



**FABRIC-BASED INDOOR AND OUT DOOR DECORATIONS
ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES FOR HOME SCIENCE
GRADUATES IN LAFIA METROPOLIS OF NASARAWA
STATE.**



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Abstract

This study investigated the status of the Home Scientist in fabric-based indoor/outdoor decoration entrepreneurial activities in Lafia metropolis of Nasarawa state. A survey design was employed in the study. Structured questionnaire was used to ascertain information from the respondents. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample 50 Home Science graduates for the study. Data were collected using questionnaire and analyzed with simple descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. Findings show that the home scientists in Lafia metropolis are aware that income could be generated in 23 indoor/outdoor decoration entrepreneurial activities (FIODEA). The Home Scientist engaged only in eight of the indoor/outdoor decoration entrepreneurial activities. Twenty three principles guided the practice of fabric-based indoor/outdoor decoration entrepreneurial activities and seven problems were discovered to be militating against the successful practice of fabric-based indoor/outdoor decoration entrepreneurial activities as perceived by the home scientists. It was recommended that teaching of indoor/outdoor decorations; both theory and practical should be intensified in the universities and other tertiary institutions that offer Home Science.

INTRODUCTION

Interior or indoor decoration is the art of beautification of rooms and other interior areas of a house so that they become attractive, comfortable and useful (Anyakoha and Eluwa, 1991). It has also been seen as the appropriate application of furnishes and decorative materials in the home by either the home maker or other persons charged with the responsibility (Montgomery, 1995). This implies that indoor decoration is not performed only by the homemakers but can also be paid for. Indoor decoration includes the decoration of ceilings and walls, doors and windows, stair cases and floors of homes, offices, hotels, hospitals using materials and accessories (Anyakoha and Eluwa, 1991; Encyclopedia Britannica Macropedia, 2005). Outdoor on the other hand means outside or open air/space (Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English

Language, 1994). Outdoor decoration therefore involves the application of furnishings and decorative materials to beautify places other than the interiors of rooms or house. It includes the decoration of house, compounds, porch or patio, galleries, fields, village squares, schools quadrangles, church arena, parks, streets or road sides and other spaces either for everyday living or for such ceremonial activities as parties/get-together, wedding, political campaigns/rallies, graduations, thanks-giving and burial ceremonies.

Indoor and outdoor decorations play very crucial roles in the social, psychological, physical and economic wellbeing of individuals, families and the nation at large. According to Read (1993), the nature of indoor decoration helps to beef up the aura of individuals and their families and brings about good sense of belonging to a person

or a group of persons. More so, multiple streams of income could be generated through creativity and maximum exploitation of the diversified entrepreneurial activities enshrined in indoor/outdoor decorations and their accessories. These decorations are mostly done with fabrics. Fabric is the most vital indoor/outdoor decoration accessory that adds exciting, appealing, thrilling and relaxing look and feel to the interior of a house or outdoor decorations. Fabrics are flexible materials made from natural or artificial sources and formed by any of the weaving, knitting or other fabrication methods. (Vanderoff, Frank and Campbell, 1985; Weber 1990). The quality of any fabric-strength, durability, elasticity, resiliency luster and stability determines the end use to which it is subjected to whether for apparel or home furnishing and house decoration (Marshall, Jackson, Stanley, Kefgen and Touchie, 2000). Decorating fabrics according to Singer Sewing Project (1999) should be very durable to stand tear and wear. They should drape well, colourful and treated with stain, crease, mildew flame and moth resistant finishes. To achieve beautiful and appealing indoor/outdoor areas using fabrics, important principles guiding the practice of fabric-based indoor/outdoor decoration must be considered. (Anyakoha and Eluwa, 1991; Encyclopedia Britannica Macropedia, 2005). This is because quite enormous Entrepreneurial activities abound in indoor/outdoor decorations.

Entrepreneurial activities according to Gartner (1990), starts with a willingness and eagerness to create a new venture in order to present a concept. It calls for an individual's ability to fashion out ways of making livelihood in an existing venture. Through its interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach, Home Science and management as a course equips its

recipients with knowledge, attitude, marketable and survival skills that make for self employment and self reliance (Njoku and Anyakoha, 1992). Many small scale business opportunities in Home science related fields including: Foods and Nutrition, Clothing and textile, Child care and family development, Housing and Home furnishing and consumer education, have been identified by Iloeje (1999), Igbo (2001) and Lemchi (2005).

Available reports from the Federal Office of Statistics (1999) and National Universities Commission (2004) showed that the rate of unemployment among Nigeria University graduates is very alarming. Graduate unemployment according to Debalen, Oni and Adekoka (2000) could be attributed to disequilibrium between the labour market requirements and lack of essential employable skills by the graduates. Presumably, many Home Science graduates are victims of this unemployment saga.

Statement of the problem: Graduates from different universities with their different field of study are wandering the streets looking for white collar jobs and graduates of Home science inclusive. Home science graduates with all their knowledge in diverse skills also follow other non-skilled graduates to walk about seeking for monthly paid employment. The street of Lafia metropolis is having its own fair share of the number of graduates roaming about- seeking for what to do. This present study was therefore designed to investigate the extent to which the graduates of Home Science in Lafia metropolis of Nasarawa State have explored the entrepreneurial activities in fabric-based indoor/outdoor decorations and recommend possible ways the entrepreneurial activities could be creatively-exposed.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the status of the graduates of Home Science and Management in Fabric-based Indoor/Outdoor Decoration Entrepreneurial Activities (FIODEA) in Lafia metropolis of Nasarawa State. Specifically the study will

- i. Ascertain whether home scientists in Lafia are engaged in indoor/outdoor decoration
- ii. Determine the guiding principles in indoor/outdoor decoration entrepreneurship
- iii. Ascertain the problems encountered with the practice of indoor/outdoor decorations

Research questions:

- i. Do home scientists in Lafia engage in indoor/outdoor decoration?
- ii. What are the guiding principles in indoor/outdoor decoration entrepreneurship?
- iii. What are the problems encountered with the practice of indoor/outdoor decorations?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a survey research design to investigate the status of Home Scientists in fabric-based indoor/outdoor entrepreneurial activities in Lafia metropolis. Structured questionnaire was used to ascertain information on the awareness of available enterprises in fabric-based entrepreneurial activities in Lafia.

Population: The population for the study comprised all the graduates of Home Science and Management and their likes who were over 2017 graduates in the area of study, (Nasarawa State Scholarship Board, 2012).

Sampling Techniques: Stratified random sampling techniques was used to sample 12 graduates from Migili tribe, 13 graduates from the tribe of Eggon, 13 graduates from Gwandara and 12 graduates from Kanuri tribe, making a total of 50 graduates for the sample of the study.

Instrument for Data Collection: A structured questionnaire using a 5 point Likert scale to ascertain information on the level of awareness of the existence of indoor/outdoor decoration entrepreneurial activities in the area of study.

Data collected were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondent according to their awareness and engagement in indoor/outdoor decoration entrepreneurial activities. Majority of the respondents are aware that income could be generated from the 28 fabric-based indoor/outdoor entrepreneurial activities identified. But only 8 respondents were able to engage in halls for meetings, conferences, workshops, weddings and get-together/parties (68%), seasonal decorations e.g Christmas/Easter decoration (68%), tables for weddings, birthdays or other functions (62%) while church and church arena/ outside decorations was at (50%).the table also show that there is awareness in the entrepreneurial activities in pillow cases of different designs and styles. Table 2 shows that the Home scientists agreed in all the guiding principles in the choice of fabrics and practice of fabric-based indoor/outdoor entrepreneurial activities.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to their awareness/engagement in indoor/outdoor decorations.

	Variable	Awareness		Engaged	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Windows and doors	49	98.00	21	42.00
2	Floors of rooms parlors	49	98.00	18	36.00
3	Bedrooms	50	100.00	29	58.00
4	Dining rooms	48	96.00	17	34.00
5	Kitchen	37	74.00	12	24.00
6	Toilet/restrooms	39	78.00	6	12.00
7	Walls and surfaces	46	98.00	26	52.00
8	Halls for meetings, conference, workshops, wedding and get-together/parties	49	98.00	34	68.00
9	Tables for weddings, birthdays or other function	48	96.00	31	62.00
10	Funeral parlors	36	72.00	12	24.00
11	Seasonal decorations e.g Christmas/Easter decoration of business/commercial house and premises of banks, offices, hotels, hospitals	1	2.00	34	68.00
12	Church and church arena/outside decorations	48	96.00	25	50.00
13	Decorations of school quadrangles for celebrations	39	78.00	14	28.00
14	Decoration of streets, roadsides, fields or open spaces for occasions. Retail or mass production, supply or sale of fabric-based indoor/outdoor decoration accessories including;	47	94.00	15	30.00
15	Plain, quilted or patch worked bed spreads, bed skirts, duvet covers and sleeping bags	44	88.00	12	24.00
16	Pillow shams or pillow cases of different styles and designs	45	90.00	25	50.00
17	Curtains and draperies of assorted colours, textures, designs, lengths and widths.	46	92.00	22	44.00
18	Valances of various styles, designs and colours	43	86.00	12	24.00
19	Slip covers and throw pillows	49	98.00	23	46.00
20	Crocheted, hand and head rests of different textures, colours and shapes	45	90.00	15	30.00
21	Table runners, placemats, table linen and cutlery	45	90.00	27	54.00
22	Plain, quilted, patch worked, beaded or laminated fabric wall hangings and collages	48	96.00	14	28.00
23	Tote bags, suit carriers and baby buntings	44	88.00	9	18.00
24	Teddies and toys	44	88.00	8	16.00
25	Fabric made flower/banquet	45	90.00	11	22.00
26	Baby cot/baby carrier	46	92.00	10	20.00
27	Fabric made floor carpets piece rugs and floor mats	43	86.00	7	14.00
28	Travelling bags	37	74.00	5	10.00

Source: Field Survey, 2012.

Table 2: Guiding Principles in indoor/outdoor decorations Entrepreneurial Activities.

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Adequate planning of the design of the decoration	49	98.00
2	Colour scheme of interiors	48	96.00
3	Colour of fabrics	48	96.00
4	Texture of fabrics	49	98.00
5	Drape ability	49	98.00
6	Fabric durability	50	100.00
7	Design effect desired in the decoration	47	94.00
8	Place/area to be decorated	50	100.00
9	Quantity of fabrics needed	50	100.00
10	Quality of fabrics needed	48	98.00
11	Cost of fabrics	42	84.00
12	Cost of fabrics care and maintenance	47	94.00
13	Service charge for the decoration	48	98.00
14	Means of transporting decoration materials to and from the place of business	47	94.00
15	Competency of the indoor/outdoor decorator in the application of principles and elements of design.	50	100.00
16	Cultural factors/values for indoor/outdoor decoration	37	74.00
17	Creative and innovative ability of the decorator production and sale of the indoor/outdoor fabric decoration accessories	48	98.00
18	competency and skill of the decorator in sewing or construction of good quality accessories eg curtains, bedspreads	47	94.00
19	Choice of attractive and beautiful colours of fabrics for the accessories	50	100.00
20	Ability to produce new design en-vogue	49	98.00
21	Availability of the necessary sewing equipment	48	98.00
22	Finishing/neatness of the constructed accessories	50	100.00
23	Marketing of the produced accessories	50	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2012.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to problems encountered with practice of indoor/outdoor decoration

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1 Lack of appropriate skills in the application of principles and elements of design in the choice of fabrics for the decoration	49	98.00
2 High cost of fabrics for indoor/outdoor decorator	43	86.00
3 Low appreciation of the lucrative nature of the business	32	64.00
4 Lack of skills in sourcing of the latest interior/outdoor decoration fabric accessories.	44	88.00
5 Strenuous nature of indoor/outdoor decoration services	22	44.00
6 Indoor/outdoor decoration services are time consuming	21	42.00
7 Indoor/outdoor decorations services are not lucrative	11	22.00
8 Operators of the FIODEA are dropouts from schools	22	44.00
9 Lack of interest in indoor/outdoor decoration services and in production and sale of their accessories	44	88.00
10 Lack of construction skills in fabric-based indoor/outdoor décor accessories eg curtains, quilted and patch worked bed spreads	44	88.00
11 Poor market for indoor/outdoor decoration services and produced accessories	19	38.00
12 Transportation problem	24	48.00
13 Cultural values not in favour of elaborate	29	58.00
14 Low patronage of locally produced fabric decoration accessories	23	46.00
15 Market prize below cost of production	22	44.00

Source: Field Survey 2012.

Table 3 shows the distribution of encountered in indoor/outdoor decoration respondents according to problems entrepreneurial activities. The major

problems identified by the respondents were the lack of appropriate skills in the application of principles and elements of design in the choice of fabrics for the decoration. (98%) of the respondents lack the skills for sourcing the latest indoor/outdoor decoration accessories, (88%) lack interest in indoor/outdoor decoration services, (88%) lack construction skills in fabric-based indoor/outdoor decoration accessories, (86%) stated that the high cost of fabric for indoor/outdoor decoration entrepreneurial activities is their major challenge, (58%) is pointing at the cultural values not in favour of elaborate decoration. This implies that fabric-based indoor/outdoor decoration was faced with numerous problems in Lafia metropolis. This might be responsible for its slow practice.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the study shows that Home Science graduates in Lafia metropolis capital of Nasarawa State are aware that multiple streams of income could be generated from fabric-based indoor/outdoor decoration entrepreneurial activities. This is indicated by the 100% responses on the awareness of different fabric-based indoor/outdoor decoration entrepreneurial activities including, treatment of bedrooms, mass or retail production and sale of plain, patch worked bed spreads, duvet covers, sleeping bags, curtains and draperies of various styles and colour, travelling bags as well as outdoor seasonal decorations of business/commercial house such as banks, hotels, etc. This findings is in line with the findings and submissions made by Montgomery (1995), Iloeje (1991), Igbo (2001), Lemchi (2005) and Ozugwu (2008) who had earlier identified various entrepreneurial/business opportunities enshrined in some of the Home Science related fields.

Though the Home scientists are aware that wealth could be created in fabric-based indoor/outdoor decoration entrepreneurial activities as shown in table 1, yet only 8 of the activities attained acceptable percentage of responses of being engaged which shows that only very few of the Home Science graduates engaged in the business. The minor involvement of the Home Scientists in fabric-based indoor/outdoor decoration entrepreneurial activities contradicts and jeopardizes the aims and objectives of Home Science as a field of study that equips and produces students with knowledge and marketable and survival skills that make for self employment and self reliance as reported by Njoku and Anyakoha (1992).

There is a serious competition for job placement in the nation's labour market with limited job opportunities. Benson (2000), emphasized that only 10 percent of about 100,000 graduates from Nigerian Universities have the prospects of securing employment after graduation yearly. If the Home Economists who are professionally and presupposed by equipped with the necessary prerequisite skills during the course of their study fail to explore the entrepreneurial opportunities in the field and expand its horizon, who will? The possible alternative and tendency is for the non-professionals to fill the gap and to reap, the golden opportunities and dividends which indoor and outdoor decoration services offer, leaving the unemployed Home Economists to join the bandwagon of perpetual job seekers. This has implications not only for the Home Scientist, but to Home Science as a field of study, the family and the nation at large.

The findings revealed that Twenty three (23) principles attracted high percentages showing that the Home scientists agreed that they should be considered (table 2) as

the guiding principles that will guide indoor/outdoor decoration entrepreneurial activities. These principles tally with those recommended by Anyakoha and Eluwa (1991), Singer Sewing Project (1991), Birren (1993), Kindersley (1995) and Neal (2000). They agreed that for beautiful, interesting, relaxing and intriguing look and feel to be achieved in the practice of fabric-based indoor/outdoor decoration entrepreneurial activities, the decorators must give careful consideration to the texture, colour and design of the fabrics, durability of fabrics, colour scheme of area to be decorated, cost of fabrics, fabric care and maintenance cost.

They must be creative, innovative and competent in the application of principles and elements of design so as to produce new design. They should as well consider the machines available and their mode of operation.

On the problems identified as militating against the successful practice of fabric-based indoor/outdoor decoration entrepreneurial activities, besides eight problems, all other seven attracted very high percentage responses. This indicates that the Home Scientists perceive seven out of fifteen identified problems of fabric-based indoor/outdoor decoration entrepreneurial activities. This findings support those identified by Kajagbola (1997), Debalen, Oni and Adekoka (2000), on the graduate unemployment related problems and those problems confronting small and medium scale industries in Nigeria that lead to little or no production

or production of low quality products. The reiterated that crude technological processes, raw material scarcity, low innovative ability, inadequate capital and lack of government's incentive are some factors accounting for low quality goods. Other important factors stressed were lack of essential employable skills, laziness and lack of motivation, interest and entrepreneurial spirit to explore the entrepreneurial activities or business opportunities in their various fields

CONCLUSION

The study identified numerous fabric-based Indoor/outdoor decoration entrepreneurial activities, which could generate wealth and multiple streams of income for the Home Scientist. The Home scientists under study have not yet creatively, skillfully and adequately explored the entrepreneurial opportunities which fabric-based indoor/outdoor entrepreneurial activities offers. Some identified problems that militate against the successful practice of fabric-based indoor/outdoor decoration entrepreneurial activities, incompetency, and lack of necessary skills, lack of creativity and entrepreneurial spirit, strenuous and time consuming nature of the fabric-based indoor/outdoor decoration entrepreneurial activities, lack of interest and laziness of some university graduates as well as scarcity of raw materials and necessary equipment for the construction of fabric-based indoor/outdoor decoration accessories. These have implications for the Home Scientist, Home Science as a field of study, the family and the nation at large.

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