

## The Challenges and Prospects of Fabric Design in Nigeria Focusing on Tie and Dye

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The paper ex-rayed the historical process of fabric design in Nigeria with emphasis on Tie and dye. The conceptual explication of the key concepts was conceptualized. The study made use of system theory, while secondary sources of data were used, data were analyzed using content analysis. The study discovered that there are factors militating against textile designs processes via Tie and dye, which includes, lack of raw materials, high cost of purchase, poor transportation system, and high literacy among personals in the process. The study unveiled that the elimination of the above-mentioned challenges against fabric designs with probable solution will lead to empowerment, employment, and national development, consequently, the following recommendations were made, elimination of unnecessary middle agent, availability of raw materials, equipment and qualified human resources, student /learners positive attitudinal change to learning. Provision of enabling environment among others will lead to national development.*

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**Keywords:** *Tie and dye, the challenges, and prospects of fabric design*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Because it is so crucial to a society's overall well-being, employment opportunities, and foreign exchange earnings, industrialization is the engine of economic expansion. According to Abimbola (2010), the clothing and textiles industry is one of the largest in the world. It becomes clear as one learns about the various aspects of textile and garment production that it has a significant impact on a nation's economy (Adam, 1992). In developed nations, textiles and clothing contribute to employment, particularly in regions where alternative employment options may be scarce. In the European Union, for instance, the sector is dominated by small and medium-sized businesses concentrated in several regions that are heavily dependent on this industry. It is also said that clothing and textiles are among the industries in which developing nations stand to gain the most from multilateral trade liberalization. According to Adisa (2013), the clothing industry is one of the largest and fastest-growing industries. It is labor-intensive, provides entry-level jobs for

unskilled labor in both developed and developing nations, and job creation in the sector has been particularly strong for women in poor nations, who previously had no other income opportunities than the household or the informal sector. In addition, it is a sector in which relatively modern technology can be adopted at relatively low investment costs even in developing nations. Because of the industry's technological characteristics, it is suitable for the top of the industrialization ladder in poor nations, some of which have experienced extremely high output growth rates in the sector (for example, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam, and Mauritius). It has grown into a significant economic force and employs many people. From cotton production to the weaving, spinning, and printing of textile materials, Nigeria's textiles factory is said to have directly employed approximately 3 million Nigerians. In addition, the industry created hundreds of thousands of indirect jobs for Nigerians and made a significant contribution to the revenue bases of the nation's governments (Afuye, 2014). The textile subsector was Nigeria's primary key play nearly two decades after independence, and this industrial sector significantly contributed to employment and economic expansion. However, the subsector that formerly dominated Nigeria's industrial sector has experienced significant decline over time.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted secondary through the review of existing literature such as review of articles, websites and books. The search key words dwelled on tie and dye, challenges, and prospects of fabric design. The adoption of secondary research allowed the access and review of large amounts of existing data. Some of the databases assessed include Elsevier and Google scholar.

### **Tie and dye**

A people's culture is basically their way of life, which produces assets like skills, products, expression, and insight that help the community's social and economic well-being. With regard to their inherent power to generate value by leveraging other production variables for creating incremental wealth through the use of resources at hand, which later translate into a cultural heritage that is passed on from generation to generation, this can be seen in the people predominating attitudes, norms, behaviors, beliefs, value, art, craft, heritage, and creative activities that characterize the functioning of a people. Ivory carving, grass weaving, wood carving, leather and calabash, pottery, painting, glass and metal works, and cloth weaving (textile) are all highly prized forms of art in Nigerian culture, which is positively multiethnic. Adire (tie and dye) textile, which is common among the people of Egbaland in Ogun State of Nigeria, reflects their culture more than any other form of these arts (Tomori, 2011). Abeokuta is the capital of the Egba nation and the present-day state of Ogun in South-West Nigeria. It is strategically situated on the Ogun River, 70 kilometers from the ancient city of Ibadan and 78 kilometers north of Lagos. Abeokuta is a market that is based on agriculture and has small and middle-level agribusinesses. The people produce yams, cassava, rice, corn, palm oil, poultry, cottons, and vegetables, among other agricultural products. In addition to that, cocoa, palm products, and kolanuts are exported from there. Although missionaries introduced cotton in the 1850s, the Abeokuta people's traditional crafts include tie-and-dye (Adire), pottery, and cotton weaving (Inside Watch Africa, 2012). It is said that the city is Nigeria's capital of the adire (tie and dye) industry. The Yoruba people of southwestern Nigeria in West Africa make and wear the resist-dyed fabric known as adire textile. Around the turn of the twentieth century, indigo-dyed cloth with resist patterns was first given the Yoruba label adire, which means "tied and dyed." The term "adire" was extended to include a

variety of hand-dyed textiles using wax resist batik methods to produce patterned cloth in a dazzling array of dye tints and hues in the second half of the twentieth century, when a broader color palette of imported synthetic dyes was introduced (Wikipedia, 2008). Until relatively recently, it was believed that the business of adire textile production, like other forms of entrepreneurship that are dynamic processes of incrementally generating wealth by an individual using available resources (Muhammed, 2001), was inherited from parents whose parents were also involved in the production process. In Egbaland, the craft was once known to be a family business that was passed down from parents to their daughters and wives. In an oral interview, Octarian Mulikat of Jojolola's compound stated, as cited by Tomori (2011), that individuals who were not members of the Jojolola family—the first family reputed to have produced adire in Egbaland—were prohibited from learning the Adire business because it is an essential component of the family heritage. However, the adire textile gradually transformed into an innovative entrepreneurial craft during a new period of innovation in handcrafted cloth production in Yorubaland in the 1960s, along with the growing availability of chemical dyes from Europe, which introduced a revolution in color and techniques (Wikipedia, 2008) and the entrants of Nigerian fashion designers who adapted the designs to print high-quality cloth using imported color-fast dyes in colors other than indigo.

### **Challenges Facing Textile Industries in Nigeria**

In addition to the problems that plague businesses in Nigeria and Africa in general, there are some challenges that are specific to the Textile industries in Nigeria which are as follows:

#### **Financing**

Depending on where you are in your business, you might just be thinking about making your own product or you might already be producing and want to expand. In any case, you'll need some money to get your business off the ground. Textile manufacturers in Nigeria unfortunately face a financial crunch. The interest rates are so high when it is available through bank loans (25 percent, 40 percent). At these rates, even if you made a profit, most or all of it would be used to pay off your debt to the banks. The textile industry requires a lot of capital, and the Nigerian industry in particular struggles with a lack of funds to keep the mills running smoothly. Assessing funds from banks with high lending rates is difficult for the industry. The federal government has attempted to approve a textile industry bailout fund. Under President Obasanjo, the Federal Executive Council approved a 70-million-naira Textile Industry Revival Fund to revive the ailing sector. Sadly, the stakeholders were not given access to this fund. According to Adamu-Suka (2011), the bail-out fund was increased to 100 billion naira, and some textile mills that have accessed the fund have begun operating. If the money is put to use, it will also fix infrastructure problems, which will end up being one of the problems the textile industry has.

#### **Marketing strategies**

Since many Nigerians are unaware of the distinctive characteristics of textiles produced in Nigeria, marketing strategies for textiles cannot be considered successful. Salisu should be allowed to incorporate these characteristics into Nigerian textile mills to give the Nigerian textile industry a competitive advantage. According to Njoku (2004)'s study of the marketability of made-in-Nigeria textiles, Nigerian textile consumers believe they are not adequately provided with a variety of textile products and that locally produced textiles are poorly finished and packaged. She noted in

her analysis of the research's findings that Nigerian-made goods are also not well-publicized by Nigerian marketers and the industry.

### **Inadequacy of Locally Produced Raw Materials**

When proposing the establishment of a textile industry, the most important consideration is the availability of raw materials. At home, basic raw materials like cotton, silk, dyes, and chemicals, among others, are unavailable for effective textile production. According to Oloyede (2014), the quality is low, insufficient, and insufficient to meet the industry's full production capacity. Despite the fact that Nigeria is a significant oil-producing nation, even petroleum-based products like polymer, dyes, and other synthetic materials, which were later introduced and are now utilized in the country, are scarce. Due to the country's liberalization policy and its inability to produce the majority of the raw materials used by these textile industries, most of them are imported. The level of dependence on foreign textiles, on the one hand, and the exportation of locally produced raw materials, on the other, were then determined by these factors, which in turn weakened the textile industry's economic viability. At this point, it is important to note that there are numerous drawbacks when raw materials are imported to produce finished goods; Such finished goods always command high prices, leading to an increase in the unemployment rate while the country typically experiences a decrease in skilled labor. Additionally, the country's socioeconomic status would suffer. This will undoubtedly limit the country's development path. Youth restlessness and violence will decrease if this trend continues if youths are effectively engaged in textile production processes. However, it is important to note that the country's widespread youth unemployment has contributed to political violence and fueled the Boko Haram insurgency and violence in the northeast of Nigeria.

### **Global Recession**

The global recession is having an impact on the world's economic stability, particularly in developing nations. The global recession is having an effect on Nigerian society. Low economic growth, the closure of businesses that are unable to compete with highly technologically driven businesses, staff reductions in businesses and government institutions, youth unemployment, a lack of financial liquidity, and a high cost of living are the issues. Around the world, economic activity is generally declining. "The problem is multifaceted, but some of the factors that aggravated the situation included decreased demand due to economic decline in the developed market, stricter environmental procedures, and currency appreciation in China," as stated by Nayak (2009).

### **Low Patronage and Low Quality**

Products People do not care about their country and do not buy textiles made in Nigeria. Because they fail to check the influx of foreign textile materials, the Nigerian Customs Service is responsible for this. More than 70% of Nigerian consumers surveyed in market research preferred imported textiles to locally produced ones, according to the findings. According to Ogundele (2000), it has been observed that consumers' preferences for goods are influenced by price and quality. As was mentioned earlier, factors that contribute to the high cost of production and drive up product prices include the inability to obtain local raw materials, the prohibitive price of electricity, malfunctioning machinery, and brand designs. Products of lower quality have also resulted from these, particularly in comparison to the imported "smuggled" goods. Smuggling has

become a "booming industry" as a result of all of these factors, making it difficult for locally produced goods to compete with cheap imports from outside the country. Today, 80% of the country's Ankara is smuggled in, many of which are counterfeit Nigerian goods marketed as Swiss-made. Therefore, smuggling, faking, and counterfeiting are on the rise, and nobody is keeping an eye on the situation. As a result, we are unable to compete because the counterfeit and low-quality smuggled materials are more affordable. If the government wants to be firm, the industries here are competing with those whose production costs are lower than ours. Now is the time to implement a firm policy and check imports. Imports can legally and officially enter our country. Naturally, competition is beneficial worldwide. However, how can we cut production costs for our own materials? The World Trade Organization (WTO) includes us as members. It has our signature on it. We are right here, producing your own textile material for N10,000 and having someone legally bring it to your shore for N2,000 or N3,000. Therefore, we absolutely need to locate these elements that hinder local production costs.

### **Distribution & Logistics**

It is typically difficult for manufacturers to sell their products if they do not have established distribution channels. In some cases, Nigerian retailers will insist that wholesalers or manufacturers pay them in advance before allowing them to stock their products at their stores. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that are just getting their feet wet and lack the necessary distribution channels to bring their products to market may find this very discouraging.

### **Insecurity**

Numerous manufacturers are being affected by the nation's insecurity. For instance, Vita-Foam used to have a manufacturing facility in Jos, but that facility has since been shut down due to security concerns in the Northern region. As a matter of fact, the last bomb impact in Kaduna was extremely near one of the Material plants. Moreover, kidnapping issues are perpetrated. Nevertheless, the evildoers reside in the same economic environment as us. Ginners have been unable to operate due to insecurity in the North, preventing them from producing sufficient cotton to feed the local textile factories, which have lacked standard measuring equipment to process their product for export. "Aside from the inputs, you need appropriate seed to give you the right yield." You also need security because farmers are killed every day in the North and 75% of Ginners live in areas of insecurity there. As a result, there is insufficient cotton in the industry, which is the raw material for textile companies. The lack of a standardized measuring instrument is the only factor affecting the export quality of cotton. For the purpose of addressing the issue of bank loans not being settled, the Bank of Industry (BOI) is calling for the establishment of a commercial court. Why do some business owners take out a BOI credit facility and refuse to repay it? The problem is that every businessperson applying for a loan from a financial institution has a business plan in place and works toward achieving that goal within a certain time frame. But now there is a problem: what should the entrepreneur do if that plan doesn't work out? Therefore, the reality is that, despite having a solid business plan, a manufacturer is ultimately unable to increase his margins due to constraints such as a lack of infrastructure or a harsh operating environment. Therefore, for industries to expand, we require a favorable operating environment and sufficient infrastructure.

## **Government Policies**

The expansion of Nigerian textile mills is fundamentally influenced by economic policies. The price of imported textile raw materials like dyestuff, chemicals, machine spare parts, and equipment has always been affected by policies like lifting the ban on foreign textiles and devaluing the naira. Professor Sam Aluko, a well-known economist, recently criticized the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) call for further naira devaluation, claiming that it would harm the country's economy (Yusuf, 2011). When discussing the success of the Indian economy, it was discovered that a favorable economic policy, a high level of manpower that produces skilled labor, entrepreneurial skills, an effective multi-fiber raw material manufacturing capacity, a large domestic market, enormous export potential, a very low import content, and flexible textile manufacturing systems are all fundamental to the country's success in textile production. To foster economic expansion, Nigeria must take these measures into consideration and implement them. On paper, Nigeria's policies always look good. You will be dancing when they say it, but they don't put it into action, like education policy, agricultural policy, child rights law, and other policies. In the beginning, the Federal Government protected the textile industry by banning the import of textile goods. However, when the same government lifted the ban, trouble ensued, and the big men in government now travel to China, Indonesia, and other Asian nations to continue importing goods into Nigeria. Consequently, despite our superior quality, Nigerian Textile Mills were unable to produce and maintain profitability due to the influx of substandard but less expensive finished textile goods from China and Asia. Those nations boost their foreign exchange reserves by exporting to Nigeria, whereas Nigerians have no such desire; To the detriment of the national economy, everyone wants everything for their pocket (Odedegn, 2015).

## **Smuggling of Textile Goods**

Entrepreneurial traders trying to meet demand for a particular textile that is illegal or heavily taxed are responsible for a significant amount of smuggling in the textile industry. Smuggling is a destructive problem that serves as evidence of greed, corruption, and disregard for the law. Greed for wealth drives smuggling, which implies disregard for due process. It hinders the expansion of local industries. The textile industry's survival has been seriously threatened by smugglers' activities. This is due to the fact that foreign textile materials are always less expensive and are regarded as superior to domestic textiles, even when domestic textiles are more costly. Because of these factors, foreign textiles are more marketable than those made in the country. Before the ban on the import of foreign textiles was lifted, smugglers continued to take all the risks associated with sneaking illegal textile materials into Nigeria because of the competitive advantage that foreign textiles had over locally produced fabrics. The federal government explains that the decision was based on the need to discourage product smuggling and the benefits of import duties in order to justify lifting the ban.

## **Dependency on Foreign Technology**

Textile mills in Nigeria heavily rely on foreign machinery and accessories. According to Ohiorhehuan (2001), the country's economy suffers as a result of this practice because of the high cost of importing materials and tools, the lack of spare parts for replacing broken or worn-out tools, and a poor maintenance culture caused by a lack of knowledge about the tools' components. These machines often break down as they get used and get older, and the ones that can't be used are often

used to replace the working ones. This always has an impact on product quality and production, which often causes consumers to switch from domestic textiles to imported ones as a better alternative. Nigeria's technological development must be accelerated, with a particular emphasis on industrial technologies. In the interim, in order to move forward, concentration and emphasis could be placed on the production of spare parts and machine modifications.

### **Prospects of fabric design in Nigeria**

The textile industry's stability could be ensured and maintained through the implementation of a few measures. The issue of cotton as a crucial raw material to maintain production flow has been addressed by the recent federal agricultural initiative. The government ought to consolidate this measure and ensure that farmers' cotton is purchased in order to maintain production. The government ought to assist in the search for markets outside of Nigeria. The nation's president and its economic and legislative experts should make decisions that should benefit the economy when it comes to trade liberalization. They should not follow the economic drives of the developed nations that are aimed at unilateral trade agreements that favor the industrially developed nations. Exploring the international market will assist local cotton farmers in maximizing their profit as well as actualize the economic drive of the government. Economic policies that impede growth and development should be rejected by our leaders. For instance, Nigeria's participation in the World Trade Organization (WTO) beginning in 1995 had a negative impact on the sale of locally produced textiles because it was unable to compete effectively with imports. Nigeria's membership in this organization facilitated the importation of low-quality, low-cost textiles into Nigeria. The majority of textile mills were forced to close as a result of this, according to Husani (2006). The point that is being made here is that the government ought to urgently regulate the kinds of textile materials that can enter the country. This is one way to maintain the gains that would be made from the current intervention measures in the agricultural sector and stabilize the textile industry. It has been observed that Nigerian investors have not realized the textile industry's high level of viability in such a populous nation. Only Dangote Textile Mill, Fintex Mills, and Nortex Textile Mills were owned by Nigerians out of over 170 textile industries in Nigeria between 1975 and 1985. According to Olowo (2002), in order to improve Nigerian textiles, indigenous ownership would be required. As a result, Nigerians must be encouraged to diversify their investment portfolios and think about investing in the textile and related industries. These kinds of businesses would not only give people a chance to work, but they would also provide a variety of goods for the communities in the area and give investors an adequate income. The question that should be asked is whether or not Nigeria should have so many textile mills. In order to ensure product diversity, these large numbers shouldn't be drastically reduced to make room for specialization. The design and finishing of textiles, particularly the clothing (fashion design) aspect, require investment. Interest in this area has possibilities in apparel, shoe, scarf, cloak, tie, belt, sack, and floor covering ventures, among others. Utilizing products from the massive textile industry, numerous medium- and small-scale businesses are already emerging. A commercial town in the state of Abia, for instance, is fully involved in the design and production of dresses, shoes, and shirts that are packaged and sold in some West African nations. Sadly, these products say that they were made in Italy, the United States, Britain, and Japan. These entrepreneurs' loss of national consciousness and moral and ethical values are the root cause of this issue. If properly harnessed, this allied textile industry initiative for entrepreneurship will help to advertise products and change the negative perception that the local industry has faced for more than two decades. Even though

the majority of these fabrics are of substandard quality, Nigeria is known to have developed a very high level of greed for imported foreign textile materials. The Ministry of Information and related organizations should organize orientation and sensitization programs to address the issue of the majority of Nigerians' negative perception of local textiles. We need a National Agency for the Management of Textiles and Garments to lead in developing expertise for efficient service management and related matters and providing them with the legal framework they need to function fully as an Agency. With this support, we will be able to apply all of our management-related research from various research institutes. The rise of Asian Tigers is linked to technological and scientific innovation; Nigeria stands to benefit greatly from this opportunity to exploit textiles and technology. There can never be advancement without scientific innovation. I code that "development is a long-term investment supported by scientific innovation." Any nation that wants to grow must be willing to invest in long-term projects supported by scientific advancement. The military might of the world's developed nations is not what makes them so, but rather their scientific and technological progress.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is pointless to assert that the Nigerian textile industry has the potential to profitably support the national economy, generate revenue (through exports), and develop human capacity. Sadly, the business had been harmed for more than three decades and was unable to fulfill its potential. How viable is the Nigerian textile industry for generating revenue and empowering Nigerians economically? The deplorable state of Nigeria's textile industry is the subject of this critical discussion, which also considers the implications for Nigeria's citizens' well-being and national development as well as possible solutions.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is suggested that the government incorporate adire crafts into the academic curriculum to improve this sector. This would allow interested students to acquire the knowledge right from the school. When they graduate, these students will be able to work for themselves. Every civil servant and student at state-owned schools should wear adire to work and school on a designated day of the week, especially the Ogun state government. According to Porter (1990), domestic demand, which plays a significant role in enhancing competitive advantage, will benefit from this. The characteristics of domestic demand have a significant impact on the characteristics of domestically produced goods as well as the pressures for innovation and quality. Additionally, the state government ought to establish an adire textile museum where various pattern and adire documentation can be kept for study of adire textile development trends in Nigeria in the future.

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