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The Role Of Technocrats In The Small-Scale Clothing Industries In The Ho Municipality Ghana

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Abstract: ***Small scale clothing industry plays an important role in the economy of any country because it gives employment to the people. Small scale clothing industry helps to develop both entrepreneurial and managerial skills that are needed as basis for local investment in medium and large-scale industries. Indeed, many small-scale clothing industries in Ghana cannot expand while majority of technocrats could not establish themselves. This study examines the problems associated with the small-scale clothing industries that are hindering their expansion as well as the role of technocrats in the clothing industry, using Ho Municipality as a case study. Descriptive survey was used to obtain information from a sample of people. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw sample of forty (40) respondents. The study revealed that the small-scale clothing industries were faced with challenges such as inability to assess funds from financial institutions, lack of collateral, high interest rates and record keeping. It was recommended that the financial institutions must make funds accessible to the small-scale clothing industries with lower interest rates. More vocational training schools should be established and people who have learnt sewing through apprenticeship must also go through formal training for at least six months.***

Keywords: Technocrats, small-scale, clothing industries, Ho Municipality, Ghana.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the framework of economic growth, industrialization, and socioeconomic empowerment, the role of technocrats in Ghana's small-scale apparel industries is an important topic. According to Khurana (2022), Examining the skills, knowledge, and influence of engineers, designers, technicians, and other skilled professionals in promoting development, creativity, and sustainability in the apparel industry is part of the study of technocrats in this field.Ho Municipality, located in Ghana, may have a thriving small-scale clothing industry that includes a range of activities like tailoring, garment production, design, and distribution of clothing items in both domestic and foreign markets(McMillan & Zeufack,2022). According to Khurana (2022), Skilled individuals with specialized knowledge in their fields, technocrats are highly influential and contribute significantly to the advancement of technology, design, production processes, and has been instrumental in the clothing industry's technological, design, production, and marketing advancements. Their participation may have an effect on competitiveness, efficiency, innovation, and product quality (Dwivedi at al.,2022).

According to Pal and Jayarathne (2022), Economic Development and Empowerment: Particularly in developing nations, small-scale industries play a major role in creating jobs. The role of technocrats in these industries can be studied to learn more about how their knowledge helps the Ho Municipality's economy grow overall and create jobs, skills, and income for its workers. Examining the obstacles that technocrats in the small-scale apparel sector must overcome, such as financial constraints, regulatory barriers, market limitations, and technology access, can reveal possible areas for development. On the other hand, locating chances for industry support, capacity-building, and innovation can assist in utilizing their knowledge for long-term expansion. According to Hammer (2023), Policy Implications: Educating legislators about the value of empowering and assisting these highly qualified professionals may help them better appreciate the impact and contributions of technocrats. This could include regulations pertaining to market access, financing

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availability, infrastructure upkeep, and skill development for small-scale apparel businesses (Edirisinghe at al.,2022).

Overall, researching technocrats in Ghana's Ho Municipality's small-scale clothing industry can provide insightful information about utilizing knowledge for economic development, resolving issues, and promoting long-term expansion of the regional clothing industry (Trippeer & Gam,2022).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES

Small scale industries is defined by different authorities based on the number of people employed and the equipment available. The same criterion is used to differentiate between the small, medium and large-scale industries. The concept of small-scale industries relates generally, to small manufacturing activities including primary products processing, handicrafts and repair services.

According to Naing (2020), Technocrats contribute specialized technical skills and knowledge to the clothing industry, bringing with them innovation and technical expertise. Their proficiency in design, pattern-making, garment construction, textile technology, and machinery operation enhances the quality, creativity, and efficiency of products produced by small-scale clothing businesses. Technocrats frequently streamline production procedures by implementing effective techniques and technologies that raise output while lowering expenses (McMillan & Zeufack,2022). To enhance the entire production cycle, they might recommend new innovative techniques, streamlined workflow, or better machinery (Heim & Hopper,2022).

According to Pal and Jayarathne (2022), Technocrats are essential to the upkeep of industry standards for quality control and compliance with laws and regulations. To improve the products' reputation, they supervise the production process, put quality control procedures in place, and guarantee that the final goods fulfil regional and global standards. Frequently, they workers in the apparel industry by providing them with technical knowledge and skills through training and mentoring (Oh at al.,2022). By doing this, they raise the general competency level in the sector and aid in the skill development and empowerment of regional artisans and laborers. Technocrats may also help with market analysis and product diversification and adaptation in response to shifting consumer preferences. Their proficiency facilitates the introduction of novel designs, the diversification of product lines, and the identification of market trends that can boost competitiveness and sales (McMillan & Zeufack,2022).

According to By Hammer (2023), Facilitating the adoption of contemporary machinery and technology, they keep the industry up to date on technological developments. This involves incorporating digital tools that can increase productivity and competitiveness, such as online sales, inventory management, and design (Oh at al.,2022). The Ho Municipality's economy grows as a result of their support of the small-scale apparel industry, which raises output and creates job opportunities. Since this industry supports a large number of people, it frequently serves as a catalyst for regional development and the reduction of poverty. It is essential for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and local authorities to comprehend the critical role that technocrats play in these small-scale clothing industries. Their impact can be further amplified by supporting their initiatives and granting them access to technology, infrastructure, finance, and training. This will promote sustainable growth and development in the clothing sector within the Ho Municipality, Ghana (Xue & Zeng ,2023).

FASHION DESIGNER

Fashion designers work in different ways. Some sketch their ideas on paper, while others drape fabric on a dress form. When a designer is completely satisfied with the fit of the *toile* (or muslin), he or she will consult a professional pattern maker who then makes the finished, working version of the pattern out of card or via a computerized system. The pattern maker's job is very precise and painstaking. The fit of the finished garment depends on their accuracy. A sample garment is made up and tested on a model to make sure it is an operational outfit.

According to Pal and Jayarathne (2022), Technocrats are essential to the small-scale apparel industry. Technocrats possess specialized technical skills that they bring to the table. Their areas of expertise in fashion design include pattern making, garment construction, textiles, sewing techniques, and software knowledge. This knowledge guarantees the accuracy and caliber of the designs and clothing. Technocrats have a creative and innovative approach to design and problem-solving. They frequently push the envelope of creativity in fashion design by introducing novel methods, materials, and styles. Their knowledge makes it possible to produce original, commercially successful designs that satisfy changing consumer preferences. They make use of technology during the design phase. According to Naing (2020), Technocrats make use of digital tools such as CAD (computer-aided design) software. instruments for designing, creating, and presenting fashion designs. During the design phase, this technological integration improves accuracy and efficiency (Heim & Hopper,2022).

According to Khurana (2022). , Technocrats are in charge of production management and quality control, making sure that designs are of the highest caliber. They are essential to upholding standards and guaranteeing that designs are produced precisely when making clothing. Their participation in quality assurance enhances the fashion brand's marketability and reputation. According to Pal and Jayarathne (2022), Technocrats study consumer preferences and fashion trends in order to adapt the market. They stay up to date with market demands, making sure that designs are appropriate for the intended audiences and current trends. Their knowledge aids in the development of collections that appeal to consumers and increase revenue and brand success. They frequently work with suppliers, manufacturers, and craftspeople. Technocrats create networks within the sector, working together with knowledgeable manufacturers and artisans to realize their designs. This partnership guarantees the timely production of

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high-quality clothing while fortifying the supply chain (Danso at al.,2022).

According to Hammer (2023), Technocrats support ethical and sustainable fashion design methods. They support sustainable production techniques, ethical manufacturing practices, and the use of eco-friendly materials, which helps to make the fashion industry more accountable and environmentally aware. A lot of technocrats work in mentoring and education. According to Naing (2020), They mentor and guide the upcoming generation of fashion designers by imparting their knowledge and experience to them (Ahorsu & Eyram, 2023).

TECHNOCRATS IN THE CLOTHING MANUFACTURE

According to Naing (2020), Technocrats are essential to the production of clothing in small-scale industries. Technocrats contribute specific technical know-how to the production of apparel. Their areas of expertise include quality control, fabric knowledge, garment construction, machinery operation, and production methods. They play a key role in manufacturing process optimization. Technocrats examine processes, spot bottlenecks, and make recommendations for changes that will boost productivity, cut expenses, and improve efficiency without sacrificing quality (Beyer & Strutt,2022). Technocrats in quality assurance and control make sure that strict requirements are fulfilled when making clothes. To maintain uniformity and guarantee that the final products fulfill predetermined standards, they apply quality control procedures at different phases of the production process. According to Rathore (2022), Technology Integration: They are in charge of incorporating and applying technology into production procedures. This covers the choice and upkeep of equipment, the use of automation when practical, and the application of contemporary methods to optimize output (Beyer & Strutt,2022).

According to Pal and Jayarathne (2022), Technocrats frequently mentor and train their workforce. They enhance the skill set of employees engaged in diverse manufacturing tasks, impart technical knowledge, and teach best practices, all of which contribute to the workforce's overall proficiency. Their knowledge facilitates the economical use of resources. According to Naing (2020), Technocrats make economical cutting, fabric usage, and waste reduction suggestions that help reduce costs and promote sustainability in the manufacturing process. Respect for Rules and Standards: They make sure that rules and standards set forth by the industry are followed. Technocrats are in charge of adhering to industry-specific standards, safety procedures, and environmental laws while manufacturing (Oh at al.,2022).

According to Rathore (2022), Technocrats troubleshoot manufacturing problems and present creative solutions. They deal with issues related to production, look for ways to enhance procedures, and come up with creative solutions to get around manufacturing roadblocks. They work together with vendors and other stakeholders. According to Pal and Jayarathne (2022), Technocrats communicate with suppliers of raw materials, suppliers of accessories, and other supply chain participants to guarantee efficient operations and prompt delivery of raw materials needed for manufacturing. According to Naing (2020), Technocrats play a particularly important role in small-scale clothing industries where resources may be scarce. Their knowledge not only guarantees the effective production of high-quality clothing but also boosts the industry's general expansion, sustainability, and competitiveness (Carrico at al., 2022).

III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey research design in which a survey was used to collect original data for describing a population too large to observe directly as recommended by Beyer and Strutt (2022). A survey obtains information from a sample of people by means of self-report, that is, the people responded to a series of questions posed by the investigator (McRobbie at al.,2022). In this study, the information was collected through self-administered questionnaires. A descriptive survey was selected because it provides an accurate portrayal or account of the characteristics, for example behaviour, opinions, abilities, beliefs, and knowledge of a particular individual, situation or group (Oh at al.,2022). This design is chosen to meet the objectives of the study, mainly to determine the growth and the challenges in the small-scale clothing industry.

The population of the research comprises manufactures in the small-scale clothing industries and teachers teaching clothing and textiles in second cycle and tertiary institutions in the Ho Municipality. The population of small-scale clothing industries is sixty-six (66) and teachers teaching Clothing and Textiles are forty-seven (47) in the Municipality which total one hundred and thirteen (113).

Data samples were obtained using a combination of questionnaire and direct observational guides were used to collect the required data from Small scale clothing industries operators for analysis. A structured interview guide with both open and closed ended questions were designed to find out the state of the industries, the challenges, and the growth rate of the Small-Scale clothing industries in the Ho municipality.

IV. FINDINGS

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS

GENDER

The results disclosed the gender of respondents in the survey. Twelve (12) respondents, representing 30.0% were males and 28 respondents representing 70.0% were females. It was observed and confirmed as well by respondents that, majority of the people in the small-scale clothing industry were females. This is not surprising as cited by Pal and Jayarathne (2022), that ‘the garment and textile industry in Ghana is dominated by 90 percent women both as owner entrepreneurs and employees’’.

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AGE OF RESPONDENTS

The study participants were distributed across four (4) age brackets indicated in table 1;

	Frequency	Percentage
15 - 25 years	10	25.5
26 -35 years	23	57.5
36 – 45 years	5	12.5
Above 45 years	2	5.0
Total	40	100

Source: Field Survey 2024

Table 1: Age of Respondents

Table 1 shows the age range of respondents. A greater percentage of respondents were youth ranging between the ages of 15 to 35years. Specifically, there were 33 respondents representing 83.0% and 7 respondents representing 13%. Respondents above 35 years old were few in the clothing industry. The researcher confers with Rathore (2022), that, vibrant and energetic youths were in the clothing industry who can bring innovation.

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF RESPONDENTS

	Frequency	Percentage
University	7	17.5
HND	8	20.0
Secondary	4	10.0
Basic Education	13	32.5
Vocational/Technical education	8	20.0
Total	40	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2024

Table 2: Educational Level

The survey as shown in Table 2 revealed that 13 respondents representing 32.5% had basic education. This would enable them to read and write their customers' names, take accurate measurement, keep records and do the calculations that are associated with pattern drafting. The researcher agreed with Naing (2020), that basic school leavers were the highest number of people in the clothing industry. Eight (8) respondents representing 20% were Vocational/Technical and Higher National Diploma leavers respectively. These are the technocrats who have the technical know-how to bring more innovations into the small-scale industry and 4 respondents representing 10% were the least in the industry with secondary education.

THE ROLE OF TECHNOCRATS IN THE CLOTHING INDUSTRIES

Twenty-seven (27) respondents representing 67.0% revealed that people who learn sewing through technical/vocational and tertiary institutions do not establish themselves in the Ho Municipality and 13 respondents representing 32.5 % said they do establish themselves.

	Frequency	Percentage
They are able to draft pattern	6	15.0
Able to teach and explain well	4	10.0
They are able to sew well	3	7.5
None	27	67.5
Total	40	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2024

Table 3: Technocrats Participation

Results in table 3 show that, 6 respondents representing 15.0 % said technocrats helped in the development of the industries by drafting patterns very well to suit complex styles that cannot be cut by free hand cutting. Four (4) respondents representing 10.0% also said technocrat helped them by explaining things that they do not understand well. Three (3) respondents representing 7.5% said technocrats in the small-scale clothing industries sews very well to the specification of the clients. Also, 27 respondents representing 67.5% on the contrary said, technocrats do not do anything to develop the small-scale clothing industries which confer with Zotorvie (2017).

Technocrats were established to be heavily involved in the apparel and textile industries, especially in the small-scale market. Technocrats contribute their technical knowledge to support the textile and apparel industries' technological advancements. They bring cutting-edge equipment, methods, and procedures that improve the effectiveness and caliber of production {Mehar, 2022). Their proficiency in pattern making, textile technology, and clothing design aids in the creation of new products. They frequently introduce cutting-edge styles, materials, and designs, expanding the product line and satisfying shifting consumer demands in the process (Zheng at al., 2022).

According to Naing (2020), Technocrats are responsible for ensuring that industry regulations and quality standards are followed. Throughout the production process, they employ quality control procedures to ensure that the final product meets both increasing the competitiveness of the market by meeting national and worldwide standards. They are essential to the industry's training and capacity building efforts. Technocrats empower local artisans and workers by transferring their technical knowledge and skills to the workforce. The textile and apparel industry's general competency and skill level are raised by this capacity building.

According to Pal and Jayarathne (2022), Technocrats streamline production procedures to increase productivity and efficiency. By pointing out areas for development, suggesting improved production techniques, and streamlining processes, they lower production costs and boost output. Their knowledge helps with both market analysis and product adaptation to meet consumer demands. According to Khurana (2022), Technocrats study consumer demands, preferences, and market trends so that the apparel and textile industries can create goods that appeal to increasing the competitiveness of the market by meeting national and worldwide standards the intended audience, increasing revenue and profitability (McMillan & Zeufack, 2022).

According to Naing (2020), Technocrats are frequently the ones who promote and carry out sustainable practices in the sector. They guarantee ethical manufacturing procedures, encourage the use of sustainable materials, and introduce ecologically friendly production techniques. Their involvement in the textile and apparel industry generates income, jobs, and overall economic growth. Their efforts, especially in small businesses, have a big effect on local economies because they create jobs for a lot of people. According to Hammer (2023). The growth and sustainability of Ghana's textile and apparel industries depend on the encouragement and empowerment of technocrats working in these sectors. Their roles can be further enhanced by government policies, funding availability, training initiatives, and infrastructure development, all of which eventually contribute to the overall development (Oh at al., 2022).

V. CONCLUSION

From the study, it was observed that (67.5%) of the respondent had the view that those who acquired sewing skills through formal education do not establish themselves as clothing manufactures in the small-scale clothing industries. The technocrats are the people who are exposed to many aspects of fashion and are well informed with the new trends and technologies associated with manufacturing of clothing. Technocrats are expected to overcome most of the challenges faced in the industries however, they rather fail to join.

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