum development in which vocational and technical education is not left out and Home Economics impartial Olatunji (2003) in another dimension stated that the partnership envisaged should cut across different but mutually inclusive groups of stakeholders, including international, non-governmental organizations, and Development Agencies such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Culture (UNESCO), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and other private sector such as Globacom, Etisalat, MTN among others. Specifically, Home Economics clothing and textile aspect should be of major focus, as skills acquired can help in job creation and growth in the textile sector that can affect the economy positively. Okwelle and Wordu (2014) concluded that the aims and objectives of vocational technical education (Home Economics Clothing and Textile inclusive) have been defeated since its funding is solely left in the hands of the government.

### **Conclusion**

With the numerous benefits in clothing and textile skill acquisition, education, private and public sector synergy is the way to go as the equipment that cannot be provided by the government in schools can be made available by private organizations/sectors. This can lead to positive growth in the economy of the country. Okoh, Patricia A, Okonkwo, Grace A. & Isibor, Angela .O.

### **Recommendations**

It is strongly recommended that;

- Students should be exposed to the benefits and job opportunities in clothing and textile as this will improved their interest in the course

- Teachers should acquaint themselves with modern trends in clothing and textile as it relates to fashion, use of equipment and facilities that can enhance and facilitate learning.
- The government should provide modern facilities and equipment in schools for the practical lessons in clothing and textile for it to be meaningful. Where they cannot measure up effectively, a synergy with private sector should be applied.

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