

## **Entrepreneurship Skills for Garment Making Needed by Youths in Ahoada East Local Government Area of Rivers State**

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### **Abstract**

The main objective of this study was to evolve entrepreneurial skills for garment making needed by youths in Ahoada East Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State. Specifically, the study identified communication skills, personal skills, management skills and marketing skills needed for garment making by youths. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The area of the study is Ahoada East LGA of Rivers state, Nigeria. The population and sample of the study comprised 52 garment making firm owners from Ahoada East LGA. Questionnaire was used for data collection frequencies and percentages were used to analyze data. The major findings including the following groups of entrepreneurship skills: 12 communication skills, including, decode messages from clients (81.25%), use mobile phone to pass information (79.2%), keep suggestion box (77.1%) among others; 10 personal traits (non-technical skills) including, negotiate with customers (83.3%), manage personal strengths and weaknesses (81.25%), smile and maintain sense of humor with my customers (79.2%) and others; 10 management skills, including, calculate profit and loss (81.25%), mobilize resources to invest into the business (79.2%), manage every component of garment making business (77.1%), and others; 12 marketing skills which include, fix prices/cost of items (85.4%), keep records (81.25%), determine availability of raw materials for garment making (79.2%), and so on. Based on the findings, five recommendations were made for improving entrepreneurship skills of the youths in garment making. These include: parents and the government should encourage the youths with financial support for them to go into agrment-making enterprise and government should provide loan facilities for the youths who have completed their training so that they can start after their training.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship Skills, Communication, Management, Marketing, Garment, Making, Youths.

### **Introduction**

Youth unemployment has become a societal issue that calls for serious attention. Consequently, there is an intense emphasis on the need for the youths to be equipped with entrepreneurial skills in order to make them productive and self-reliant

(Abdulkarim, 2019). There is need to facilitate self employment among youths in various areas of endeavour such as garment making. Garment making has the potential to create youth employment and integrate the youth into the economic mainstream while addressing some of the socio-

psychological and delinquency problems that arise from joblessness (Haque, Aston & Kozlovski 2018). Youth entrepreneurship skills provide marginalized youths with a sense of meaning and belonging. Such skills can help shape their identity and encourage people to treat and accept them as functional members of society. In addition, acquisition of entrepreneurship skills promotes innovation and resilience among youths and encourage them to find new solutions to problems, ideas and methods of doing things through experience-based learning (Omolara, 2018). The acquisition of entrepreneurial skills through experience-based learning would also enable the youths to be resourceful, have initiative, imagination, enthusiasm, ambition, energy, vitality, boldness and courage needed to fight youth unemployment. It is worth noting.

That International Labour Organization data on unemployment placed youth unemployment at 14.2 percent (71million) globally (Plecher, 2020), making the youth vulnerable to social exclusion. In Nigeria, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) estimated the population of youth unemployment to be 13.9 million as at the end of the second quarter of 2020 (Oyekanmi, 2020). The only way to tackle this youth unemployment challenge is to encourage youth to acquire entrepreneurial skills in order to take up self-employment opportunities.

Abdulkarim (2019) identified some entrepreneurship skills, including opportunity recognition skills, creativity skills or innovation skills, and risk-taking skills, communication skills, marketing skills, management skills, and financial records keeping skills, among others. These skills apply to

entrepreneurship in garment making enterprises.

Communication skills according to Omolara (2018), Enu-kwesi and Akongonngang (2019), are skills needed in the act of transferring ideas to ensure a clear meaning. Omolara (2018) noted that communication is a social skill that is essential for business growth as it is the ability of the entrepreneurs to convince clients to patronize their products. Oliver and Kanu (2012) noted that communication skill is made up of four basic skills which are listening skills, speaking skills, reading skills and writing skills. Delinger cited in Amankwa, Gbadegbe and Gbetodeme (2015) also opined that communication as the bedrock of entrepreneurship business depends on the skills of listening, speaking and writing. These unique skills according to Omolara (2018) help entrepreneurs pass information to their customers through the use of words, adverts, body language, report and so on. Oliver and Kanu (2012) reported that communication skills are needed for effective communication and success of entrepreneurs in today's business world.

Personal skills have also be identified to be important for any garment making entrepreneur who want to be successful. Anyakoha (2015) outlined the following personal skills needed for garment making ability to: develop plans to meet goals, organize day to day activities of the firms, negotiate with customers, dress well so as to attract customers, manage personal strengths and weaknesses, keep scheduled appointment with customers, smile and maintain sense of humor with my customers, maintain open-mindedness to suggestions, be honest and be trusted, maintain open-mindedness to

suggestions and maintain cordial relationship with customers are required of unemployed youth who want to go into garment making businesses. Haque, Faizan & Cockrill (2017) also outlined personal skills such as ability to manage home well and to take care of personal business efficiently as key to the success of small scale garment makers. Omolara (2018) also outlined ability to manage personal strengths and weaknesses and keep to appropriate appointment schedule with customers as personal skills for garment making businesses.

Another entrepreneurial skill that drives the success of any entrepreneur is management skills. Okoli and Ezenwafor (2015) opined that management skills as entrepreneurial skills are knowledge and abilities that enable entrepreneurs to effectively perform management functions. Management function abilities of an entrepreneur according to Abdulkarim (2019) are ability to plan, organize, supervise, coordinate and communicate business goals effectively. This means that communication as entrepreneurial skills is also key aspect of entrepreneur's managerial skills. Consequently, it is important for entrepreneurs in garment making firm to develop management skills and communication skills for effective and efficient utilization of scarce resources as well as for the purpose of relating to customers. Supporting this, Haque, Aston and Kozlovski (2018) noted that the entrepreneurs must be able to manage every component of a business if success is to be attained. Bosire and Nzaramba (2013) opined that even where a hired manager is used to attend to daily details, the owner of the business must understand if their business has the right

resources and if those resources are being used effectively and efficiently.

With regards to marketing skills, Neelam, Anamdita & Radhika (2016) noted that a business's success or failure is very dependent on whether the business reaches the market (its potential customers), stimulates the interest of the market with the results of research and influence the markets' buying decision. Usoro (2016) outlined the following as marketing skills needed to drive sales among others: product identification skills, product development skills, pricing, branding, labeling, packaging, advertisement and product selling skills. According to Abdulkarim (2019), marketing skills empower entrepreneurs to identify consumers need as opportunity for risk taking, it enables them to use their creativity to develop products that would attract the consumers and develop strategy for delivering the product to its primary market. Consequently, good marketing skills utilization in garment making business would result in people wanting to buy the goods or services offered – a critical factor for the business continuous survival (Emelue, 2010).

Studies have been carried out in various aspects of clothing and textile, sewing, fashion and marketing strategies across the globe. For instance, Emelue (2010) conducted study to identify selected entrepreneurship skills required of youths in clothing production in Delta State. Emelue reported that youth in Delta State required entrepreneurship skills for planning, organizing, mass production, and marketing skills in clothing production enterprise. Omolara (2018) conducted study on entrepreneurial skills and growth of Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and identified communication skills as one of

the skills required for small scale enterprises for success. Fernandes (2019) conducted study on fashion design entrepreneurship: skills and solutions to create a fashion business. Fernandes reported lack of entrepreneurial thinking in fashion design courses which translate to enormous difficulties for young fashion designers willing to create their own business. Rao and Joshi (nd) conducted study on entrepreneurial training in the apparel and fashion design sector through distance mode: a strategy for facing the challenge of growing unemployment. The authors reported the need to impart young people in fashion and apparel design with the ability to develop distinct, consistent, and new style, manage the process of communication and handle marketing issues. The above reviewed empirical works showed that there are numerous works carried out in textile, fashion and clothing industry but to the best knowledge of the researcher none of these studies have been carried out on the skills required by the unemployed youths to set up and manage a garment-making firm in Ahoada East Local Government Area, hence, the need to fill this gap in literature inspired the current study.

It is worth noting at this juncture that youth in Ahoada East like their counterparts in other parts of Rivers State have become hopeless due to inadequate employment opportunities that can absorb them. According to Dokubo, Taylor and Ededeh (2020), the population strength of the youth in Ahoada East can be an asset for socio-economic development if mobilized and harnessed positively through different socio-economic empowerment programmes. There is no doubt that when the youth are empowered through

entrepreneurship, they would develop the mindset of starting and managing their own businesses from micro level to whatever size they desire in the future (Abdulkarim, 2019). However, many of the youth in Ahoada East are rather seen roaming about than taking up opportunities in garment making which can fetch them some incomes largely due to lack of entrepreneurial spirit.

### **Objective of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to evolve the entrepreneurial skills for garment making needed by youths in Ahoada East LAG of Rivers state. Specifically, the study determined the following groups entrepreneurial skills needed by the youths for garment making:

1. communication skills
2. personal skills
3. management skills
4. marketing skills.

### **Methodology**

*Design of the Study:* the study adopted descriptive survey research design.

*Area of the Study:* The area of the study is Ahoada East LGA of Rivers state, Nigeria. Ahoada East LGA is one of the 23 LGAs in Rivers state. It is a semi urban area with 12 public secondary schools and three registered private secondary schools. The area is mainly populated by farmers, fishermen, civil servants, traders, oil workers and private business men and women. It is important to note that apart from commercial retail businesses, another prominent business within the area is tailoring and garment making.

*Population for the Study:* The population for the study comprised 52 garment making firms in Ahoada East LGA registered in the State (in the

Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2019). Most of these garment making firms are small scale businesses with at most four employees apart from apprentices. The owners (managers) of the 52 firms formed the population of the study. The entire population was involved. There was no sampling because the size of the population was measurable.

**Instrument for Data Collection:** Questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was developed through literature review and based on the specific purposes of the study. The instrument had 53 items based on the four specific purposes of the study. The response options of the questionnaire were “Yes” or “No” responses. The instrument was validated by three Home economics lecturers. The suggestion and criticisms of the experts were used to improve upon the questionnaire. The reliability of stability of the questionnaire was established using test-retest method. Fifteen copies of the instrument were administered twice to 15 garment making firms’ owners selected from Ahoada-West LGA, outside the area of the study. Data from the two administrations were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and reliability index of 0.78 was obtained.

**Data Collection/Analysis Method:** Fifty-two copies of the questionnaire were

distributed by hand to the owners (managers) of the 52 garment making firms. Only 48 copies were properly completed and returned. This represents 92.3% return.

**Data Analysis Technique:** Frequencies and percentage were used to analyze data. Items with percentage scores of 50 percent and above were regarded as needed entrepreneurship skills for the youths.

## Result

**Demographic Data:** Data on background of the respondents reveal that there are 17(35.4%) male, and 31 (64.6%) females. While the garment making firms owners educational attainment indicated that 27(56.25) were holders of West Africa School Certificate (WAEC), 10 (20.8%) were Diploma Certificate holders, 4(8.3) were holders of OND, 3(6.25) were HND holders while 4(8.3) were holders of First-Degree Certificate. Also, on business experience, 8(6.7) of the respondents had operated garment making firms between 1-3years 18(37.5) had operated their garment making firm between 4-6years, 10(20.8) between 7-10years, 9(18.75) between 11-13 years, and 3(6.25%) had operated between 14 years and above.

## Communication Skills Needed by Youths to Manage Garment-Making Firm

**Table 1: Percentage Responses of Garment Making Firms’ Owners on Communication Skills Needed by Youths to Manage Garment-Making Firms**

S/N	Communication skills	Yes (%)	No (%)
<b>Ability to:</b>			
1.	generate message or information	28(58.3)	20(41.7)
2.	code generated message or information	34(70.8)	14(29.2)
3.	send information message	30(62.5)	18(37.5)
4.	use mobile phone to pass information	38(79.2)	10(20.8)

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5.	use WhatsApp and Facebook for interaction	33(68.8)	15(31.25)
6.	use face-to-face interaction	36(75)	12(25)
7.	keep suggestion box	37(77.1)	11(22.9)
8.	receive messages from clients	35(72.9)	13(27.1)
9.	decode messages from clients	39(81.25)	9(18.75)
10.	send feedback to clients	30(62.3)	18(37.5)
11.	use client's feed back	29(60.4)	19(39.6)
12.	Listen to complaints of clients	36(75)	12(25)

N=48

Table 1 shows that all the 12 items in the Table obtained percentage scores of 50 and above, therefore each of them is a communication skill needed by the youths. From the Table, ability to messages from clients (81.25%), use mobile phone to pass information (79.2%), keep suggestion box (77.1%),

and others. the skill with the lowest generate message or information (58.3%). The skill is however still needed by the youths.

#### Personal Skills Required by Youths in Garment-Making Firm

**Table 2: Percentage Responses of Garment Making Firms' Owners on Personal Skills Needed by Youths to Manage Garment-Making Firms**

S/N	Personal Traits (Non-Technical Skills)	Yes (%)	No (%)
<b>Ability to:</b>			
1.	develop plans to meet goals	36 (75)	12(25)
2.	organize day to day activities of the firms	32(56.7)	16(33.3)
3.	negotiate with customers	40(83.3)	8(16.7)
4.	dress well so as to attract customers	25(52.1)	23(47.9)
5.	properly answer phone calls	21(43.75)	27(56.25)
6.	manage personal strengths and weaknesses	39(81.25)	9(18.75)
7.	keep scheduled appointment with customers	32(66.7)	16(33.3)
8.	be always polite and not rude to customers	18(37.5)	30(62.5)
9.	smile and maintain sense of humor with my customers	38(79.2)	10(20.8)
10.	be honest and be trusted	35(72.9)	13(27.1)
11.	bring in creativity into my works	19(39.6)	29(60.4)
12.	maintain open-mindedness to suggestions	37(77.1)	11(22.9)
13.	maintain cordial relationship with customers	34(70.8)	14(29.2)

N=48

Table 2 shows that 10 items in the Table obtained percentage scores of 50 and above, while 3 items obtained percentage scores of less than 50 percent. From the Table, negotiate with customers (83.3%), manage personal strengths and weakness (81.25%), smile and maintain sense of humor with my customers (79.2%), and others. the skills

with the lowest scores properly answer phone calls (43.75%), bring in creativity into my works (39.6%) and be always polite and not rude to customers (37.5%).

#### Management Skills Required by Youths to Manage a Garment Making Firm:

**Table 3: Percentage Responses of Garment Making Firms' Owners on the Management Skills Required by Youths to Manage Garment Making Firms**

S/N	Management Skills	Yes (%)	No (%)
	<b>Ability to:</b>		
1.	plan and set goals	31(64.6)	17(35.4)
2.	analyze and evaluate	23(47.9)	25(52.1)
3.	manage every component of garment making business	37(77.1)	11(22.9)
4.	attend to daily details	34(70.8)	14(29.2)
5.	hire workers and use them to achieve result	31(64.6)	17(35.5)
6.	mobilize resources to invest into the business	38(79.2)	10(20.83)
7.	ensure that resources are managed effectively	33(68.75)	15(31.25)
8.	ensure that positions are occupied by qualified people	29(60.4)	19(39.6)
9.	have knowledge of account	32(66.7)	16(33.3)
10.	have knowledge of costing	17(35.4)	31(64.6)
11.	acquire the skills of preparing financial statement	15(31.25)	33(68.75)
12.	interpret financial statements	15(31.25)	33(68.75)
13.	calculate profit and loss	39(81.25)	9(18.75)
14.	understand payroll and various deductions	17(35.4)	31(64.6)
15.	know how to obtain loans	25(52.1)	23(47.9)

N=48

Table 3 shows that 10 items in the Table obtained percentage scores of 50 and above, while 5 items obtained percentage scores of less than 50 percent. From the Table, profit and loss (81.25), mobilize resources to invest into the business (79.2), manage every component of garment making business (77.1), and others. The skills with the lowest scores analyze and evaluate

(47.9%), have knowledge of costing (35.4%), understand payroll and various deductions (35.4%), acquire the skills of preparing financial statement (31.25%) and interpret financial statements (31.25%).

**Marketing Skills Needed by Youths to Set-Up and Manage a Garment-Making Firm**

**Table 4: Percentage Responses of Garment Making Firms' Owners on Marketing Skills Required by Youths to Manage Garment-Making Firms**

S/N	Marketing Skills	Yes (%)	No (%)
	<b>Ability to:</b>		
1.	convince customers to patronage products	31(64.6)	17(35.4)
2.	get the product to final consumers	36(75)	12(25)
3.	introduce innovation to make product competitive	37(77.1)	11(22.9)
4.	use the media to reach customers	24(50)	24(50)
5.	use competitive prices to attract customers	35(72.9)	13(27.1)
6.	determine the extent to which garment will sell	34(70.8)	14(29.2)
7.	familiarize with various aspects of sales and salesmanship	36(75)	12(25)
8.	budget and forecast	27(56.25)	21(43.75)
9.	determine current and future trends in sales of garments	23(47.9)	25(52.1)
10.	determine availability of raw materials for garment making	38(79.2)	10(20.8)

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11.	determine what customers need	35(72.9)	13(27.1)
12.	fix prices/cost of items	41(85.4)	7(14.6)
13.	keep records	39(81.25)	9(18.75)

**N=48**

Table 4 shows that garment-making firms' owners are of the opinion that ability to: convince customers to patronize products (64.6%), get the product to final consumers (75%), introduce innovation to make product competitive (77.1%), use the media to reach customers (50%), use competitive prices to attract customers (72.9%), determine the extent to which garment will sell (70.8%), familiarize with various aspects of sales and salesmanship (75%), budget and forecast (56.25%). Others are: ability to: determine availability of raw materials for garment making (79.2%), determine what customers need (72.9%), fix prices/cost of items (85.4%) and keep records (81.25%) are marketing skills required of youth to set-up and manage garment-making firm in Ahoada East Local Government Area of Rivers State.

### Discussion of Findings

Garment making as one of the major areas in Home Economics has the capability of empowering unemployed youths to earn a living if they possess the required skills for making of garments as well as for starting and managing their business successfully. The findings of this study show that entrepreneurship skills needed by unemployed youth in Ahoada East LGA to startup and manage their own garment making businesses include; communication skills, personal skills, finance management skills and marketing skills.

Findings on communication skills include the ability to: generate message or information, code generated message or information, send information

message, , use mobile phone to pass information, use WhatsApp and Facebook for interaction, use face-to-face interaction, keep suggestion box, others are: ability to; receive messages from clients, decode messages from clients, send feedback to clients, use client's feedback and listen to complaints of clients are needed by the unemployed youth in order to setup and manage their own garment making businesses. These findings are supported by those of Archan and Sharma (2014) when the revealed that good communication skills are what the merchandizers in clothing and fashion businesses need in the supply chain competitiveness. The finding is also supported by the finding of Omolara (2018) when the author discovered that Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) required communication skills to be successful. The finding is also in line with the discovery of Rao and Joshi (nd) when the revealed that young players in the fashion industry need to develop skills for managing the process of communication.

The study also revealed that the owners of garment firms in Ahoada East are of the opinion that the acquisition of personal skills such as ability to: develop plans to meet goals, organize day to day activities of the firms, negotiate with customers, dress well so as to attract customers, manage personal strengths and weaknesses, keep scheduled appointment with customers, smile and maintain sense of humor with my customers, maintain open-mindedness to suggestions, be honest and be trusted,

maintain open-mindedness to suggestions and maintain cordial relationship with customers are required of unemployed youth who want to go into garment making businesses . The findings are in line with the list of personal skills drawn by Anyakoha (2015) for economic empowerment and survival of young entrepreneurs. The findings are also in line with the opinion of Haque, Faizan & Cockrill (2017), Omolara (2018), who all agreed to the acquisition of the assessed personal skills for garment making businesses.

The finding of the study also revealed that the owners of garment firms in Ahoada East Local Government Area are of the opinion that management skills such as ability to; plan and set goals, manage every component of garment making business, attend to daily details, hire workers and use them to achieve result, mobilize resources to invest into the business, ensure that resources are managed effectively, ensure that positions are occupied by qualified people; have knowledge of accounts, the skills of calculating profit and loss, and know how to obtain loans are required of unemployed youth who wants to setup and manage garment making businesses. A cursory look at the abilities should that they are necessary for effective and efficient management of the day to day activities of the garment making entrepreneurs. The findings are supported by the opinion of Okoli and Ezenwafor (2015) when they opined that management skills as entrepreneurial skills are needed to enable entrepreneurs to effectively perform management functions. The findings are in line with the discovery of Emelue (2010) who discovered that youth required entrepreneurship skills for planning,

organizing and mass production in clothing production enterprise.

Also, the finding of the study revealed that owners of garment making firms in Ahoada East Local Government Area are of the opinion that youth who want to venture in garment making needs marketing skills such as ability to: convince customers to patronage products, get the product to final consumers, introduce innovation to make product competitive, use the media to reach customers, use competitive prices to attract customers, determine the extent to which garment will sell, familiarize with various aspects of sales and salesmanship, budget and forecast. Others are: ability to: determine availability of raw materials for garment making, determine what customers need, fix prices/cost of items and keep records. These skills indicated that youth who want to venture into garment making business need marketing skills in order to win customers and drive sales. The findings are supported by the discovery of Emelue (2010) who discovered that youth required marketing skills in clothing production enterprise. The finding is also in line with the discovery of Rao and Joshi (nd) when they revealed that young players in the fashion industry need to develop skills for handle marketing issues.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded although there are vast opportunities for unemployed youth in Ahoada East Local Government Area to venture into garment making for the purpose of earning a living, their success in starting and managing the garment business would depend on entrepreneurial skills for successful commercialization of idea. These

entrepreneurial skills as identified through the findings of this study are communication skills, personal skills, management skills and marketing skills. Consequently, unemployed youth who wants to exploit the opportunities in garment making business needs to develop these entrepreneurial skills during training.

It is important to note that these skills can only be developed through training in garment making entrepreneurship formally and non-formally. This means that developing these skills would come with some financial and non-financial implications which must be borne by the youth before they can be able to develop and utilize such skills to start and manage their own garment making business.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are put forward for implementation:

1. Parents and the government should encourage the youths with financial support for them to go into garment making enterprise.
2. Government should partner with the owners of garment making firms so that they can create more jobs opportunities for the youths
3. Youth in Ahoada East should enroll themselves in garment making entrepreneurship training in prominent non-formal training centres within and outside Ahoada East in order to develop the skills for garment making
4. Unemployed youths with garment making skills should endeavour to attend workshops and seminars on entrepreneurial skills development in order to enhance their opportunities to

be successful in garment making businesses.

5. Government should provide loan facilities for the youths who have completed their training so that can start up after their training.

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