

The Role of Clothing and Textile in Poverty Alleviation among Women in Abakaliki Local Government Area

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Abstract

This study identified the roles of clothing and textiles-related occupations in poverty alleviation among women in the Abakaliki Local Government Area. The study was guided by three objectives. A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was employed in a population of 555. A proportionate stratification sampling method was employed in the selection of 228 women from seven districts in the area who formed the sample size for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled “Roles of Clothing and Textiles Related Occupations in Poverty Alleviation among Women Questionnaire”, validated by two lecturers from the Department of Home Science and Management, University of Nigeria. Data obtained were analysed in Statistical Product for Service Solution (IBM-SPSS, version 23), using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation) and presented in the form of tables. The results showed that these occupations provide the women with enough income to solve their basic needs; the opportunity to develop their potential; and active participation in the LGA's decision-making on issues affecting women. Unrealistically high electricity costs; no tax relief for start-ups; and insufficient relevant skills training; were major challenges. The survey suggested in-house finishing of products, upfront payments, and resource-efficient production for businesses. On a broader scale, suggested government interventions include equipment grants, tax reliefs, and the establishment of textile mills.

Keywords: Clothing and Textiles, Occupations, Poverty Alleviation, Women

Introduction

Poverty is the state of being poor, that is living with a lack of money and material resources. It is a state of being poor and a social construct with a variety of facets and qualities. There is no universal definition or standard for measuring poverty. Being poor entails more than just not having enough money or other resources to support a

sustainable way of life. Its symptoms include hunger and malnutrition, restricted access to basic services like education and healthcare, social marginalization and discrimination, and a lack of involvement in decision-making (United Nations, 2020). The problem of poverty has existed since Nigeria became a nation (Nkwede, 2013). According to the Federal Office

of Statistics report (1999), poverty rates in Nigeria ranged from 27% in the late 1970s to the early 1990s; and 46% in 1996. In 2017 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) prices, the new global poverty threshold of \$2.15 per person per day mirrors the typical national poverty limit of low-income countries, including Nigeria (World Bank, 2022). Slightly under 133 million people in Nigeria or 62.9% of the population, are multi-dimensionally poor, which means that they experience deprivation in at least 26% of weighted indicators (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Poverty impacts the health and development of children negatively. Children born into poverty are more susceptible to infant mortality, poor nutrition, congenital disorders, etc. Poverty also increases maternal mortality, crime rates, and poor literacy rates in Nigeria.

According to United Nations Women, (2020), there are 125 women for every 100 men in the age range of 25-34 years, who live in extreme poverty (Charmes, 2019). This reflects the differences in their life courses, women between the ages of 25 and 34 are particularly vulnerable due to earlier marriage and childrearing, discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes that reinforce their role as caregivers, as well as unequal power dynamics in the household that restrict their access to resources and opportunities (United Nations Women, 2020). In addition, men and women are assigned different amounts of unpaid caregiving and domestic chores, and because time-saving equipment is not

readily available, women must work longer hours to enter the workforce, endangering their health and well-being. Women spend more time doing unpaid care work than men do. The trend over 15 years indicates that women's share of the total unpaid care work decreased from 70.6% to 67.5% (Charmes, 2019). Pearce (1978) coined the phrase "feminization of poverty" to describe the disproportionately high poverty rates among women despite apparent advancements in gender equality and women's higher labour force participation (Bullock, 2013). Poverty still affects women more than males and has proven to be a very challenging issue to solve, even though some women have become financially independent of their spouses due to their engagement in the workforce. Women experience poverty more frequently than men do, as a result of gender inequality in the workplace, family responsibilities, and societal oppression of women. Women also experience poverty more severely because they are at the bottom of the labour market, particularly in rural areas where there are severe labour restrictions. Rural women are unable to carry out the tasks and play the roles that are required of them in a social, cultural, and physical context as a result of social marginalization, gender discrimination, age, a lack of expertise, having no land, and other factors. The likelihood of poverty is increased by several factors, including dangerous living and working environments, inadequate nutrition and health care, and low educational attainment (Aluko

& Mbada, 2020). Income is a significant indicator of poverty among women in both urban and rural places around the world, and family responsibilities frequently limit their ability to engage in more lucrative activities and access employment possibilities (Aluko & Mbada, 2020). Their priorities for how to measure and respond to poverty change primarily as a result of the many roles individuals play in their community, which expose them to various limits, opportunities, and needs (Jayamohana & Amenu, 2014). In rural settings, traditional gender roles, guided by Role Theory, often cast men as primary breadwinners while unduly burdening women with domestic responsibilities. Economic dependence on male partners and extended family dynamics can restrict women's financial autonomy (Biddle, 2013; United Nations Women, 2018; Gram et al., 2018). Extended family living arrangements may ease childcare duties, as younger women often turn to older female relatives for support (United Nations Women, 2020). Education, a fundamental right, equips individuals with skills and awareness that enhance health, earning potential, and decision-making. Empowering women through education is pivotal for poverty reduction (Janjua, 2014; Khan, 2015).

One of the first steps for nations making the switch from agricultural to sector, according to Wiman (2012) has historically been the clothing and textile sector (especially for women). Hence, the sector's development has significant implications for the whole

economy as well as a nation's ability to grow and combat poverty. Clothing and textile-related occupations refer to jobs that require performing tasks like tailoring garments, producing knitted goods and other articles of clothing, textile crafts, textile engineering, designing, and so on. Wiman (2012) found that women make up at least two-thirds of all employees working in the clothing and textile sector, except in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. In nations like Bangladesh and Pakistan, where female labour force participation in the rest of the economy is low, women continue to hold higher proportions of employment in the clothing and textile sector (relative to other industries). Due to the strong influence of women's wage-earning opportunities, understanding the evolution of the clothing and textile sector has substantial consequences for the advancement of women and the fight against poverty. According to Ka'oje and Kaoje (2022), to fully comprehend and address the causes of poverty, it is important to take into account how differently men and women feel about poverty. Nkwede, (2013) reported that successive administrations have designed poverty alleviation programmes with little implementation success due to underrepresentation of the targeted poor people, policy and political instability, lack of continuity, corruption and misappropriation of government funds, and the programmes were not well designed. Such programmes that targeted women include the Better Life for Rural

Women, the Family Economic Advancement Programme, and the National Poverty Eradication Programme. In 2005, the Ebonyi State government established the Ebonyi State Community-Based Poverty Reduction Agency (EBCPRA).

With over one million Nigerians employed and more than ₦1 billion in revenue, the country's textile industry has been a significant contributor to the manufacturing sector of the economy (Owen et al., 2016). With 250 factories and a capacity utilization rate of more than 50% before 1997, it was the second largest in Africa. It had expanded to become the third largest in Africa by the 1970s and 1980s. Women have safeguarded and promoted rich cultural value and traditional designs, and Small-to-Medium-sized Enterprises are a significant driver of innovation and job development (Moungar, 2018). Global demand for African textiles and clothing is rising, and African patterns are becoming acknowledged as really fashionable and classic designs. African influences are becoming more and more prevalent in the most recent collections from international fashion businesses. Moungar (2018) further states that to profit from the global fashion value chain, African nations must industrialize quickly, and the textile and clothing sector offers significant possibilities for value additions and employment creation. National strategies to reduce poverty require democratic participation and changes in economic structures to ensure access for all, more equitable distribution of

wealth and income, and social protection for those unable to support themselves (Wiman, 2012).

The level of acceptance of locally produced clothing and textiles-related goods is now high because of the high foreign exchange rate. Despite numerous obstacles like poor infrastructure, inadequate government incentives, and other issues, many people, particularly women and young people, have taken advantage of the opportunities the industry has to offer. Clothing and textile-related occupations have been a source of livelihood for many people for centuries. Seamstresses can specialize in sewing skirts, trousers, shirts, jackets, and coats are just a few examples of the many things. Others make curtains and linings, while others work with textiles to create crafts, decorative items like throw pillows, and much more. Several pieces of research have revealed that this sector provides stable revenue across the nation. Unfortunately, some regions of the nation have not utilized this business to its full potential as a means of subsistence and income generating. The government and some non-governmental organizations have tried to alleviate poverty among women by empowering them to engage in clothing and textiles-related skills acquisition programmes. Most of the time, there is rarely any kind of assessment to see if these techniques are producing the expected effects. This study, therefore, investigated if clothing and textiles-related occupations play any role in poverty

alleviation among women in Abakaliki Local Government Area. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. Identify the roles that clothing and textiles-related occupations play in poverty alleviation among women in the LGA;
2. Identify the problems encountered in the clothing and textiles industry that hinder effective poverty alleviation among women; and
3. Recommend likely solutions to the problems.

Methodology

Study design. The descriptive cross-sectional survey design was employed for the study. Cross-sectional study is a type of observational study that analyzes data from a population, or a representative subset at a specific point in time (Setia, 2016).

Study population. The study population included 555 registered businesses that are clothing and textiles related in the Local Government Area (LGA), according to the data obtained from Abakaliki Local Government Council, Nkaliki. Abakaliki LGA is one of the thirteen (13) LGAs in Ebonyi State, with its administrative headquarters in the town of Nkaliki and the council is made up of seven (7) districts, and 204 villages. The districts include Amachi, Amegu, Edda, Izzi Unuhu, Okpuitumo Ndebor, Okpuitumo Ndiagu, and Nkaleke Echara with 27, 36, 19, 30, 15, 19, and 57 villages respectively.

Sample size and sampling technique. The WHO (2013) formula for sample size calculation was employed, it yielded 228 respondents. A

proportionate stratification sampling method was employed in the selection of respondents for the study from each district, herein referred to as stratum. This method was adopted because the study population's characteristics were diverse and needed to be properly represented in the sample. Each stratum was then sampled using simple random sampling in direct proportion to the stratum population.

Instrument for data collection. The structured questionnaire titled: Roles of Clothing and Textiles Related Occupations in Poverty Alleviation among Women Questionnaire (RCTROPAWQ) was developed after an extensive literature review and used to elicit information from the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into two (2) parts. Part 1 assessed their demographic data while Part 2 had three (3) sections with each addressing an objective. Items on the questionnaire were scored on a 5-point Likert scale structure which ranged from 5 "strongly agree" to 1 "strongly disagree".

Validation and reliability. The questionnaire was face and content validated by two lecturers in the Department of Home Science and Management, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The reliability of the instrument for the study was ascertained using Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency reliability test. Data used for the test was collected from twenty (20) women who possess similar characteristics as the study population in Ebonyi LGA and a coefficient score of 0.82 was obtained.

The value indicates the high internal consistency of the items.

Method of data collection. A preliminary visit was paid to the Head of Department of the Education Department/Social Welfare Unit of the LGA with an introductory letter obtained from the head of the Department of Home Science and Management, to obtain permission for the research. Two undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University who are residents of Abakaliki and speak the Izzi dialect of the Igbo language, were recruited and trained as research assistants in the distribution and administration of the questionnaires. The questionnaire was administered by hand to available respondents who were directly or indirectly working with textiles in each district. Those who were literate were given the questionnaire to fill out while those who had little education were guided to answer the questions by translating the questionnaire items to their dialect for easy understanding, and their responses were recorded. The collection was on-the-spot and all the questionnaires were received back.

Data and statistical analysis. Statistical analysis was done using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Descriptive statistics (mean \pm standard deviation)

were used to analyse data. The decision rule was placed at a mean score of ≥ 2.5 , only scores up to 2.5 were accepted to have been agreed upon by the respondents.

Results

Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

The respondents were predominantly (47.4%) middle-aged (31-45 years), Igbo and Christian 93.5%, and 85.2% respectively, 37.4% of them were O'level holders, 60.4% were married, and 46.1% earned <120,000 Naira per annum.

Table 1 below shows that tailoring was the most common (100%) clothing and textile-related occupation in the area, followed by fabric merchandising (98.3%) and Second-hand cloth selling (96.9%), Trimming and finishing (93%), Costume designer (91.7%), Accessory designer (88.6%), Dry-cleaning and laundry (88.2%), Milliner (87.7%), and Others (68%). The respondents mostly engaged in tailoring (92.5%) and fabric merchandising (82%). The fashion designers among them constituted 20.2%, and Second-hand cloth sellers (16.2%). Dry-cleaning and laundry (0.9%), Embroidery (3.5%), and Retail store management (3.9%) were the least engaged occupations.

Table 1: Percentage responses on the existence and engagement of the respondents in clothing and textiles-related occupations

Occupations	Exists F (%)	Engaged F (%)
Tailor/seamstress	228 (100.0)	211 (92.5)
Fashion designer	148 (64.9)	46 (20.2)
Merchandiser (fabric)	224 (98.3)	187 (82.0)
Retail store manager	148 (64.9)	9 (4.0)
Second-hand clothing seller	221 (96.9)	37 (16.2)
Dry-cleaning and laundry	201 (88.2)	2 (0.9)
Embroidery	109 (47.8)	8 (3.5)
Trimming and finishing (“weaving”)	212 (93.0)	17 (7.5)
Patternmaking	76 (33.3)	15 (6.6)
Accessory designer	202 (88.6)	14 (6.1)
Costume designer	209 (91.7)	19 (8.3)
Milliner (e.g. hats)	200 (87.7)	13 (5.7)
Others (e.g. cobblers, sewing machine technicians)	155 (68.0)	33 (14.5)

Table 2 shows the responses of the participants on the roles of clothing and textiles-related occupations in poverty alleviation among women. The respondents agreed that these occupations provide the women with enough income to solve their basic needs (mean = 4.24); the opportunity to develop their potential (mean = 4.20); and active participation in the LGA's decision-making on issues affecting women (mean= 4.08). The women are

gainfully employed (mean = 4.07). They are equipped with the economic assets to access credits as equitably as possible with men (mean = 3.98), and there is no gender entry barrier (mean = 3.93). They are not capital-intensive to start-up (mean = 3.48); give women access to the society's elites and high-profile events (mean = 3.40), and allow women more time for leisure and household chores (mean = 3.07).

Table 2: Roles of clothing and textiles-related occupations in poverty alleviation among women

Roles	Mean (SD)	Remark
Full, productive, and decent work for women.	4.07 (2.48)	Agree
No entry barrier based on gender.	3.93 (2.11)	Agree
The demand for products/services is higher than the supply so, any woman with the interest and relevant skills can join.	3.74 (1.98)	Agree
Not capital-intensive to start-up.	3.48 (1.68)	Agree
Allow women to become employers of labour.	3.98 (2.24)	Agree

Allow women more time for leisure and household chores.	3.07 (1.15)	Agree
Equip women with the relevant skills and experience for accessing poverty alleviation programmes.	3.74 (1.80)	Agree
Equip women to access loans and grants as equitably as possible with men.	3.98 (2.24)	Agree
They allow women active participation in the LGA's decision-making on issues affecting women.	4.08 (2.44)	Agree
Provide opportunities to develop women's potential.	4.20 (2.60)	Agree
Provide enough income to solve their basic needs.	4.24 (2.68)	Agree
Give them access to the society's elites and high-profile events.	3.40 (1.28)	Agree
Give them advantageous popularity should they seek to run for political offices.	3.72 (1.91)	Agree
Allow the women the creative freedom to add value to existing business ideas and thus earn profits.	4.02 (2.44)	Agree

Table 3 shows the problems that hinder effective poverty alleviation among women. They include unrealistically high electricity costs (mean = 4.40); no tax relief for start-ups (mean = 4.20); insufficient relevant skills training (mean = 4.13); the complexity of the loan's application process (mean = 4.00); high poverty level in the area (mean = 4.00); heavy taxes (mean = 3.96); customers always patronise on credit (mean = 3.87); inadequate infrastructural facilities (mean = 3.80); shop rents were too high (mean = 3.78); and water is not easily accessible (mean = 3.56).

Table 3: Mean responses on problems that hinder effective poverty alleviation among women

Problems	Mean (SD)	Remark
The complexity of the loan application process.	4.00 (2.22)	Agree
No tax relief for start-ups.	4.20 (2.55)	Agree
Heavy taxes.	3.96 (2.12)	Agree
Inadequate infrastructural facilities.	3.80 (2.18)	Agree
The high poverty level in the area.	4.00 (2.40)	Agree
Unrealistically high electricity cost	4.40 (2.93)	Agree
Insufficient relevant skills training on machine operation, management, other technical skills, and general knowledge.	4.13 (2.47)	Agree
Shop rents are too high.	3.78 (2.08)	Agree
Water is not easily accessible.	3.56 (1.78)	Agree
Customers always patronize on credit.	3.87 (2.21)	Agree

Table 4 shows the responses on the likely solutions to the problems identified. The respondents mostly suggested that businesses can finish clothing with special seams to save outsourcing costs or energy consumed by industrial machines (mean = 4.40), and should demand that the customers

make a huge part of the payment when they order a product/service (mean = 4.03). They also suggested that businesses should find creative ways to reduce the number of resources used to produce their products while maintaining quality (mean = 3.59), give discounts to encourage word-of-mouth referral instead of paying hugely for digital advertising (mean = 3.53), and

manufacture some necessary raw materials (mean = 3.19). Additionally, the government should provide equipment grants and loans at low-interest rates (mean = 4.27); there should be tax reliefs for start-ups (mean = 4.20); and build textile mills and factories for raw materials production (mean = 4.19).

Table 4: Mean responses on the likely solutions to the problems identified

Solutions	Mean (SD)	Remark
The government should provide equipment grants and loans at low-interest rates.	4.27 (2.86)	Agree
There should be tax reliefs for start-ups.	4.20 (2.68)	Agree
The government should provide social welfare funds for large households with a greater number of members who are not of working age.	3.87 (2.31)	Agree
The government should build textile Mills and factories for raw materials production.	4.19 (2.69)	Agree
Government should intervene in the alleviation of poverty among residents of the LGA.	3.99 (2.30)	Agree
Clothing can be finished with special seams to save outsourcing costs or energy consumed by industrial machines.	4.40 (2.93)	Agree
Charcoal iron can be used in place of industrial steam iron to save energy.	3.30 (1.55)	Agree
Businesses can give discounts to encourage word-of-mouth referrals instead of paying hugely for digital advertising.	3.53 (1.75)	Agree
The government should review the curriculum of Home Economics subjects in schools to include practical training on machine operations.	4.00 (2.32)	Agree
The government should build model vocational schools and provide scholarships.	3.65 (1.99)	Agree
Businesses should demand that the customers make a huge part of the payment when they order a product/service.	4.03 (2.32)	Agree
Find creative ways to reduce the amount of resources used to produce their products while maintaining quality.	3.59 (1.68)	Agree
Businesses should manufacture some necessary raw materials.	3.19 (1.32)	Agree

Discussion

This study aims to explore the roles of clothing and textiles-related occupations in poverty alleviation

among women in the LGA. The findings reveal that tailoring is the predominant occupation, followed by fabric merchandising and second-

hand cloth selling. Other prevalent clothing and textiles-related occupations include trimming and finishing, costume designing, accessory designing, dry-cleaning and laundry, and millinery. Notably, occupations like dry cleaning and laundry, embroidery, and retail store management are less commonly pursued in the study area. Understanding the distribution of these occupations provides valuable insights for designing targeted interventions and support mechanisms to enhance economic opportunities and empowerment of women in the LGA.

The high engagement in tailoring and fabric merchandising suggests the popularity and practicality of these occupations among the women surveyed. These roles not only provide economic opportunities but also empower women with valuable skills in the clothing and textiles sector. Fashion designers represent a niche within the broader spectrum of clothing and textiles-related occupations. This indicates a certain level of specialization within the industry, potentially leading to higher income and economic empowerment for those involved. Second-hand cloth selling showcases another niche of the clothing and textiles market. While it may signify a more informal sector, it remains a notable source of income for a significant proportion of women in the LGA. This niche may also represent the proportion of women who are part of the circular economy,

which is a leading watchword in the world today. On the other hand, the lower engagement rates in occupations such as dry-cleaning and laundry, embroidery, and retail store management suggest that these roles are less prevalent or less preferred by the respondents. Further exploration could shed light on the factors influencing the choice of certain occupations over others.

The participants' responses reflect a positive perception of the roles played by clothing and textiles-related occupations in poverty alleviation among women in the LGA. Their responses showed that through clothing and textiles-related occupations, women in the LGA can be permanently lifted out of multidimensional poverty. The participants believe that these occupations provide women with sufficient income to address their basic needs. This underscores the economic significance of engaging in clothing and textiles-related activities for the surveyed women. Similarly, Yamagata (2006) observed that, in specific job categories, women constitute the majority of the labour force, earning wages well above the poverty line. Moreover, barriers to employment and promotions in these categories are low, making the garment industry an excellent job prospect for rural women, offering an alternative to low-wage economic activities.

The finding shows that these occupations offer women opportunities for personal and

professional growth. They acknowledged that engagement in clothing and textiles-related occupations allows women to actively participate in the LGA's decision-making on issues affecting them. This highlights the perceived empowerment and involvement of women in community matters. Moungar (2018) emphasizes that developing their skills in these areas not only enhances economic productivity but also fosters independence, offering social and political benefits to their communities.

The women recognized that they were gainfully employed through these occupations. This emphasizes the significance of these roles in providing meaningful employment opportunities for women in the LGA. According to the respondents, these occupations equip women with economic assets to access credits as equitably as possible with men. Moungar (2018) highlights the potential for economic empowerment, particularly among women, in both rural and urban areas through active involvement in the fashion value chain. Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) play a vital role in job creation and innovation, contributing to decent and productive employment in future industries (Moungar, 2018).

The study findings also indicate that there is no significant gender entry barrier in these occupations, and they are not highly capital-intensive to start. Beghini and

Pozzan (2019) note that the Textile Clothing Leather Footwear (TCLF) sector, compared to other industries, is characterized by a significant presence of SMEs due to lower startup costs. The women also believe that engaging in clothing and textiles-related occupations provides them access to society's elites and high-profile events, which could lead to potential social and networking benefits. These occupations are also believed to allow women more time for leisure and household chores. This suggests a perceived balance between work and personal life for women engaged in these activities. Textile Exchange (2018) asserts that the textile industry holds the potential to alleviate poverty, especially among women, and promote gender equality. Quality jobs in this sector can empower women economically, provide social protection, support work-life balance, and foster discrimination-free environments. Also, that research highlights the significant employment of women in the garment sector, contributing positively to economic growth.

The challenges hindering effective poverty alleviation among women engaged in clothing and textiles-related occupations are multifaceted and contribute to the complex dynamics of economic empowerment in this context. Unrealistically high electricity costs pose a significant financial burden on these women, impacting their overall profitability and economic

sustainability. As a consequence, they are compelled to resort to manual machines, which lack ergonomic features, resulting in lower product yields and, consequently, reduced income. World Bank (2022) stated that infrastructure, especially electricity access, is crucial for market success and poverty reduction.

The absence of tax relief for start-ups adds another layer of financial strain, increasing the overall operational costs for these women. This, coupled with heavy taxes, creates a challenging financial environment that affects the profitability and viability of their businesses. Also, taxation is dependent on government policies, beyond the control of business owners. Keane and Te Velde (2008) found that the long-term contribution of the textile and clothing industry to growth and development relies on the quality and effectiveness of government policies and institutions in developing countries.

Insufficient relevant skills training on machine operation, management, other technical skills, and general knowledge, compounds the challenges, limiting the capacity of women to adapt to changing market dynamics and emerging trends. Additionally, the complexity of the loan application process exacerbates these issues, creating bureaucratic hurdles that impede access to financial resources. Ita et al. (2018) support that education is vital

for sustainable poverty reduction, offering economic development, increased income, entrepreneurship, and improved utilization of government facilities.

The high poverty level in the area further exacerbates the difficulties faced by women engaged in these occupations. It reflects a broader economic context that may limit the purchasing power of potential customers, affecting sales and income generation.

Other challenges include customer reliance on credit transactions, which impacts cash flow and creates financial uncertainties for these women entrepreneurs. Inadequate infrastructural facilities, such as poor transportation and communication networks, add logistical challenges to the operation of their businesses. Exorbitant shop rents reduce profitability, while limited access to water affects some processes in certain textile-related activities.

To address the identified challenges, respondents propose several solutions. Businesses can optimize costs by finishing clothing with special seams in-house and should request substantial upfront payments from customers. They also suggest adopting resource-efficient production methods while maintaining quality and incentivizing word-of-mouth referrals with discounts instead of heavy spending on digital advertising. Manufacturing essential raw materials is another

recommended approach. On the part of the government, respondents advocate for equipment grants and low-interest loans, tax reliefs for startups, and the establishment of textile mills and factories for raw material production to foster sustainable solutions. This implies that Nigeria should manage most or the entire process of manufacturing clothing and textiles from supply to sales. The process includes turning fibres into fabrics and then into clothing and textiles with several steps at which value can be created or added. Aligning with Mounzar's (2018) suggestion that to profit from the global fashion value chain, African nations must industrialize quickly, and the textile and clothing sector offers significant possibilities for value additions and employment creation. Makinde et al. (2015) also suggested that with appropriate management and attention, Nigerian textile mills have the potential to contribute significantly to the nation's growth.

Eradicating poverty demands more than anti-poverty programs; it necessitates democratic participation, economic structural changes, and policies ensuring universal access to resources, opportunities, and public services. This includes promoting equitable wealth and income distribution, offering social protection, and aiding individuals or communities facing unforeseen challenges (Wiman, 2012). Onwe et al. (2019) underscore the crucial role of government and NGOs in

promoting youth entrepreneurship emphasizing the need for financial support, vocational training centres, and a conducive entrepreneurial environment to overcome obstacles hindering youth entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

The findings underscore the significant role clothing and textiles-related occupations play in poverty alleviation among women, particularly in tailoring and fabric merchandising. Clothing and textiles-related occupations provide financial stability and foster women's active participation in decision-making. While the challenges hinder effective poverty alleviation, proposed solutions emphasize in-house finishing of products, upfront payments, and resource-efficient production for businesses. On a broader scale, suggested government interventions include equipment grants, tax reliefs, and the establishment of textile mills. These insights highlight the potential for targeted strategies to enhance the impact of these occupations and address associated challenges, contributing to sustainable poverty alleviation.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

- ❖ Government should provide equipment grants and loans at low-interest rates; build textile mills and factories for raw materials

production; and there should be tax reliefs for start-ups.

- ❖ The women can lease equipment to scale up.
- ❖ Women can also expand their catalog with additional products such as accessories, wigs, cosmetics, and more to diversify their income streams. This will enable them to scale their businesses more quickly and provide a fallback option during sales downturns.

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