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Relevance of the clothing curriculum to industry: A case study of a polytechnic in Zimbabwe

***Isabel Makwara Mupfumira, *Gamuchirai Tsitsi Ndamba and **Emily Motsi**

*Robert Mugabe School of Education and Culture, Great Zimbabwe University
**Faculty of Education University of Zimbabwe

Corresponding Author: ndambagt@gmail.com Cell: +263 777128992 / +263 782795253

Abstract

This study examined the relevance of the National Certificate in Industrial Clothing Design and Construction Curriculum to the Clothing Industry. A qualitative approach was used in the study utilising a case study of one Polytechnic in Zimbabwe. Convenience and purposive sampling were used to come up with a sample for the study. The participants were four second-year clothing students, four production managers and three clothing lecturers. Data were collected through interviews, observation and document analysis. The findings showed that the curriculum furnished students with basic skills and competences for the clothing industry. However, the skills and competences may not be relevant for employment in the clothing industry. The study established that stakeholder involvement in curriculum design and implementation was essential for development of relevant programmes. The study recommends a link between curriculum designers and implementers with industry for development of relevant programmes.

Keywords: curriculum, stakeholder involvement, skills and competences, employment, clothing industry.

INTRODUCTION

The National Certificate in Industrial Clothing Design and Construction is a two-year programme. The entry requirement is a minimum of five 'O' level passes including Fashion and Fabrics and English Language.

In 1997, the National Certificate in Industrial Clothing Construction Programme 374 was introduced at the Polytechnic. According to Higher Education Examination Council of Zimbabwe (1993b), the programme was designed to produce a clothing constructor who is highly skilled in the construction of garments to satisfy the needs of the clothing industry. The programme comprised Industrial Pattern Techniques, Industrial Sewing Techniques, Clothing Factory Management and Operations, Garment Design and Textile Studies. One of the programme's aims was to train versatile operators within the clothing industries. In 2005, the programme was revised and renamed code 374/04 National Certificate in Industrial Clothing Design and Construction. In addition to the subjects outlined, the revised programme also offers Computer appreciation and Entrepreneurial Skills Development.