



Case Studies from Africa

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This chapter analyzes some of the situations examined throughout this volume. The four brief case studies presented explore real situations in four representative countries of the African continent: Kenya, Nigeria, Tunisia and Ghana.

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The first case study looks at local government actions designed to promote improvements in the local textile industry. In particular, the case analyzes a plan designed by the Ministry of Industrialization and Enterprise Development (MOIED) of Kenya and considers its achievements.

The following two case studies located in Nigeria and Tunisia, illustrate the main characteristics of the woman entrepreneur, as well as what have been the main difficulties encountered in her entrepreneurship career. Despite cultural differences between these two geographically separated countries, the characteristics shown by the entrepreneurs, as well as the challenges they face, are the same.

The final case describes how companies in Ghana led by women have achieved success in international markets thanks to the sale of sustainable products.

1 THE KENYAN TEXTILE AND FASHION INDUSTRY: SUSTAINABILITY AS THE KEY OF THE INDUSTRY'S COMPETITIVENESS

1.1 Introduction

Kenya's textile and apparel sector has the potential to play a critical role in anchoring the country's development. It can contribute as a source of gainful employment for its fast-growing, young population—especially women. But as a manufacturer, it offers opportunities to local companies for increased value capture through the building of knowledge, skills and experience from factory floor to management level.

Kenya's MOIED responded to these opportunities with an action plan aimed at improving Kenya's competitive position in this sector, based on two key factors: sustainability and worker training.

1.2 The Structure of the Textile and Apparel Sector

Traditionally there has been a textile industry in Kenya. Together with other East African countries it has a pool of talented small dressmakers, and fashion designers are geared to serving the global garment market (HEVA 2016). The Kenyan Textile and Clothing sector comprise 22 large foreign companies, 170 medium and large companies, eight

ginneries, eight spinners, 15 weaving and knitting companies, nine accessories manufacturers and over 75,000 micro and small companies (Hivos International 2016). Women entrepreneurs are at the heart of Kenya's clothing and textile revolution and are responsible for showcasing the country's business potential to Africa and the world. The Kenyan fashion industry is 80% female and has the potential to employ 300,000 individuals (Hivos International 2016). As of November 2017, 15.3% of the female labor force in Kenya was unemployed (ILO 2017). This indicates that there are gaps in the potential of the Kenyan fashion industry to absorb the unemployed women.

The challenges facing the Kenyan fashion industry, as identified in a 2016 study conducted by the Association of Fashion Designers of Kenya (AFAD) in collaboration with Equity Bank, include: old and inefficient machinery; poor-quality raw and intermediate materials; acceptability of local fabrics to international users; policy deficit in the regulation of imports; high production costs; accessibility of microfinance; and informality of operations.

The adoption of AGOA in 2000 boosted the textile industry in Kenya, with increased foreign investment and increased exports to the USA. Kenya was the first country to adopt the agreement to fulfill the additional requirements for apparel (KNBS 2015). With its entry, Kenyan manufacturing companies could gain access to the USA market quota and dutyfree with a single-transformation rule of origin (even allowing them to import fabric from outside the region).

This, along with quotas on Chinese and other Asian exporters as part of the Multi-fiber Arrangement (MFA), made Kenya an attractive location for producing mass-market clothing for the US market. Between 2000 and 2004, Kenya's apparel exports—virtually all going to the United States—increased slowly, from US\$8.6 million to US\$17 million. With the ending of the MFA in 2004, apparel exports rose steeply, hitting a high of US\$283 million in 2008 (KNBS 2015). However, uncertainties over the continuation of AGOA's rules of origin combined with the global financial crisis led Kenyan apparel, like the rest of the African textile and fashion sector, to suffer, and during the second half of the decade, exports fell. Currently, Kenya's trade with the United States is dominated primarily by the export of locally produced raw materials and textiles to international fashion companies.

But compared with other countries, the Kenyan textile and fashion industry is uncompetitive. Kenyan factories face some competitive

disadvantages, many of which relate to the cost of doing business. One of the main problems is the high cost of electricity, which accounts for approximately 25% of the total cost of production. According to data provided by KNBS (2015), in 2014 a kWh cost 20 cents, compared to the 7 cents paid by Chinese companies, and the 6 cents paid by Ethiopian companies. Companies in Kenya are also characterized by the obsolescence of their production teams. Although investment in technology is necessary, many companies are reluctant to undertake such investments when they are unsure about the survival or competitive prospects of Kenya's textile and fashion sector.

A good proportion of the companies in Kenya work for international fashion companies, developing of labor-intensive tasks, but with little added value. If we add that labor costs are much higher than those offered by other neighboring countries, such as Ethiopia or Tanzania, it leads us to question the sector's continuity.

For apparel companies, labor productivity and time to market are central to their ability to compete. Comparatively higher wages do not necessarily inhibit apparel firms from competing globally as long as productivity rises to match higher wage levels. But this has not occurred in Kenya, where the value added to minimum wage ratio is lower than in most competitor textile and fashion countries. Skills concerns, both at management and technical levels, are to blame.

Speed to market also requires fast and effective logistics, and here Kenya fares unfavorably. A container takes longer to get to the USA than it does from countries such as China, India, South Africa and Vietnam. Costing over US\$2000, it is also more expensive than almost all apparel-exporting countries, bar Ethiopia.

However, for the Kenyan economy, the textile and fashion sector is vital at the strategic level. According to data provided by the AFAD (2016), 80% of employees in the textile and fashion industry in Kenya are young women, with low levels of qualification.

As we saw in Chapter 4, traditionally women have been a group at risk of exclusion. However, recent international studies show that certain countries in sub-Saharan Africa are essential drivers of economic and social development, which is why empowering women is one of the country's priorities, given the high percentage of the population it represents and the high rates of unemployment in this group.

Since it is also occupied by a high percentage of collectives—traditionally at risk of exclusion—the textile and fashion sector offers

important opportunities for growth within the economic activity of Kenya. However, the creation and strengthening of local industry in the textile and fashion sectors requires significant reforms that (a) have to be undertaken at government level and (b) imply essential changes at the economic and social level.

The strategy focuses on local companies promoting entrepreneurship and the continuous training of their workers, favoring investment in technology, and employing systems and production processes that are sustainable and offer improved efficiency. It is about reducing the dependence of local companies on international fashion companies, enabling local suppliers to manufacture products with high added value, so that their products can be sold in international markets, or failing that, their position in the global value chain can be improved.

1.3 New Opportunities for the Sector: The MOIED Plan

Since the end of 2017, MOIED has promoted various actions aimed at companies in the industry.

The first is the recommendation that local companies in the textile and fashion sector specialize in the production of the sustainable products increasingly demanded by global consumers and focus on environmentally (and socially) conscious consumers who are willing to pay a premium for products that cater to their concerns. The Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability (LOHAS) segment accounts for almost 20% of US adults, and more in European markets. The high growth of this segment offers a significant opportunity for companies in the sector, as long as they can implement the necessary reforms. In the first place, producing sustainable products requires modification to production systems. It involves the use of raw materials obtained sustainably, but also of energy-efficient and non-polluting production processes (Dufrou et al. 2012).

Traditionally, companies in the textile and fashion sector in Kenya have not made the necessary investment in technology and production processes to make them more efficient and less polluting. Equipment in textile and apparel firms is outdated and consumes a significant amount of electricity.

In this context, and aware of the opportunities these recommendations offer in the medium and long term for companies in the sector, MOIED underlines the need to implement them urgently. Investment in

technology and the renewal of production processes offer cost reductions that translate into an improvement of the company's competitive capacity. Furthermore, new market opportunities open up for the company, since the products manufactured incorporate an additional added value, derived from their sustainability. Finally, these investments can attract foreign capital, encouraging the establishment of new production plants.

Given the need for financial resources to undertake the necessary investments, MOIED has sought support from other local institutions, such as the Kenyan Association of Manufacturers, to help companies in the sector upgrade their equipment and technology. For instance, a partnership between the MOIED and KAM, as part of KAM's Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Energy Financing project (SUNREF) has offered significant greening opportunities to manufacturers. SUNREF covers 70% of the cost of a factory audit, which identifies potential energy and cost savings. Free business plan assistance is then provided to help with applications for concessionary loans at interest rates of around 5% offered by specific banks engaged by SUNREF. In conjunction with the greening of production, the program facilitates matchmaking with potential buyers (Brazilian and Tagliapietra 2017).

A third recommendation by MOIED relates to ongoing training for workers and the promotion of local entrepreneurship, especially among women who represent about 80% of the textile and fashion industry workforce.

Rapid changes in the design, materials and production methods require knowledge and skills necessary to implement them. In Kenya, a traditional approach to training through local training institutions has failed to keep up with the pace of change required to remain competitive in the textile and fashion sectors. University education is also unusual for women, both because of the high cost and because of the group's social disadvantage.

This has led to the emergence, both from the public and private spheres, of initiatives that facilitate access to up-to-date specialist knowledge of the sector for the female collective. Knowledge is often imparted informally and in the workplace, as with the role played by the hubs. But collaboration between companies, and scientific institutions and research centers is also encouraged.

An important part of the necessary training is specifically related to productive activities. However, women also need training in other aspects such as business management and the use of technology,

especially since one of the priorities of the MOIED is to promote entrepreneurship among women.

Female entrepreneurs in Kenya create their companies not because of the abundance of opportunities, but because of the need to survive. Many women become entrepreneurs because it is the only way to cover the expenses of their family. Most projects are undertaken alone, are small in size and cannot hire employees.

Training deficiencies are one of the reasons for women's projects failing to take off. Lack of management knowledge leads to strategies that do not prosper, such as accumulating different lines without consolidating those that are profitable. But there are other factors that do not allow the women entrepreneurs to grow. They often come up against traditions contrary to their economic independence, such as the need to undertake domestic tasks and care for children. There are also legal restrictions for women that can hinder their access to finance, or make them dependent on their husband or father for certain procedures.

1.4 Female Entrepreneurship Success Stories

Despite the difficulties faced by women, there are recent cases of successful female entrepreneurship in the fashion sector, some of them with sustainability orientation.

1.4.1 Case One

Adèle Dejak creates handmade fashion accessories inspired by African shapes, textures and traditional techniques. These accessories are not only high-fashion pieces, they could easily be called artifacts. The Adèle Dejak creates statement pieces to help the African woman seeking a unique, individual style.

She studied typographic design in England and Italy before moving to Nairobi, Kenya in 2005 and turning her attention to accessories design. She was captivated by the natural beauty of horn and began experimenting with it, using different techniques to create chic, original pieces. Her brand is based on an ethical and sustainable business model and aims to empower communities by celebrating local cultures, teaching technical skills and creating employment opportunities. Adèle Dejak employs 25 talented bead makers, tailors and artisans in the creative process, contributing to employment generation in the country.

1.4.2 Case Two

Diana Opoti PR is a fashion consultancy company involved in brand strategy, publicity, and campaign development and management in the fashion industry in Kenya. The role of middleman/link between the customer and service provider is essential in business transactions particularly for new entrants into an industry or country.

The publicity and marketing subsector of the fashion industry has a gap in network supporting the growth of fashion professionals, standardizing services and challenging professionals to set trends and compete with international brands in Kenya. Similarly, the recruitment of the right individuals with the right skills for a job is imperative for every business concern. Diana Opoti PR provides services in the areas of publicity, product reviews, fashion campaigns and recruitment. Entrepreneurs have the challenge of getting clients to pay for non-traditional services. Diana Opoti PR has been able to achieve this by earning the trust of fashion brands because of its online visibility, gaining referrals from satisfied clients.

Narratives:

The key for would-be women entrepreneurs is

Find a niche. Turn what you like into a business. Passion fuels business.

1.4.3 Case Three

Nuba Elamin, Lynn Bugaari and Tetsi Bugaari, owners of Buqisi-Ruux, create high-heeled shoes for women covered in bold and colorful African print material. The importance of having the African narratives changed by Africans is highlighted in the efforts of Buqisi-Ruux to tell African success stories by naming the shoes after inspirational African women. Thus, Buqisi-Ruux projects the diversity, vibrancy and boldness of the African continent. The founders of Buqisi-Ruux are close relatives and family businesses are often sustained by the bonds of affection and shared values. Buqisi-Ruux was inspired and is sustained by a combination of passion, curiosity, interest and opportunity.

Narratives:

I love to say that we create wearable art by putting Africa at your feet.

The name Buqisi-Ruux means “Queen of the Village”. Buqisi comes from an ancient Egyptian word meaning Queen, while Ruux represents our home town Rukungiri. The name symbolizes what we as Buqisi-Ruux

find important; our African heritage and the sensation of royalty and pride we want women to feel when they wear a pair of Buqisi-Ruux shoes.

The Buqisi-Ruux brand celebrates the success of the African continent and its women, as each shoe is named after an inspirational African woman and her story is shared with the world.

We are looking to grow the Buqisi-Ruux brand to be a global platform that will not only continue to provide high-quality, contemporary, high-heeled shoes covered in African print material, but that will also provide a basis where we have the opportunity to share the stories and successes of Africa, and most especially, the African woman.

We have to find different ways to innovate our brands to remain relevant. (Tetsi Bugaari, co-founder Buqisi-Ruux)

These narratives show that Buqisi-Ruux, by using African fabrics to make high-heeled shoes, is creating products acceptable in the global market.

1.4.4 Case Four

Brigit Wasike and Sophie Umazi Mvurya, co-founders of House of Tahzi, create high-quality, affordable clothes for Kenyans. The challenge of creating affordable products and services is unavoidable for most entrepreneurs. The aim of most businesses is the creation of a unique product. To this end, House of Tahzi creates unique outfits for their clients. Businesses sometimes form alliances to minimize the weaknesses of the parties, maximize their strengths and take advantage of shared assets and liabilities. In this connection, House of Tahzi is an amalgamation of two independent but complementary fashion ventures.

The following narratives indicate that House of Tahzi is contributing to the accessibility of African fashion because the issue of the cost of products and services is central in the African context.

Narratives:

Our similar vision for Kenyan fashion as a trend influencer in the global fashion world bore fruit to our partnership, where we combined both our lines to form House of Tahzi.

We are an energetic and dynamic young company that has forged links with the most competent personnel and stakeholders within the clothing and branding industry.

We plan on building a House of Tahzi lifestyle empire that extends beyond the world of fashion across the world.

... always be willing to learn not only through your experiences but from other women, irrespective of their industries.

2 FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS DOMINANCE OF THE NIGERIAN FASHION INDUSTRY: MYTH OR REALITY?

2.1 *Introduction*

The global advocacy that we are currently seeing for more inclusive-growth economies, especially in developing countries, where equal opportunities are created and accessible to all, should be the focus for all stakeholders, including academia. In Nigeria and most other developing African nations, a persistent and common concern is the widening gap between men and women in terms of employment, poverty levels, standard of living and participation in key economic activities, politics and other important sectors of the economy. This has been a recurring trend despite deliberate attempts by successive governments at the empowerment of women and other intervention programs. This head-long tackling of financial inequality may not produce the desired results unless a holistic strategy and inclusive sustainable framework that identifies and strengthens women-dominated industries are embraced. One such industry is fashion. Women, who make up 49.5% of the population, are pivotal to the economy of Nigeria (NBS 2015). Creating a sustainable path for women's empowerment and growth enabling them to gain more control over their lives cannot therefore be over-emphasized (Page and Czuba 1999). An enabling environment for a woman implies access to more opportunities and resources, increasing her array of choices, and her ability to drive the social entrepreneurship and change needed to influence the trajectory of any economy.

The creative economy is a potentially lucrative social and economic change agent in developing countries. Global assessments of the industry, according to Unchad (2010, cited in Langevang 2016), suggest that "the creative economy can foster income generation, job creation, and export earnings while promoting social inclusion, cultural diversity, and human development" in any economy. While most developed countries have over the past few decades recognized the diverse value embedded in this industry and are using all economic tools to drive it, the direction in Africa is still very vague. For instance, the global market for fashion dates back decades in France, considered to be one of the largest and most important fashion hubs in the world. Mode à Paris organizes the semi-annual Paris Fashion Week, which showcases a range of designers. Similarly, in Milan, London, New York, Chicago, Virginia and Tokyo,

fashion events are held throughout the year showcasing various designers and their exclusive collections (Grail Research 2009). These Western countries have used fashion to shore up the GDP of their respective economies while simultaneously exporting their culture, vividly expressed through their designs. For instance, Japan, the fourth-largest apparel market in the world, has its fashion industry heavily influenced and driven by its affluent population and youth culture (Grail Research 2009).

The annual turnover in the US fashion industry is over US\$250 billion, making it one of the five top fashion markets in the world (JEC 2015). One of the benefits of globalization for the US economy is the spread of its fashion across major continents of the world, especially the densely populated Africa and Asia (Doeringer and Crean 2006). In contrast, fashion events in Nigeria and major cities in Africa are still a mirage, despite the abundant natural and human resources that can be harnessed to effectively drive the fashion industry. Nigeria, for example, has a multi-skilled human population with diverse intellectual capacities; the country is also rich in arable land that can grow sustainable cotton, raffia and plants such as *Kola nitida*, *Cmelina arborca*, *Prosopia Africana* and *Tcctona grandis* that are used in dye production (Alamu and Ajibola 2007); cassava (used for starch); polymers; and other raw materials essential for textile production and design. The fashion industry in Nigeria is therefore still an untapped goldmine.

This case study highlights the potential of the fashion industry in Nigeria, but also the challenges it presents, especially to women entrepreneurs. The analysis of six in-depth interviews with the country's principal clothing and accessories designers shows the importance of women to this sector, as well as the characteristics and motivations that women entrepreneurs have to start and continue their professional careers.

2.2 *Fashion in Nigeria*

Fashion in Nigeria is an evolving multi-structural industry that consists of diverse areas of expertise, interests and participants ranging from micro-businesses (mostly in the informal sector) to small enterprises (gravitating more towards the formal sector). It is a major player in the country's creative economy, with a continuum of simple to sophisticated manufacturing clusters that provides employment along its value chain for a large number of women across all social strata. In monetary terms,

the fashion industry in Nigeria is worth billions of naira, mostly generated from its huge local market and exports of designs and finished garments to foreign countries.

The three major business subsets within the Nigerian fashion space are textiles (weaving), designing (surface fabric design and garment making), and accessories (bags, shoes and jewelry).

2.2.1 Textiles

Historically, especially during the pre-colonial era, traditional textiles in Nigeria were categorized into woven, non-woven, patterned or dyed, and involve processes that create jobs generally but most especially for women. The Nigerian textile market was one of the largest in Africa, contributing approximately 10% to the country's GDP in the 1960s (Olutayo and Akanle 2009). However, the non-development of this important subset of the fashion industry led to its steady decline over the years. Weaving is a creative skill that is historically associated with women in most areas in Nigeria. Traditionally, cloths woven by hands constitute the indigenous textile industry which has a long record of being dominated by women (Asakitikpi 2007).

The popular traditional fashion textiles among different tribes are as follows.

Aso-oke is a skill-intensive woven and patterned cloth made locally by the Yoruba ethnic group (Olutayo and Akanle 2009). It was initially worn mostly by people from the south-west but is now embraced by almost all major ethnic groups in Nigeria especially as “headtie for aso-ebi” at special occasions (Olutayo and Akanle 2009). *Aso-oke* is also known for its use in epic ceremonial wear such as *iro* and *buba* for ladies, and *buba*, *sokoto* and *agbada* for men. The art of *aso-oke* making goes back many generations with documented evidence (Clarke 1938; Murray 1936) suggesting that it was a primary fashion item and expression for men and women of Yoruba origin as far back as the late 1930s. It is still a significant subsector of the textile industry in Nigeria based on its creative patterns, and wide acceptance and usage (Aremu 1982).

Aso-oke is woven by men and women, but as a craft it is mostly dominated by women and it is one of the few trades that have a long history of a defined line of succession (Asakitikpi 2007).

Akwete is a woven cloth of Igbo origin and is mostly made by women in Ukwa East Local Government Area of Abia State in the south-eastern

Nigeria (Ikegwu and Uzuegbu 2015). According to McPhilips and Appolos (2012), Akwete cloth weaving is as old as the Igbo tradition and consists mostly of red and black designs. The weavers use a traditional technology which is local to the Igbos (Ikegwu et al. 2017). The intricate procedure and technology involved in Akwete cloth making bring out an array of beautiful designs that are mostly used as ceremonial wears (Ibeto and Ogunduyile 2015). Akwete also has the potential of being used in producing fast-moving tourist items (such as wristbands, handbags, tee-shirts, etc.) for both local and foreign visitors to the south-eastern Nigeria.

Okene is another loom-woven cloth named after its makers in Okene, Kogi State (north central). It is made by the Ebirá people. History has it that the Ebirá women have been weaving Okene cloth for centuries. Earlier generations of women did it as a craft to counter boredom but it has grown into a major commercial fashion item in Kogi with interested buyers traveling from other parts of Nigeria to purchase the beautifully and skilfully crafted cloth (Ibeto and Ogunduyile 2015).

Hausa cloth is commonly made with manufactured threads and wider looms than those used to produce *kente* cloth in Ghana). They often come out as beautiful and colorful strips used for special occasions in the northern part of Nigeria. They are however very similar to *djerma* cloth from the Republic of Niger. Another popular woven cloth in northern Nigeria, mostly worn by the Fulanis but now embraced by the Hausas, is *mudukare*, but this has become almost extinct. The beauty of *mudukare* weaving is the very simple technology employed by the weavers despite its very sophisticated appearance (Gusau 2016).

The following case studies, informed by in-depth interviews, highlight the experiences of female fashion entrepreneurs in Lagos.

2.2.2 Direct-Design Printed Fabrics Used by Nigerian Fashion Designers

Local *adire* is a traditional work of art mostly created by Abeokuta women in the South-west Nigeria. However, it also has tradition among the Jukun people in the North and in some parts of West Africa. It is one of the most popular fabrics in Nigeria and uses a simple but yet complicated technology to produce different patterns. In “The Bluest Hands”, Byfield (2002) gave a critical review of the historical connection between Yoruba women and *adire* making with a brief discourse on how neglect may have been responsible for the under-development of the industry.

Nigerian factory-produced printed fabrics borrow their inspiration mostly from the country's culture, but due to external influences, lack of direction and unfavorable policies the industry now depends more on foreign technology (Makinde et al. 2015). The industry is now near absolute collapse with considerable job losses and a major impact on the secondary users of these fabrics.

Foreign colorful printed fabrics produced in other countries and outside the continent enjoy wider patronage from Nigerians for diverse reasons: varieties, texture and quality, designs, affordability and consistency. The collapse of the textile industry in Nigeria is also responsible for the unavailability of the made-in-Nigeria printed fabrics that were the toast of West African fashion from the 1960s to the early 1990s (Makinde et al. 2015). Popular foreign printed fabrics include Vlisco, Uniwax, GTP, Woodin (Dutch); DaViva, ATL, Printex and Kente (Ghanaian); Dutch Super Wax (Dutch); Hi-Target (Chinese); ABC English Wax (UK); and Excellence Fabric (unknown).

2.3 *Basic Information on Interviewees*

Interactions with these women suggest that they are highly sought after with a high demand for their creativity and designs. They have created a niche for themselves and almost all of them identified the enormous growth potential and opportunities lurking in the Nigerian fashion industry.

2.3.1 *Clothing*

Unique Needle Apparel was started in 2005 by a university graduate. They design bespoke women's garments using a variety of African and other fabrics.

Valerie David's Limited was started in 2006 by a biochemist graduate. The company is known for designing, training, haute couture, bespoke womenswear and bridal wear.

Tareoni Limited was started in 2011 by a university graduate. The company makes bespoke apparel for women mostly using African fabrics. However, they also work with other colorful prints.

Takeover Clothiers was started in 2013 by a university graduate. They are involved in designing haute couture and bespoke apparel, mostly for middle-class women.

2.3.2 *Accessories*

Mona Matthews Ventures started in 2002. This very articulate lawyer-turned-designer produces made-to-measure high-quality leather shoes and bags to international standards. Mona Matthews also does private collections while still maintaining the versatility of their designs.

Madame Coquette was started in 2008 by a very fashion-conscious university graduate. She makes intricately designed leather bags from mostly locally sourced materials.

2.4 *Recurring Themes from the Interviews*

2.4.1 *As an Entrepreneur, What Reasons Have Led You to Enter the World of Fashion?*

Among the reasons given by the entrepreneurs were: passion; love of fashion; being fashionable and stylish; creativity; an eye for details; styling people; creating jobs for other women; filling the entrepreneur's unmet needs and those of others around her; the desire to create a brand; the need to express innate creative skills; meeting social needs; the need to promote Nigerian brands; and a large ready market.

2.4.2 *What Elements Have Influenced Your Business Career?*

Common influences were parents, older siblings, exposure and experience, love for African prints, love of colors, love of leather, self-motivation, and recognition of an opportunity.

2.4.3 *What Is Your Greatest Inspiration?*

Customer presence, brand demand, satisfied customers, goals and vision for business growth, work, religion, stylish women.

2.4.4 *What Are Your Basic Requirements?*

passion, drive, discipline, commitment, customer satisfaction, training, adequate finance.

2.4.5 *Prompts for Choice of Raw Material*

Customer's needs, purpose (use), fabric design, color and motif, uniqueness, durability, trend, budget.

2.4.6 Sources of Raw Materials:

Mostly local (imported African prints), *adire* and batik (produced locally), leather (sourced locally and also imported by the suppliers), other cotton fabrics (imported), ornaments (imported).

2.4.7 What Are the Main Challenges You Encounter in Your Daily Activity?

Infrastructural problems especially steady electricity supply and good road network, lack of reliable and skilled manpower, high production and marketing costs, access to affordable finance.

2.4.8 Gender Dominance of the Nigerian Fashion Industry

95% think it is female dominated. Secondary sources also feature mostly female designers across the industry.

2.4.9 What Are the Main Barriers to Women Making It in This Business?

Egoistic attitudes of male employees, poor cash flow, inadequate capital.

2.4.10 From the Marketing Point of View, What Factors Hinder Sales and Distribution?

Duplication of designs by competitors, funds.

2.4.11 Which Are the Most Efficient Marketing Platforms?

word of mouth, satisfied customers, exhibitions, social media, print media.

2.4.12 Tracking Progress

Customer feedback, quality of work, brand performance.

2.4.13 Perceptions of the Nigerian Fashion Industry

High growth potential, profitable, higher rated than most other African countries, some presence in the global market (but not strong enough), high employment creation.

2.4.14 High Points of the Nigerian Fashion Industry

Evolving fashion shows, e.g., Lagos Fashion Week and Lagos Leather Week (though very few and far between), unique Nigerian designs and creativity; support shown by high-profile Nigerians wearing wholly Nigerian brands, gradual embrace of Nigerian designs by important

foreign personalities such as Michelle Obama, showcase of Nigerian designs at reputable world fashion events.

2.4.15 Gaps in the Industry

Lack of strong mentorship from Nigerian female fashion veterans; lack of affordable design masterclasses, inadequate government support in terms of friendly policies and accessible infrastructure, insufficient recognition and accolades for the fashion industry, lack of entrepreneurial training, scarce locally made raw materials, inadequate promotion of Nigerian brands by relevant stakeholders, absence of high-quality skill acquisition programs for women (especially in garment making), dearth of Nigerian textiles.

2.5 Main Conclusions

From textile weaving (by rural women) to garment design, production and sales (mostly by urban women), women control a large chunk of the economic activities that take place in the fashion industry. Secondary sources also present the success stories of internationally recognized top-notch female clothes designers such as Deola Sagoe, and other celebrated female entrepreneurs in the fashion industry such as: Wunmi Amokeodo (she makes ready-to-wear and made-to-measure clothes for women); Adenike Ogunlesi (the initiator of leading African brand for children, Ruff 'n' Tumble); Adey Soile (maker of ready-to-wear and made-to-measure corporate dresses that depict boldness in African women); Banke Kuku Textiles (use African prints to create exclusive home interiors and garments); Olatorera Oniru (a very creative dressmaker); Oluwatosin Lawson (promotes African prints by using them to manufacture lifestyle products such as backpacks, earrings, bangles); Femi Olayebi (a bespoke luxury handbag designer); and many others (Lioness of Africa 2015). However, despite the evident huge presence of women in this sector, an inclusive framework that has the potential to address both surface and underlying issues affecting the survival and growth of women in the industry is missing. Consequently, from a policy perspective, the focus of this chapter is to remind relevant stakeholders of the need to create a sustainable empowerment path for women in the fashion industry.

The available literature on the Nigerian fashion industry suggests that its secondary market (of design, production and sales) is one of

the fastest-growing businesses in Nigeria but conversely, it lacks the proper direction required for the main players to tap into the wealth of opportunities inherent in the industry. Furthermore, the primary market (textile weaving and printing) requires focused attention from all relevant stakeholders to revive the industry and create an enabling environment to set it on the right track. A good understanding of the dynamics of fashion across all of its subsectors would elucidate the valuable tacit knowledge that is required to develop a holistic strategy for the industry.

3 WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN TUNISIA: THE CASE OF THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN THE MONASTIR AREA

3.1 *Introduction*

Tunisia has historically been engaged in the clothing industry. Many brands such as Levi's manufacture their clothes in Tunisia, where textiles are regarded as a strategic national industry. It is the major sector in manufacturing industry in terms of exports, employment and added value. It represents 34% of total employment in the manufacturing industry, and 70% of the total industry exports from the country (Agence de promotion de l'Industrie et de l'Innovation 2014). The major importers remain European countries: 34% for France, 28% for Italy, 10% for Germany, 7% for Belgium and 4% for Spain.

Monastir, situated in the north-east of the country, is one of the Tunisia's 24 governorates. Its economy is based first on agriculture—especially olive oil—and second on industry. The industrial fabric consists of 607 industrial enterprises operating in different sectors such as construction products, ceramics and glass, electrical and electronic equipment, chemicals, and so on (TIP 2018). Yet, textiles remain the main pillar of Monastir's industry with 431 enterprises (71% of total industrial enterprises). However, 80% of them are manufacturing for export, and most are small SMEs (less than ten employees) (Hassine 2017).

Despite the competition from Asia, there are 54 companies owned and managed by women, or 12.3% of the 431 enterprises in the sector. Eight out of 54 are owned by foreigners and 46 by Tunisians. As regards the workers in the sector, 86% are women, the majority (80%) aged between 16 and 35 (Hassine 2017). So, since few studies discuss the

characteristics of women entrepreneurs in the textile industry in Tunisia, this section presents the case of women entrepreneurs in Monastir, because it is the most dynamic region in Tunisia as regards the textile industry.

In according with the literature, on female entrepreneurs, we will discuss various categories: the size of their companies, their education level, their motivations, the obstacles they encounter, companionship and the influence of the socio-cultural environment (Alexandre 2016).

As regards their motivation, we quote the push/pull factors proposed by Malach-Pines et al. (2010). These authors declare that women in developing countries are more in a push situation, while in a developed country, women are more in a pull situation. Various factors can be considered obstacles: financial issues (Zouiten and Levy 2005); the socio-cultural environment (Alexandre-Leclair and Redien Collt 2013); and the balance between personal and professional life (OECD 2012). As regards company size, Davis and Abdiyeva (2012) state that women's ventures are smaller than men's. Support and companionship seem to be more important for women than for men (Carrier et al. 2006). Level of education, the OECD (2012) states that it is the nature of the education that influences women's entrepreneurship and not the level.

3.2 *Methodology*

We began our qualitative research based on the experiences of 18 women in Monastir by identifying 46 Tunisian female entrepreneurs. We targeted 23 enterprises for our survey. Five were removed because of non-response or incomplete answers. Our final sample was therefore reduced to 18 observations, i.e., 39.1% of the women entrepreneurs in the textile industry in Monastir.

Data was collected from a questionnaire consisting of 34 open and closed questions. The questionnaires were completed in face-to-face interviews with 12 enterprises and phone interviews with the remaining six.

The collected data was analyzed using Sphinx Plus² (v5), which is regarded as one of the most appropriate software packages for questionnaires combining closed questions and qualitative open-ended questions (Yacoub 2013).

3.3 Results

3.3.1 Size and Company Profiles

According to our research, 83.3% of the surveyed companies are totally exporters, even though, they are mostly small (50%), and medium (44%) companies.

Our findings tally with the composition of the industrial sector in Tunisia, where small and medium enterprises (SMEs) represent more than 70% of industrial enterprises (TIP 2018).

3.3.2 Entrepreneur Profiles

According to our research, the average age of the entrepreneurs when creating their business is 31.6 years, the youngest being 23 and the oldest 48 years old. This average age is younger than that of women entrepreneurs in France, for example, where it is about 52 (Baromètre femmes entrepreneurs 2013).

As regards respondents' academic background, results show a fair distribution (50%) between secondary and tertiary education. The nine businesswomen who had tertiary education are distributed as shown in Table 1.

Note that only one of the nine higher-educated entrepreneurs have a degree related to their current business (textile engineering), while five women studied business and economics which can help to manage a business. Yet the academic background of the remaining three entrepreneurs has no link with business (chemical engineering, political science and French literature).

As regards marital status, six entrepreneurs (33.3%) were single at the time they created their own business. Four of the 12 married ones

Table 1 Women's tertiary educational background

<i>Degree</i>	<i>Number of observations</i>
Chemical engineering	1
Textile engineering	1
Economics and management science	5
Political science	1
French literature	1
Total	9

did not have children when they started. So ten women entrepreneurs (55.5%) did not have children when launching their projects, while two still do not. Not having children seems to be a major factor in women's decision to create their own business.

3.3.3 Entrepreneurial Intention Decision

Family (parents and husbands) is clearly the major determinant of female entrepreneurial intentions (for 94.4%) in the Tunisian textile industry. This finding is confirmed by the fact that all the respondents' families (parents, husbands, in-laws) welcomed and encouraged their decision to start their own business.

My decision has been more than welcomed by my husband and my parents. Even my seven-year-old son was so happy to learn that his mummy was going to become a business woman that he asked me to buy Disneyland! (OBS. No. 8)

In addition, 38.8% of the entrepreneurs chose to undertake their own business according to their academic background. However, a large number of entrepreneurs (44.4%) mentioned other determinants that motivated their entrepreneurial decisions.

From answers summarized in Table 2, we find that the determinants for Tunisian women's entrepreneurial decisions are diverse, depending globally on the woman's character, marital status and educational background.

3.3.4 Motivations for Starting a Business

As regards the motivations for starting a business, the results are more homogeneous. Making profit is the top-ranked answer (88.8%), followed by the desire to be their own boss (66.6%) and self-achievement (61.1%). Other motivations like having a family member with experience in entrepreneurship and/or in the textile industry were in fourth (57.1%). However, having an entrepreneur family member is cited by only 38.8%. Since the 1990s, unemployment has been an increasing economic problem in Tunisia. With encouragement and financial assistance offered by the government, many graduates have decided to start their own business. In this context, for five women (35.7%), creating their own enterprises was mainly to cope with being out of work.

Table 2 Other determinants of entrepreneurial decision

	<i>Nb. Cit.</i>	<i>Freq.</i>
My own choice	4	50%
I was working at my current factory as a chief supervisor. One day the foreign former manager quit, the headquarters offered me his position and unexpectedly I became a business woman!	1	12.5%
It's my father's project. I've always been meant to work with him. It's the same for my brothers and sisters	1	12.5%
When I was an employee at a textile factory, I was ranked top of the candidates in a competition to benefit from a two-year professional training course in different European countries. During this training, I learned a lot about the sector and I met many representatives of international textile companies. It was there that I met the manager of the Italian United Colors of Benetton and decided to start my own business in 1991 as a subcontracting manufacture for UCB. We still work together to this date	1	12.5%
When I created my first enterprise I was young and just married. It was so boring staying at home doing nothing but chores. So I decided to launch my own small project	1	12.5%
Total OBS.	8	100%

I was jobless for a while. I understood that I would never be able to find a job related to my political sciences bachelor degree. So I decided to follow a textile training and to undertake my own business. (OBS. No. 6)

Having a flexible timetable and working near home was mentioned by 21.4% of the entrepreneurs.

3.3.5 *Motivations for the Textile Industry*

The analysis of women's motivations for the textile industry reveals five main factors. The most cited ones are family experience (33.3%), and their passion for fashion and clothing (33.3%).

Since I was a kid, I have always been passionate about clothing. I used to dress my dolls with table napkins and towels. So becoming a textile entrepreneur and dressing people was simply a dream coming true for me (OBS. No. 2)

Further, 33.3% of the women declared they had chosen the textile industry because it was easier to manage than other sectors like chemicals.

Measures of easiness were quality standards, the amount of capital required and access to information from other firms. Another characteristic mentioned was that most of the textile industry's workers are women, which makes it easier for women entrepreneurs to deal with them.

Textiles had never been in my mind when I graduated as a chemical engineer. However, in Monastir there's a big concentration of textile firms. So it was quite easy to find information about the market and the different procedures. Besides, quality standards are easier to build up in textile than in complex sectors like chemicals or pharmaceuticals. (OBS. No. 9)

The two other motives for choosing the textile industry are related to personal experience (16.6%) and favorable public policy towards this sector (11.1%).

3.3.6 *Obstacles*

All respondents affirm having faced obstacles when starting their business. Administrative problems were top of the list (77.7%) followed by financial issues (55.5%) and difficulties combining family and business (38.8%).

Administrative issues relate mainly to bureaucracy and cumbersome procedures leading to delays in starting production. This is annoying, particularly for subcontracting firms that have commitments to their foreign partners.

Shyness and lack of self-confidence were in fourth place (22.2%) and were cited by respondents who started their business at an early age. Another obstacle cited by 22.2% of the entrepreneurs was the negative influence of the in-laws.

Tough competition was an obstacle to 16.6% of the entrepreneurs. Only one respondent claimed not to have experienced any obstacle since it was her father's project.

Six women (33.3%) cite other current obstacles. They are mainly related to the global economic and political instability following the Jasmine revolution (50%) and to the crisis of the textile industry in Tunisia (33.3%).

After the Jasmine revolution, labor unions have become more active leading to frequent strikes and disruptive behaviors of some workers. (OBS. No. 5)

Common to all the entrepreneurs was the answer that being a woman has never been an obstacle for their business as regards financing, administration and competition issues, either currently or when starting out. Yet 50% state that being a woman entrepreneur is an obstacle as regards family–business balance.

When it's about housekeeping and raising children it's always a women's issue. So from this perspective, yes, being a woman is an obstacle to running business. (OBS. No. 13)

Solutions to these different obstacles vary among the respondents. Nevertheless, the majority (94.4%) claimed the support of their parents was necessary to achieve a fair-enough balance between family and business. As for administrative issues, it seems that there is no effective solution but socializing with agents (22.2%). Financial issues are overcome using family savings (16.6%) and loans (11.1%).

3.3.7 Support Structures

This part of the survey was intended to evaluate the effectiveness of different support organizations for women entrepreneurs in the textile industry. We asked them about four main actors: people helping with starting and running the business; institutional support; companionship structures; and belonging to any women entrepreneurs' network.

In both phases, starting and running the business, parents and husbands are the most frequently cited as helping the entrepreneur. At the starting stage parents come first at 83.3% (against 55.5% for husbands), while at the running stage husbands come first (66.6% against 50% for parents). This finding is simply explained by the fact that 33.3% of the respondents were single when launching their business.

Another finding is the low rate of support structures either during the launching (16.6%) or in the day-to-day running (22.2%) of the business. Three structures were mentioned by respondents: the Monastir textile cluster (cited by three entrepreneurs); the textile technical center, which is a technical structure within the textile cluster (also cited by three entrepreneurs); and a private consulting bureau specialized in the textile industry (mentioned by one entrepreneur). Actions offered by these structures are mainly training and technical advice. Only 37% of the women were aware of the existence of such institutions.

3.3.8 *The Socio-Cultural Environment*

The women were very positive about Tunisian culture. They stated four main advantages for women entrepreneurship in the textile industry in Tunisia. First, all described Tunisian society as open-minded. Second, 94.4% declared that women enjoy entirely equal rights with men in business. Third, “respect towards women” is an advantage cited by 27.7% of the respondent, followed by “modern culture” with 16.6%.

Our Tunisian culture towards women doing business is just amazing! It combines open-mindedness and respect. This is uncommon within Arab countries. (OBS. No. 11)

Nevertheless some gaps cited by 14 businesswomen distort this idealistic image. The three main factors in these gaps are presented in Table 3.

Social gaps are mentioned by 28.5% of the business women, declaring that although nowadays an increasing number of Tunisian husbands do help with housekeeping and childcare, women remain too engaged as wives and mothers at the expense of their responsibilities as entrepreneurs.

Cultural gaps consist of two major factors. The first is the presence of regional differences as regards equality between genders (cited by two entrepreneurs).

But let me highlight that *open-mindedness isn't alike within the whole country. Unlike the region of Monastir, in some Southern and Western regions of Tunisia, some male workers still find it unusual to work for a female boss. So there's still much work to do to overcome this problem on the national scale.* (OBS. No. 8)

Table 3 Gaps for women's entrepreneurship in Tunisia's textile industry

	<i>No. Cit.</i>	<i>Freq.</i>
Social gaps (too much engagement towards family)	4	28.5%
Cultural gaps	3	21.4%
Male workers' disruptive behaviors towards business women	2	66.6%
Regional disparities	1	33.3%
Institutional gaps	5	37.5%
Lack of specific support for women entrepreneurs	5	100%
Lack of networking between women entrepreneurs	2	40%
Total OBS.	14	–

The second main factor relates to disruptive behavior by some workers (especially men) and is mentioned by one entrepreneur. The reasons for this behavior is usually linked to pay claims.

After the revolution, workers have become more and more demanding. Sometimes it's awkward to deal with some disruptive behaviors coming specifically from male workers. (OBS. No. 17)

The textile industry in Tunisia is struggling. The situation can be described as 'alone against all': intensive foreign competition, a lax attitude of the government and frequent labor unions' strikes. There is an emergent need of an efficient public policy to fix these issues and to help our textile industry regain its attractiveness. (OBS. No. 15)

The lack of support from public institutions during the launch and the day-to-day running of the business is cited as a major gap for entrepreneurship in Tunisia by 37.5% of the women. All of them cite the lack of specific financial, managerial and technical support for female entrepreneurs, while 40% highlight the lack of networking between businesswomen operating in the textile industry, in spite of their geographical proximity.

There is a lack of genuine accompanying for young women with ingenious and innovative projects' ideas but can't carry them out without efficient public aids. (OBS. No. 15)

I think there is a lack of collaboration between the actors of the textile industry (industrials, public institutions, research units, universities). In the spot, the textile cluster of Monastir doesn't play the role it's meant to play. So I think the government must intervene to overcome this failure in order to strengthen our textile sector's position. (OBS. No. 18)

Tunisian women entrepreneurs need to benefit from favoring financing advantages, coaching, training and so on. I think the Tunisian government should support female entrepreneurship because women are more cautious than men and they always achieve their goals with the minimum of risks and expenses that means they are economically more efficient! (OBS. No. 7)

3.4 Conclusion

Women entrepreneurs are a minority in Monastir, representing 12% of all entrepreneurs in the textile industry. But they are young (average age 31.6 years) and manage SMEs, a result that concurs with that of Davis

and Abdiyeva (2012). As regards the educational level, 50% of the women have a second degree and the other half have a bachelor's degree. Even though most of these women studied business administration, we cannot state that they have chosen the textile industry because of their educational background, which is in contradiction with the OECD (2012). They are mostly exporters (working as subcontractors for foreign companies, especially European ones). However, according to our study, the overall Tunisian environment is favorable for women. Female entrepreneurial intentions and motives depend essentially on family support and predisposition to provide help. As regards motivation, our study demonstrates that the Tunisian women's strategy is more push than pull, with a minority declaring that they have created their business because they were jobless. This result contradicts that of Malash-Pines et al. (2010) who declared that women in developing countries are more in a pull than a push strategy.

As regards the obstacles, most of the women claimed not to have experienced socio-cultural obstacles (in contradiction to the suggestions of Alexandre and Redien-Collot (2013) who pointed out that women in Arab countries are negatively influenced by the cultural environment), but they are more likely to face administrative issues. Financial issues are resolved in general by the support of their family (husbands and parents) because there is no support from private or public institutions. Indeed, the government demonstrates a lax attitude to textile entrepreneurship in Tunisia rather than enforcing favorable industrial policies in support of it. The textile cluster in Monastir is supposed (through its financial, technical and research institutions) to assist future entrepreneurs in the different stages of the launching of their enterprises. It is also supposed to support established entrepreneurs in their day-to-day operations. According to our results, there is a significant gap between the industrial policy's objectives and mechanisms on the one hand, and the actual achievements on the other hand.

Most of the recommendations suggested by the women textile entrepreneurs addressed this point. Most of the businesswomen would like policies specifically advantageous for Tunisian women entrepreneurs (72.2%) and a reduction in administration procedures (55.5%).

As a key sector for the Tunisian economy, public policy mechanisms that genuinely support the textiles industry must be implemented in such a way as to help this industry face intensive international competition, especially from Asia. Four main mechanisms must be targeted: financial, managerial, administrative and technical support.

On the other hand, female networks are a great channel to develop business and for psychological support. They also enable issues linked to entrepreneurship in general to be more effectively presented to government. We therefore encourage these women to create associations for discussion and to address their needs and problems.

4 GHANA: AN INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE FOR SUSTAINABILITY FASHION IN AFRICA

4.1 *Introduction*

Ghana is a West African country formerly known as the Gold Coast, which gained its independence in 1957 and has a population of over 25 million (BBC 2018). It was the first sub-Saharan African country to break loose from colonial rule and this was a big catalyst for the independence of other countries within the West African sub-region. In addition to its leadership on the political front, the country has also been regarded as one of the leading countries across the continent in various areas of human endeavor, such as sports, education, music and fashion. The value of the global fashion market is currently over US\$1.5 trillion while that of Africa is over US\$32 billion (Toesland 2016), to which the Ghanaian fashion industry is deemed to be contributing its quota. The industry in the country has been growing over the years, with different brands springing up each year and hitting the global stage with amazing designs and products carrying the Ghanaian culture along with them. This case study will just focus on two such brands: AASK (fashion accessories) and KIKI Clothing (fashion designerwear and footwear). The fashion industry was given a boost in 2004 when the Federal Government of Ghana introduced National Friday Wear which encouraged people to wear local fabrics and designs to work on Fridays. There are many fabrics of Ghanaian origin but the most popular is kente, which was originally worn by only the highest social classes but has become available to everyone in recent times.

The concept of sustainable fashion refers to clothing that combines fair-trade principles with sweatshop-free labor conditions and does not harm the environment or workers (Shen et al. 2013). A company known as Green Strategy has presented the concept as being about the various processes of fashion from production to end user that

takes into consideration its impact on the environmental and socio-economic aspects of society (Arrayales 2016). The company went on to list seven ways in which the concept can be expressed, three of which we have chosen for review in our case studies. These are: the product being made locally; using materials that are green; and ensuring that they are of the highest quality, especially when handcrafted. The two companies chosen were picked mainly based on their reputation as firms that are interested in the concept of sustainable fashion, and are known to follow up their interests with action. To give further credence to their approach to fashion, they are both members of the International Trade Center's Ethical Fashion Initiative in Africa. We will discuss how they have applied these aspects of sustainable fashion in their operations.

4.2 Case 1: AAKS (*Fashion Accessories*)

AAKS is a Ghanaian company founded in 2014 that produces fashion accessories, its main product being combined raffia and leather bags. The company was founded by Akosua Afriyie-Kumi to demonstrate the special weaving techniques involved to a world audience. These traditional weaving techniques are still maintained today, with local women artisans from Bolgatanga in the northern region of Ghana responsible for the production of these bags. This is a core part of the company's operations, as they pride themselves on being at the forefront of projecting and celebrating the craftsmanship of African artisans, especially women.

The company currently has over 50 local workers who have been empowered through their employment as weavers. The continued engagement of these women further creates opportunities for families that might not otherwise have survived to experience some of the good things in life.

The final product is a blend of tradition and modernity. The company is constantly experimenting with new materials, but they are all eco-friendly. The handbags are made using ecologically harvested raffia from family farmers in Ghana. They utilize as much of every raffia as possible and reserve scraps for smaller bags. The use of natural fibers and emphasis on the handcrafted technique means each bag is unique. A sophisticated dyeing process is formulated in house to create exclusive seasonal colors. The final designs are modern and exclusive styles, so they are made by hand using traditional methods.

The company's bags are currently sold in over 60 stores across the world.

The company's ethical stand as a sustainable fashion company has been given further credence by its listing as a partner of the International Trade Centre's Ethical Fashion Initiative in Africa. Since its launch in 2014, the brand has been popular around the world, with features in global brands such as *Vogue Italia*, *Elle Decoration*, *Vogue*, *CNN*, *Forbes Woman Africa*, *Guardian UK* and a host of other international publications.

In this way, the company continues to put Ghana and Africa generally on the map. In an interview about their weaving techniques with the *Guardian* in 2015, the founder stated: "It's a skill that has been passed on from generation to generation – I'm harnessing their skill, so that people can hear about it internationally. It's placing a bit of a spotlight on the weaving techniques that we have here." As a result, the company maintains active social media accounts that help take the message to the far reaches of the world, ensuring that more people get to appreciate the beauty of African fashion, while emphasizing its sustainable nature.

In addition to the environmental sustainability of its products, AAKS is a company committed to the defense of African women. One way to promote the talent of women is through fashion. The company considers that education is a powerful tool in the empowerment of women, but also believes that local government should contribute by supporting local talent and favoring their presence at the international level.

4.3 Case 2: KIKI Clothing (Fashion Designerwear and Footwear)

KIKI Clothing is a Ghanaian fashion company founded by Titi Ademola in 2002, which prides itself in the promotion of "Made in Ghana" products. The company, which started out with the design and production of children's clothing, has now metamorphosed into the production of womenswear, childrenswear, and footwear for men, women and children. The production process hinges on the company's philosophy of creating comfort and wearability for their clients while also ensuring that there is no compromise on meeting the clients' style demands and expectations. In order to achieve this for close to two decades, the company has maintained its tradition of handmade construction of products using vibrant

West African prints. This means a reliance on eco-friendly materials that are mainly locally sourced as well as the engagement and empowerment of the local workforce in Ghana, which includes women.

The brand continues to strive for the highest of standards and this is achieved by getting the right materials and people, thereby ensuring that the end user is getting value for money. This means that the clothes sold by the company have a higher chance of lasting longer than some other clothing from brands that are keener on mass production. KIKI Clothing sells its womenswear, childrenswear and footwear across the world and online through their online store, and is worn by celebrities. Social media outlets are well used, and this in itself is a form of sustainable fashion as use of these platforms reduces the impact of the business on the environment, with fewer publicity materials needing to be printed for marketing purposes.

The company is listed as partner of the International Trade Center's Ethical Fashion Initiative in Africa, which indicates endorsement of the brand's role promoting sustainable fashion, especially across the African continent. In its close to two decades of operations, the brand has been recognized by major media players in the industry such as *Vogue Italia*, *Elle Italia*, *The Daily Telegraph* (UK), *Glamour Magazine* (SA), CNN, BBC and other leading media outlets. KIKI Clothing has also had its ever popular Handkerchief hem dress photographed by Mario Testino for *Vogue US* and worn by Academy Award-winning actress Lupita Nyong'o. As a measure of this brand's popularity on the international fashion market, it has also been featured and celebrated on the red carpet by Hollywood actress Nicole Ari Parker and reality star Tiffany Jones. It has continued to be featured on different catwalks across the world, including Exopa Ghana Fashion Week, Face of Africa launch in Ghana, Altaroma Altamoda in Rome, Mercedes Benz Africa Fashion Week in Johannesburg, Arise Magazine Fashion Week in Lagos, African Prints Exhibition in Los Angeles and Africa Fashion Week in London. This is in addition to exhibiting opportunities in Accra, Lagos, Mauritius, Johannesburg, Rome and London.

All this international exposure tends to confirm what the founder is quoted as saying about internationalizing African fashion: "we need to take advantage of this time when wearing African is acceptable in the fashion world, and make the most of it" (Back 2012). On the company website she offers a further explanation:

I wanted to give credence to the magnificence of Africa's distinctive creative and artistic ability, through the production of exquisite and wearable clothing and accessory items. Items which speak to Africa Rising. Items which speak to contemporary, fashionable, Afro-politian Africa. Items which speak to the distinct, unique stylistic preferences and trends of her people.

Interestingly, the company is also associated with humanitarian activities that impact the lives of people who might not have had the chance of a good life if it were not for the company's support. It supports the Osu Children's Home Orphanage in Accra, Ghana as well as being involved in different charitable activities or projects, one of which is the Walk The World project which seeks to bring an end to hunger by providing food for the millions of starving children across the African continent.

4.4 Conclusion

From the brief discourse presented above, it is clear that the idea of sustainable fashion in Africa, while it may not be very popular at the moment for various reasons, is still gaining momentum as a result of the activities of some brands within the African fashion industry. The two cases presented can be seen as good examples of how Ghanaian culture is being exported to the rest of the world via the design and crafting of clothing and fashion accessories for men, women and children. They have continued to contribute to the advertisement of the continent in general and Ghana in particular, while also impacting the local economy of the country.

However, much remains to be done. As both entrepreneurs point out, sustainable fashion offers an important development opportunity to the Ghanaian woman. The consumer values products made with traditional techniques using sustainable materials, and that is something that the women of Ghana know how to do. However, and in order to improve their position in the industry, comprehensive training needs to be provided for women, and there is also an urgent need to develop government policies that support the activities developed by this group.

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