Evaluating The Past, Present, And Future In Apparel Development And Merchandise: The Home Economics Perspective

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to evaluate the past, present and future in apparel development and merchandise in Nigeria: the Home Economics perspective. This study adopts a mixed research design based on interviews, archival records, print and electronic media and the use of 30 copies of researcher administered questionnaire. Respondents were purposively recruited for the study. Data collection took about two weeks and data generated were analyzed and represented through descriptive statistics. The study indicates that Nigeria Apparel Development and Merchandising Industry (NADMI) over the years have been great especially before and during the early part of Nigeria independence. Over the years, Nigerian apparel development and merchandise has gained global recognition but its state today is not encouraging. However, there is hope for the future as the study findings of this research prescribes. Based on these findings, it was recommended among others that all tiers of government should invest in the Nigeria apparel industry like what the government of Prof. Ben Ayade of Cross River State did and patronage of Nigerians on Nigeria made apparels.

Keywords: Apparel development, Apparel merchandise, Apparel industry, Nigeria.

I. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In a society in which fashion and trends transforms virally than envisaged, the need for successful follow-up in apparel development and merchandising becomes challenging, though necessary. To develop apparel products successfully to meet up with the changing trends for today's markets, facilitating creativity and innovation by removing organizational constraints is prerequisite for developers and merchandisers. Apparel development does not really end in the factory. Until it is merchandised and utilized by the final consumer its essence has not been meet and of course satisfaction must be ascertained for both the producer, merchandiser, and the final consumer. The satisfaction of the final consumer is the most important.

It is vital that apparel developers take complete control over their product development process. In contemporary Nigeria, one will say it's one of the few developing and still developing economies blessed with different natural and human resources that could give her a leading economy globally within two decades of her independence.

Apparel also interchangeably called textile is a general term which refers to any material made of interlacing of fibers such as fabric, cloth, carpet, and belt among others and generally, it is a flexible woven material consisting of a network of natural or artificial fibers which are often referred to as thread or yarn.

The world point of view as in the case of garment industry in Bangladesh, it has been expanded almost uninterruptedly since the late 1970s and the industry survived

multi-fiber arrangement phase out at the end of 2004 as well remains internationally competitive to date (Yunus & Yamagata, 2012). However, China and India still remains the world leading apparel developers and merchandizers (Keane & Velde, 2008). The past, present and future of apparel development and merchandising in Nigeria becomes a subject of concern to home economic professionals.

II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

In developing countries like Nigeria, Philippines, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, etc., the role of apparels cannot be over emphasized as people and government cannot do without it especially in growth and development strategies. Apparels (clothing) are identified as one of the most essentials in the hierarchy of human needs apart from food and shelter. Owing to this, it has raised consciousness among textile and clothing professionals in the home economics professions. This is so because the trends of production are not commensurate to the high demands and fashion trends. Secondly, the interest of government and poor policies towards the development industries has been militating its production and merchandising which in turn affects the economic situation of the country leading to a reasonable per cent of unemployment in the study area.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Nigerian Apparel Development and Merchandising Industries (NADMI) which have sustained the national economy for more than three decades are dying by the day without any hope of resurrection. How true this is lies in the continuous evaluation and re-evaluation of the apparel industry. The report of Modern Nigerian Textile Workers (MNTW) shows that NADMI is the third largest in Africa after Egypt and South Africa (Makinde, Fajuyigbe, & Ajiboye, 2015). The industry, which currently accounts for about 25% of manufacturing, passed through various phases of growth.

In Nigeria, following antecedent and study statistics, Import Substitution (IS) policies induced steady growth in the 1960s, which gave way to rapid growth, averaging 12.5%. In the 1970s when the economy was booming the recession of the mid 1980s took its toll: the cumulative textile production index (1972 = 100) declined from 427.1 in 1982 to 171.1 in 1984. The industry (NADMI) recovered in the late 1980s, achieving an annual growth of about 67% between 1985 and 1991, with synthetic textiles alone accounting for about 80% of the recorded growth. Capacity utilization improved between 1986 and 1991. The backward integration programme instituted by many firms in the industry following the strict government directive on the issue in the mid-1980s, the level of domestic sourcing of raw materials was put at about 64% in 1991, a steady improvement from 52% in1987 and 57% in 1988 (Makinde, Fajuyigbe, & Ajiboye, 2015).

IV. APPAREL DEVELOPMENT AND MERCHANDISING IN THE PAST

According to Bhattacharya (1980) in Makinde, Fajuyigbe, and Ajiboye (2015), the first modern apparel development and merchandise mill in Nigeria – Kaduna Textile Mill – was established in 1956. The primary reason for setting up the mill was to process the cotton that was being produced in the northern part of the country and between 1960 and 1988; the country has witnessed a fast growth of the industry as a result of her rich stable economy arising from her oil-wealth (petroleum/oil boom). It is no doubt that in the 1970s and the 1980s, the Nigerian textile industry (NADMI) grew to become the third largest in Africa.

The textile industries in Nigeria became blossomed precisely from 1957 to 1972 when other textile mills like Oodua Textile Mill in Ado-Ekiti, Aba Textile Mill in Aba, Arewa and United Textiles in Kaduna were established. Others include: Afprint, Enpee PLc, Aswani and Five Stars Textile Mills in Lagos.

A report by the United Nations University (U.N.U.) states that in 1987, there were 37 textile firms in the country, operating 716,000 spindles and 17,541 looms which according to Makinde, Fajuyigbe, and Ajiboye (2015), was the golden period of Nigeria's textile industry. Between 1985 and 1991, it recorded an annual growth of 67%, and as at 1991, it employed about 25% of workers in the manufacturing sector. Independent researches of Asaju (2014) and Oloyede (2014) reveal that the apparel industry had been a major employer of labour (about 60% of the labour force) in the apparel manufacturing sector and contributed immensely to the socio-economic and cultural development of the country.

V. APPAREL DEVELOPMENT AND MERCHANDISING IN THE PRESENT

The present state unfortunately depicts that the relevance of apparel development and merchandising to national economic growth had decreased drastically today. Judging from antecedence, Nigeria is noted for the production of cotton, silk and other fibers, which are primary materials for the textile industries. However, the situation has changed today; Nigeria now relies on imported raw materials and foreign technology to make the industry function.

The Nigerian textiles (NADMI) fail to impact on the world market because; it is still struggling to meet up with the basis of its establishment. This in effect provided an opportunity for the importation of foreign substitutes (textiles) to the country. The surface decorations found on most Nigerian factory-produced textiles have been discovered to have foreign influences (motifs) particularly from Java, Indonesia and India.

Illustrating this, the technique of covering the whole surface of a fabric with dominating patterns of flowers, plants, leaves among others are legacies from Java in Asia. Notably, Nigerian markets are now flooded with many of these foreign designs; thus jeopardizing the African Wax Print types which conventionally has the main and subordinate motifs that often serve as texture in the background in the fabric. Other

mechanically produced printed fabric known as dress print characteristically contains small motifs that are randomly distributed on the surface of the fabrics. These surface decorations with abstract or floral motifs are best described as 'all over patterns'. Other prints produced by the industry include super print, real wax, brocade, and other weaves from jacquard loom; off-loom weaves such as baby/cupion lace, shirting, and suiting materials.

The current state of Nigerian textile industries is worrisome because; most textile industries in the country today had already folded up or dying by the day. The reasons for this unfortunate trend are not farfetched. Tracing antecedence it can be pointed out that as at 1987, the 37 textile mills in Nigeria were operating 716000 spindles and 17541 looms. However, the output of the sector has never exceeded 55% of annual domestic consumption, allowing for a thriving in imported or mostly smuggled textiles (NUTGTWN, 2006).

A survey of technological gaps in the textile industries in Nigeria revealed that only 12 mills (industry), representing 61% of the total capacity spin only cotton while 25% of the existing mills are integrated mills. It has also been observed that most of the industry operates on low spinning capacity and they are generally lagging behind technologically without any hope for improvements in the weaving mills. More so, labour productivity in spinning operations is not high because of low capacity utilization and inadequate provision for on-the-job training. Low productivity levels also limit export capacities. Notably, with substantially liberated economic policies that Nigeria offers to avoid quota restrictions under the Multi Fibre Agreement (MFA), foreign entrepreneurs are induced, mostly from Asian countries, to establish export-oriented plants in the country (NUTGTWN, 2008).

The long years of neglience and adverse policies have led to the under-utilization of these resources, despite abundant human and material resources in the country. These resources have not been effectively utilized in order to yield maximum economic benefits to aid national development. This has been confirmed to be one of the primary causes of setbacks in the apparel development and merchandising industries in Nigeria.

In essence, the Textile Industry has been confirmed to be the most affected in Nigeria today. Statistics have also shown that about 85% of the industries are already dead while their employees were pushed out of job (Textile Report, 2005).

The estimated fall in apparel development and merchandising industries is shown thus: 1992-1995 = 124 Industries, 1996-1999 = 112 Industries, 2000-2003 = 60 Industries, 2004-2007 = 45 Industries, 2008-2011 = 40 Industries, 2012-2015 = 33 Industries (Armed, 2014). Makinde, Fajuyigbe, and Ajiboye (2015) attributed these setbacks to; lack of production of basic textile materials and tools at home, dependency on foreign experts, importation of textile materials, high cost of electricity, water, chemicals, dyes and affordability of the end products by the target users, including government liberality on textile importations, inadequate laws to protect copy rights and simulations.

VI. APPAREL DEVELOPMENT AND MERCHANDISING IN THE FUTURE

It is evidence that there has been neglience of government on other aspects of her economy like apparel development, agriculture, arts and culture, among others while channeling interest on oil economy alone. The social, physical and infrastructural developments in the post-independence era in 1960 guarantee an upward, stable increase in its economic profile.

The trend then (past and present), given the surplus natural resources, attest to the potentials of the country and her people, and the possibility of being ahead of other developing countries in Africa and beyond as well as in Nigeria, the apparel production and merchandising had flourished at both cottage and industrial levels. This is evidence based that the apparel development and merchandising can regain its feet if the right steps are taken and right policies implemented.

Globally, the workforce in clothing and textiles production was around 26.5 million in 2000. China still dominates in textile and clothing production (Choi, Powell, & Cassill, 2005). In 2000 the world's consumers spent around U.S. $1 trillion worldwide buying clothes. Around one third of sales were in Western Europe, one third in North America and one quarter in Asia. Today, clothing and textiles represent about 7% of world exports (Allwood, Laursen, Rodriguez, & Backen, 2006). In Bangladesh textile industries, there are three potential strengths implemented to keep the garment developments and merchandising industry going: market force, government policy, and dynamism inside the industry (Yunus & Yamagata, 2012).

It suggests that textiles and clothing industries are important in economic and social terms, in the short-run by providing incomes, jobs, especially for women, and foreign currency receipts and in the long-run by providing countries the opportunity for sustained economic development in those countries with appropriate policies and institutions to enhance the dynamic effects of textiles and clothing. The potential of the textile and clothing industries to contribute to long-run growth and development will depend not only on the attributes (desirable or otherwise) of the investors, but also on the quality and effectiveness of government policies and institutions in developing countries to build on this investment (Keane & Velde, 2008).

The pattern and effects of textiles and clothing industries in developing countries has been affected by trade and other economic policies. Countries with adequate public policies and private sectors have used the opportunities provided by temporary trade preferences for the apparel development and merchandising to move up the value added chain (e.g. Asian Tigers, Mauritius, Costa Rica); other countries have used the trade preferences to attract a very important part of their manufacturing base (e.g. Lesotho, Bangladesh, Malawi) but may still have to make full use of the opportunities offered to develop dynamically and diversify into other activities at a time they are faced with competition from other countries, e.g. China which affects apparel development and merchandising based strategies (Keane & Velde, 2008). However, Nigeria can compete with China and India in apparel development and

merchandizing optimistically if and only if the right policies are implemented.

VII. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study was to use home economics perspective to evaluate the past, present and future of apparel development and merchandising in Nigeria.

Specifically, this study sort to discuss:
- ✓ The past of apparel development and merchandising in Nigeria;
- ✓ The present of apparel development and merchandising in Nigeria; and,
- ✓ The past of apparel development and merchandising in Nigeria;

VIII. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a mixed research design based on interviews, archival records, print and electronic media and the use of 30 copies of researcher administered questionnaire. Respondents were purposively recruited for the study. Data collection took about two weeks and data generated were analyzed and represented through descriptive statistics.

STUDY AREA

Nigeria is most populous country in Africa which is situated on the gulf of Guinea in West Africa whose capital is Abuja. It is bounded by Benin Republic, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad. The lower course of the Niger River flows south through the western part of the country into the gulf of Guinea. Swamps and mangrove forests border the southern coast and her inlands are hardwood forests. Nigeria had her independence in 1960 and became a republic in 1963 with 36 states and a federal capital territory. It has 774 local government areas and 6 geopolitical zones. It has 250 ethnic and linguistic groups. It is predominant by Christians and Muslims. The landmass of Nigeria is enclosed between latitudes 4°16'-13°52' N and longitudes 2°49'-14°32' E and being 1100 km on a North/West axis. Approximately 125,471 km^2 of Nigeria land mass is covered by the waters of the nations major rivers, lakes, ponds and pools (Oribhabor, 2016). This excludes the coastal region. It occupies an area of 923,768 sq km with a population of 177,155,754.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population of this study comprised of 30 home economics professionals who were drawn through purposive sampling techniques across the study area and this constituted the sample used for primary data collection. However, 120 small scale apparel developers and merchandisers where randomly and purposively interviewed to get their opinion and views on trends in the past, present and future of apparel development and merchandising in Nigeria. This gave a total of 150 respondents used for the study.

IX. RESULTS

Primary data was elicited from 150 respondents. From the home economics professionals, 26 were females while 4 were males giving a total of 30. From the 120 small scale apparel developers and merchandisers, 50 were females while 70 were males. Their mean age is 42. On marital status, 62 were married, 85 were single, while 3 were cohabiting. On religious affiliation, 132 subscribes to Christianity while 17 subscribes to Islam. However, all respondents had some form of formal education.

X. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The study indicates that Nigeria Apparel Development and Merchandising Industry (NADMI) over the years have been great especially before and during the early part of Nigeria independence. This corroborates the study of Makinde, Fajuyigbe, and Ajiboye (2015) who affirmed that the NADMI blossomed in the 1950s through 1980s. This is seen in the words of one of the interviewed respondents –

...clothing was very lucrative and was seen as a means of showcasing our cultural heritage, norms and values....

Apparel development and merchandising has transited from been industrialized to micro scale apparel development and merchandising. This is seen in the small scale level of boutiques and street sales of fabrics, ready-made articles. One of the respondents had this to say –

...the truth about it is that, in the apparel industry for today, we can only boost of 10% of increase in the industry because only individuals who sew in small scale in front of their homes can keep it moving and this cannot meet up with global needs. Though the habit of Nigerians is to disvalue fabrics made from the study area...

However, with the current innovation and call for a revitalization of the industries for apparel development and merchandising in Nigeria, small scale apparel sewing individual have their private meetings, identifying each other and discoursing their challenges, there is hope for the future apparel development and merchandising in Nigeria. This is expressed in the words of one of the interviewed respondents-

...there is hope for Nigerian apparel development and merchandising because our designs are great and we now go for the best fabrics. More so, with our weekly meetings where we discourse our challenges, we strongly believe that sooner or later, Nigeria clothing industry can match up 99% with any clothing industry in the world...

The discussions of these results are further demonstrated in the graph below (Figure-1).
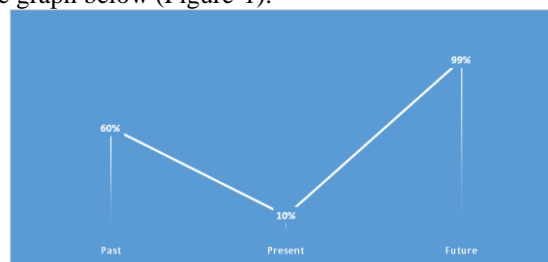

Figure 1: The Past, Present, and Future in Nigeria Apparel Development and Merchandise

XI. CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the years, Nigerian apparel development and merchandise has gained global recognition but its state today is not encouraging. However, there is hope for the future as the study findings of this research prescribes. Based on these findings, the following are recommended:

- ✓ Investment of all the tiers of government on Nigeria apparel development;
- ✓ Provision of apparel development center like what is obtainable in Cross River State fabric industry provided by Prof. Sen. Ben Ayade in 2016 cited in Calabar;
- ✓ Patronizing of the country made fabrics by the people; meetings are encouraged between apparel developers and merchandisers to always discourse the way forward.

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