

Assessing The Role of Women in Promoting "Kampala Adire" In Abeokuta, Ogun State

OPENIYI GRACE BOSEDE¹, DR. CHIKADA J. DANIEL², DR. PHILIP J. UMARU³

^{1,2,3} *Department of Theatre and Cultural Studies, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nasarawa State, Nigeria*

Abstract- *This study assessed the role of women in promoting the Kampala Adire cottage industry in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. Adire, the indigo resist-dyed textile rooted in Yoruba culture, has long depended on women as its principal producers, traders, and cultural custodians, yet their contributions remain insufficiently documented in scholarly and policy discourse. Guided by Feminist Theory, Cultural Feminism and African Womanism, and Entrepreneurship and Empowerment Theory, the study adopted a convergent mixed methods design that combined structured questionnaires, in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentary review. A sample of 400 respondents was drawn from the Itoku and Asero communities using Taro Yamane's formula, and 387 questionnaires were validly completed and analysed alongside data from 30 purposively selected key informants. The findings show that Adire production in Abeokuta remains largely family based and community based, with market demand and cultural heritage preservation identified as the strongest drivers of growth. Women dominate production, marketing, apprentice training, and increasingly social media promotion, and the craft stands as the primary source of household income, funding children's education, housing, and family welfare for many respondents. Even so, women continue to face significant constraints, including limited access to capital, the high cost of materials, poor electricity supply, competition from imported fabrics, and weak institutional support. The study concludes that women are the backbone of the Kampala Adire industry and recommends gender-responsive financing, structured skills training, branding and certification policies, and stronger cooperative organisation to sustain and expand their contributions to Nigeria's cultural economy.*

Index Terms- *Adire, Kampala Adire, Cultural Industry, Women Entrepreneurship, Cottage Industry*

I. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's textile heritage is one of the clearest expressions of cultural identity and creativity in West Africa, and among its richest traditions is Adire, the indigo dyed fabric known for its intricate resist dye patterns. Adire is more than clothing. It is a living record of artistry, history, and community pride, and

it has been sustained mainly through the skill, ingenuity, and resilience of Yoruba women who have carried the craft from one generation to the next. Over time, women have remained central to the production, marketing, and innovation of this textile. From the dye pits of Abeokuta to the wider creative networks that now stretch across Nigeria, their labour has kept the craft alive while it adapts to changing fashion and global taste. The growth of cultural tourism, social media marketing, and a renewed appreciation for indigenous products has given Adire fresh visibility, opening new opportunities for women to turn traditional artistry into sustainable economic ventures that support both local development and national identity (Ajiboye, 2019).

The place of women in Nigeria's cultural industries is not a small matter when weighed against national development. Development can be understood from both an individual and a societal perspective. At the individual level, development is the ability of a person to build their capabilities to the point where they become useful to themselves and to society. At the societal level, it is the capacity of a group of people to organise their environment so that life becomes easier and better for them, and it includes the growth of both the material and non-material aspects of culture. No nation develops outside its own socio-cultural system, which is why it matters to examine closely the part women play in promoting cultural industries in Nigeria.

The craft of hand dyed Adire cloth, from the Yoruba words meaning "tie and dye," has a long history in the Egba region. Its pioneering production is widely traced to the Jojolola compound in Itoku, Abeokuta, under the leadership of Chief Mrs Miniya Jojolola Soetan, a foundational figure in the craft. Over time, the term Kampala came to describe the multi coloured, more stylised versions of tie and dye fabric produced in this area, and it is in the Abeokuta, Itoku, and Asero corridor that the craft of Adire and Kampala is most concentrated. Despite this cultural

renaissance, structural and gender related barriers, including limited access to capital, poor infrastructure, restricted markets, and a lack of formal training, continue to hold back women's ability to scale their businesses and compete effectively. Government and institutional support for women led cultural enterprises also remains inadequate or poorly targeted, so the full potential of the industry, and of the women who sustain it, has not yet been realised.

Women have long stood at the centre of Adire production and trade, nurturing a craft that carries both cultural identity and creative resilience, yet their contributions often go unrecognised or undervalued by policymakers, researchers, and development practitioners. In communities such as Kampala, women have devised creative strategies to promote their work, organising cultural festivals, using social media for visibility, and forming cooperatives to strengthen their collective bargaining power. Despite these efforts, they continue to face persistent barriers, including poor access to finance, weak market linkages, limited quality inputs, and inadequate technical and business training. These structural challenges restrict their ability to scale production, compete in wider markets, and benefit fully from the opportunities emerging in Nigeria's growing creative economy.

This study set out to evaluate the role Nigerian women play in sustaining and promoting the Kampala Adire cottage industry, a vibrant strand of Nigeria's cultural heritage, in Abeokuta, Ogun State. Specifically, it sought to ascertain the level of development of the Adire cottage industry in Abeokuta, examine the economic value of Adire in the area, assess the roles women play in promoting Adire, and identify the challenges women face in Adire production. The study is significant because it validates the often overlooked contributions of Nigerian women to the growth and preservation of the Kampala Adire cottage industry, and it offers evidence that can guide policymakers in developing gender responsive cultural policies as well as programmes designed by NGOs, cooperatives, and market stakeholders to strengthen women artisans. The study is centred on the Itoku and Asero neighbourhoods of Abeokuta South Local Government Area in Ogun State, which have become recognized hubs for tie and dye textile production, with strong concentrations of women artisans, workshops, market stalls, and cooperative groups.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Culture Industry and the Creative Economy

Women have long stood at the heart of Nigeria's indigenous textile industry, serving as creators, innovators, and promoters of cultural heritage through fabrics such as Adire and Kampala. In many Yoruba communities, women are not only producers but cultural custodians whose craft sustains both identity and livelihood, and their creativity continues to transform indigenous textiles into contemporary fashion statements and economic assets. Ajiboye (2019) argues that indigenous textile production remains one of the most viable pathways through which rural women assert agency and sustain family economies in Nigeria. Through their artistry in dyeing, weaving, and marketing, women have preserved traditions that might otherwise have faded under the pressure of modernisation, and their role extends beyond craftsmanship into cultural preservation and economic empowerment. Oyeleke (2018) observes that the evolution of Adire into Kampala demonstrates the adaptive capacity of African women to transform tradition into modern creative industries, a point that captures how women's creativity bridges past and present. Adire itself is not merely fabric but an expression of women's agency, resilience, and innovation, reflecting their mastery of resist dyeing techniques and their capacity to adapt traditional designs to modern aesthetics. As Eicher and Ross (2010) note, textiles in Africa are not merely decorative but serve as visual languages that communicate identity, history, and status, a view that further underscores the significance of women's contributions to textile traditions.

Cultural industries, often called the creative industries, cover a broad range of economic activities involved in the creation, production, and distribution of cultural goods and services, including traditional crafts, fashion, music, film, publishing, design, and the performing arts. Globally, these industries have become powerful drivers of economic growth, job creation, and social inclusion, while also serving as vehicles for national identity and cultural expression. In Nigeria, the creative economy has become one of the fastest growing sectors, with industries such as Nollywood, Afrobeats, and indigenous textiles like Kampala Adire contributing meaningfully to the country's gross domestic product and providing sustainable livelihoods for millions of artisans and

entrepreneurs. Adire producers have, in effect, become cultural ambassadors, representing Nigerian creativity on fashion runways and at international exhibitions, projecting the country's cultural richness and diversity while strengthening its global image. Even so, the growth of cultural industries brings its own tension, particularly the need to balance heritage preservation with commercialisation, since the pressure to meet market trends can lead to mass production, loss of authenticity, and cultural misappropriation. Sustainable cultural policies that protect intellectual property, encourage fair trade, and invest in the capacity of artisans and creators are therefore essential if the integrity of the heritage is to be preserved alongside its commercial growth.

Across Africa, and in Nigeria in particular, women are the beating heart of craft and cultural industries. From weaving and dyeing to beadwork and garment making, women shoulder much of the day to day labour that transforms raw materials into culturally meaningful products, and their work routinely contributes crucial income to households. Yet this central role coexists with persistent constraints, since women frequently face gendered barriers to land, credit, and formal markets, often operate with limited access to productive technology, and see their labour undervalued or left informal with little official recognition. Even so, a growing body of research shows that craft production can be a powerful route to empowerment, helping women build skills, social networks, and economic independence while serving as a vehicle for cultural preservation and intergenerational knowledge transfer.

A gendered value chain perspective helps to reveal how women are positioned within the production and marketing systems of industries like Kampala Adire. Women typically dominate the early stages of the chain, engaging in dyeing, tying, and finishing activities that are essential but often yield the least financial reward, while men or larger firms tend to control higher value segments such as design innovation, branding, large scale marketing, and export. This unequal participation limits women's earnings and visibility even though their craftsmanship sustains the industry's cultural and economic vitality. Scholars of artisanal and textile industries note that improving women's access to better equipment, design training, digital marketing, and cooperative organisation can significantly enhance their income and social status, allowing

them to move beyond production into more profitable stages of the value chain such as fashion collaborations, online sales, and cultural tourism.

Empirical Review

Picton and Mack (1989) describe Adire cloth as a synthesis of artistic intuition, chemical knowledge, and social communication among Yoruba women, who pass on this knowledge both orally and practically, ensuring cultural continuity despite colonial, industrial, and economic disruption. Through their mastery of dyeing, patterning, and weaving, women preserve not only the craft but also the meanings, symbols, and stories embedded in its designs, making them cultural custodians who ensure that traditional skills remain relevant in modern times. Studies on the Adire industry show how women have turned what was once a domestic or community craft into a genuine business venture. Ukwueze (2022) documents how women now manage small enterprises, sell products in local markets, and partner with designers who value the cultural and aesthetic worth of these fabrics, creating income for individual women while contributing to local employment and community development.

Beyond production, women also drive demand for indigenous textiles. Adire is frequently worn at ceremonies, festivals, and family events to express identity and pride, and younger women, including students, increasingly favour locally made fabrics when motivated by cultural consciousness, a dual role as both producers and consumers that keeps the market for Nigerian cultural textiles alive. Contemporary scholarship also notes a growing trend of women blending tradition with innovation. Akinwumi (2016) argues that the global visibility of Adire demonstrates Africa's creative resilience and its capacity to define contemporary aesthetics through indigenous knowledge systems, and this cultural entrepreneurship shows how women reimagine tradition to meet new aesthetic and commercial demands. Despite these achievements, women in the textile sector face notable challenges, including limited access to credit, inadequate infrastructure such as dye pits and modern equipment, poor marketing channels, gender bias, and competition from cheap imported fabrics.

The term Kampala Adire is a modern variation of Adire that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, when brighter synthetic dyes began arriving through East

Africa, particularly via Kampala, the Ugandan capital, giving the fabric its name. It represents both a stylistic evolution and women's capacity to adapt their craft to modern tastes and international markets. Opeolu and Fadina (2005) studied women in the indigenous Adire textile industry in Abeokuta and found that women dominated the industry and depended on textile production as a major source of livelihood, with the industry contributing significantly to employment generation, household income, and women's social status, although exposure to chemicals and poor working conditions remained concerns. Soaga and Opeolu (2009) similarly found that over seventy percent of Adire producers in Abeokuta were women, and that production generated income, reduced poverty, and contributed to Nigeria's gross domestic product, even as health risks from dye chemicals remained a challenge.

Rice (2014) examined the role of women in textile production and contemporary art among Yoruba women in southwestern Nigeria and found that women used textile production for both economic survival and artistic expression, with Adire producers historically active in colonial resistance and social development. Areo and Areo (2014), studying the relationship between Ankara, Kampala, and Adire production, found that women were the major producers and marketers of indigenous textiles and that the modernisation of Ankara Kampala fabrics increased their popularity in local and international markets. Svensson and Wamala Larsson (2015) studied market women in Kampala, Uganda, and found that mobile technology improved their business performance and communication, while Dolan et al. (2015) found that women in African textile and manufacturing value chains experienced increased income, improved confidence, and greater participation in household decisions, even though gender discrimination and unequal wages remained persistent problems. Meier zu Selhausen (2017) found that women involved in cooperative production groups in Uganda improved their economic wellbeing and gained greater decision making power.

Closer to the present study area, Olu-Owolabi et al. (2020) examined women entrepreneurs in the Adire textile industry in Abeokuta and found that production improved family income, strengthened family stability, and supported economic

empowerment through informal textile businesses, and recommended stronger government support to improve productivity. Adeyemi (2018) similarly found that women in the Nigerian fashion and textile industry increased their income, developed managerial skills, reduced poverty, and achieved financial independence through their businesses. Muhwezi et al. (2020) found that vocational training in tailoring and textile production improved women's productivity, income, entrepreneurial ability, and self-reliance in Kampala, Uganda, while Peters et al. (2021) found that textile and fashion related businesses significantly improved women's financial independence and employment opportunities in developing countries. More recently, Malhotra et al. (2024) conducted a systematic review of women's economic empowerment through value chain activities, including textile production, and concluded that such industries remain important tools for women's empowerment in developing countries.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on three complementary theories that together explain how gender, culture, and enterprise intersect within the Kampala Adire industry.

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory, associated with thinkers such as Simone de Beauvoir and later expanded by Betty Friedan and bell hooks, provides a framework for understanding and challenging gender inequality. De Beauvoir (1949) argues that one is not born but rather becomes a woman, emphasising how society constructs gender roles, while Friedan (1963) critiques the limitations placed on women within domestic spaces, and hooks (1984) highlights the importance of intersectionality in analysing women's experiences. Feminist theory examines how social structures, traditions, and economic systems shape women's opportunities and representation, treating women as active agents capable of shaping their societies rather than passive participants in patriarchal systems. In the context of this study, feminist theory helps explain how Yoruba women in Adire and Kampala production assert creativity and agency within a patriarchal society. Textile art has historically provided women with a socially accepted means of earning income, attaining status, and transmitting cultural knowledge, so their activities can be understood as central cultural and economic

contributions rather than secondary forms of labour. Using this lens, the study highlights the empowerment dimension of women's involvement in indigenous textile production and supports policy recommendations that promote gender equity through women led cultural industries.

Cultural Feminism and African Womanism

Cultural feminist thinkers such as Mary Daly and Carol Gilligan emphasise women's unique strengths and cultural roles. Daly (1978) argues that women possess a deep rooted cultural power that patriarchal structures attempt to suppress, while Gilligan (1982) asserts that women's ethical reasoning is grounded in a different voice, shaped by care, relationship, and empathy. African Womanism, advanced by Clenora Hudson-Weems and Chikwenye Ogunyemi, situates gender discourse within African realities. Hudson-Weems (1993) explains that African womanhood is defined by family centredness, flexibility of roles, and genuine cooperation between men and women, while Ogunyemi (1985) maintains that African women's identities balance selfhood, motherhood, and cultural continuity. Cultural feminism and African Womanism together celebrate women's creativity, nurturing roles, and cultural preservation, framing Yoruba women as cultural custodians and creators rather than merely economic contributors. Their promotion of Adire and Kampala reflects cultural preservation, aesthetic expression, and social continuity, reinforcing identity, heritage, and pride in line with womanist principles of cooperation and heritage preservation. This lens supports interpreting women's textile work as cultural entrepreneurship, where economic activity is inseparable from cultural preservation, and where empowering women textile producers simultaneously strengthens indigenous knowledge and cultural identity.

Entrepreneurship and Empowerment Theory

Schumpeter (1934) contends that entrepreneurs introduce new combinations of products, processes, and markets, thereby driving economic development, while Sen (1999) emphasises that empowerment involves expanding individuals' capabilities and enabling them to make strategic life choices. Women who promote Adire and Kampala exemplify entrepreneurial innovation, modernising traditional techniques, creating new designs, and connecting indigenous crafts with contemporary fashion markets. Their agency and decision making power contribute to family welfare and local economies,

reflecting Sen's concept of empowerment through the expansion of capability. This theory justifies analysing women's textile activities not merely as cultural preservation but as entrepreneurial innovation and economic empowerment, implying that policies and programmes supporting women in this sector should prioritise capacity building, access to finance, and market expansion. Together, the three frameworks allow this study to examine women's involvement in Kampala Adire as simultaneously an act of cultural custodianship, gendered resistance, and entrepreneurial agency.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a convergent mixed methods design to gain a comprehensive understanding of women's roles in the Kampala Adire cultural industry. Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches allowed the research to capture both the measurable aspects of women's participation and the deeper social, cultural, and experiential dimensions that numbers alone cannot reveal. The qualitative strand, through interviews and participant observation, provided rich, firsthand insight into women's lived experiences, challenges, creative processes, and empowerment journeys, while the quantitative strand, based on structured surveys, offered statistical evidence on income levels, household contributions, and access to resources. Analysing both strands side by side ensured triangulation, credibility, and a holistic interpretation of how women sustain and promote Nigeria's textile based cultural industries.

The study population comprised women actively engaged in the Kampala Adire cultural industry within the Itoku and Asero communities of Abeokuta, Ogun State, including artisans, fabric traders, cooperative leaders, cultural officers, and consumers who patronise or promote the fabric. Itoku alone is reported to have about 1,500 women directly involved in the hand-made Adire and Kampala trade, and this figure represented the population of the study. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination, expressed as $n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$, where n is the sample size, N is the population size of 1,500, and e is the margin of error set at 0.05 (Yamane, 1967). This calculation yielded a sample size of approximately 400 respondents. For the qualitative component, purposive sampling was used to select 30

key participants, drawn from master dyers, textile marketers, cooperative leaders, and fashion designers, for in-depth interviews. For the quantitative component, a stratified convenience sampling method was applied to select 400 respondents, with strata based on participants' roles as producers, traders, and cooperative members, to capture diverse viewpoints across the Adire value chain.

The study used a combination of instruments to generate rich, complementary data. A structured questionnaire served as the main quantitative instrument, capturing demographic profiles, income levels, production volumes, and business activities, along with access to finance, training opportunities, market channels, and promotion platforms. An interview guide was used to collect qualitative data from key informants, allowing them to describe their roles in production, cultural preservation, entrepreneurship, and the challenges they face. Direct observation allowed the researcher to visit workshops, markets, and cultural festivals, documenting production activities, marketing routines, and social exchanges that underpin the industry. A review of documentary sources, including cooperative records, market data, and policy documents, supplemented the primary data with historical and institutional context.

Content and face validity were established by subjecting the instruments to expert review in sociology, gender studies, and textile production,

followed by a pilot test among a small group of women in textile production outside the study area. Reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using the test-retest method, with the instrument administered twice within a two week interval and results correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, with a coefficient of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable. Ethical clearance was obtained before fieldwork began, and informed consent, confidentiality, and cultural sensitivity were observed throughout, with female enumerators engaged for interviewing women artisans in culturally sensitive contexts. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages, for the quantitative component, and thematic analysis for the qualitative component, with triangulation applied to compare and cross-verify findings from the different sources.

V. RESULTS

Out of 400 questionnaires administered, 387 were properly completed and returned, forming the basis of the quantitative analysis presented below alongside insights drawn from the 30 in-depth interviews. Given the scope of a journal article, the tables presented here are limited to those most directly related to the four objectives of the study, namely the socio-demographic profile of respondents, the level of development of the industry, its economic value, the roles women play in promoting it, and the challenges they face.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	158	40.8
	Female	229	59.1
	Total	387	100.0
Age Group	18-30 years	110	28.4
	31-40 years	142	36.7
	41-50 years	98	25.3
	51 years and above	37	9.6
	Total	387	100.0
Marital Status	Single	97	25.1
	Married	198	51.2
	Divorced	53	13.7
	Widowed	39	10.1
	Total	387	100.0
Educational Qualification	No Formal Education	38	9.8
	Primary Education	74	19.1

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
	Secondary Education	118	30.5
	Tertiary Education	157	40.6
	Total	387	100.0
Occupation	Adire Producer	162	41.9
	Trader/Marketer	103	26.6
	Artisan	72	18.6
	Civil Servant	50	12.9
	Total	387	100.0
Years of Involvement	Less than 5 years	84	21.7
	5-10 years	143	37.0
	11-15 years	97	25.1
	Above 15 years	63	16.3
	Total	387	100.0
Monthly Income	Below N30,000	112	28.9
	N31,000-N50,000	128	33.1
	N51,000-N70,000	89	23.0
	N71,000-N100,000	42	10.9
	N101,000 and above	16	4.1
	Total	387	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 1 shows that women constituted 59.1 percent of respondents, confirming their dominant presence in the Adire industry in Abeokuta. Most respondents fell within the productive age brackets of 31 to 40 years (36.7 percent) and 18 to 30 years (28.4 percent), suggesting a vibrant workforce. A majority, 51.2 percent, were married, and 40.6 percent held tertiary qualifications, which may explain the growing

adoption of digital marketing among producers. Occupationally, 41.9 percent identified as Adire producers and 26.6 percent as traders or marketers, while income levels clustered mainly between below N30,000 and N50,000 monthly, pointing to the need for targeted financial support to improve returns for women in the industry.

Table 2: What best describes the current state of Adire production in Abeokuta?

Category	Frequency	Percent
Family-based production	143	37.0
Community-based production	98	25.3
Cooperative production	86	22.2
Commercial-scale production	60	15.5
Total	387	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 2 shows that Adire production in Abeokuta remains predominantly family based (37.0 percent) and community based (25.3 percent), with cooperative (22.2 percent) and commercial scale production (15.5 percent) still a minority. This mirrors Opeolu and Fadina's (2005) finding that women in the Adire sector depend largely on informal, family rooted production frameworks. A

45-year-old female producer in Itoku explained that the craft has always been passed down within families, noting that "my mother taught me, and I am now teaching my daughters the same way" (Female/IDI/45/2026), an account that confirms the industry's growth has been driven more by cultural commitment than by deliberate institutional investment.

Table 3: What is the major economic benefit of Adire production?

Category	Frequency	Percent
Employment creation	97	25.1
Income generation	183	47.3
Export earnings	54	13.9
Tourism promotion	53	13.7
Total	387	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 3 shows that income generation was identified by 47.3 percent of respondents as the major economic benefit of Adire production, ahead of employment creation (25.1 percent), export earnings (13.9 percent), and tourism promotion (13.7 percent). A 47-year-old cooperative leader in Itoku captured this vividly, stating that Adire "is our children's school

fees. It is the roof over our heads... I sent my three children to university using money from this craft" (Female/IDI/47/2026). This finding resonates with Soaga and Opeolu (2009), who documented that Adire production generated meaningful household income and contributed to poverty reduction among women in Abeokuta.

Table 4: What role do women play most in the Adire industry?

Category	Frequency	Percent
Production	172	44.4
Marketing	98	25.3
Training apprentices	74	19.1
Business management	43	11.1
Total	387	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4 confirms that women occupy central and largely indispensable roles across the Adire value chain. Production was identified by 44.4 percent of respondents as the role women play most, followed by marketing (25.3 percent), training apprentices (19.1 percent), and business management (11.1 percent). A 50-year-old master artisan in Itoku

summed up this dominance plainly: "we produce, we market, we train, and we manage. The men may help here and there, but the core of Adire is women's work" (Female/IDI/50/2026), an observation consistent with Picton and Mack's (1989) description of Yoruba women as the technical and cultural custodians of the craft.

Table 5: What is the major challenge facing women in Adire production?

Category	Frequency	Percent
Lack of capital	174	44.9
High cost of materials	103	26.6
Limited market access	67	17.3
Inadequate equipment	43	11.1
Total	387	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 5 reveals that lack of capital is the most pressing challenge facing women in Adire production, cited by 44.9 percent of respondents, followed by the high cost of materials (26.6 percent), limited market access (17.3 percent), and inadequate equipment (11.1 percent). A 46-year-old producer in Itoku explained that although she has "ideas" and "customers who want to buy," she "cannot expand because I do not have enough capital to buy materials

in bulk," and that banks demand collateral she does not have (Female/IDI/46/2026), a challenge that aligns with Adeyemi's (2018) conclusion that limited access to credit severely constrains women's ability to invest in equipment and market growth.

VI. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study confirm that the Adire cottage industry in Abeokuta remains predominantly informal and family based, a pattern that has persisted for at least two decades, since Opeolu and Fadina (2005) observed the same reliance on familial skill transmission in the same location. This continuity may be read both as evidence of cultural resilience and as an indicator of how little formal economic development support has penetrated the sector. Even so, market demand has emerged as the clearest area of growth, mirroring Akinwumi's (2016) observation that the global reach of indigenous Nigerian textiles has expanded through the fashion industry's growing appreciation for African aesthetics. Cultural heritage preservation, rather than government policy or private investment, appears to be the stronger force behind the industry's sustainability, suggesting that women's commitment to the craft as cultural practice continues to outpace institutional engagement.

Cooperatives and women's associations, while present, still represent a minority of the industry's organisational forms, even though Meier zu Selhausen (2017) found that cooperative participation among women in craft industries improves productivity and income. Read through the Entrepreneurship and Empowerment Theory, this suggests that enabling women to access productive structures, networks, and capabilities remains essential for transforming traditional craft activity into sustainable, scalable enterprise. The economic contributions of Adire to households are substantial and multi-dimensional, with income generation identified as the primary benefit and producers, rather than intermediaries, capturing the largest share of the value created, a pattern consistent with Soaga and Opeolu's (2009) documentation of household income and poverty reduction among Abeokuta's Adire producers. Beyond direct income, the craft supports children's education and housing improvement, aligning with Olu-Owolabi et al.'s (2020) findings on Adire's role in household welfare and suggesting that the industry functions as a genuine pathway to intergenerational social mobility.

Women's dominance in production, viewed through Feminist Theory, should not be read merely as a reflection of traditional gender roles but as an assertion of cultural agency and creative authority, echoing Picton and Mack's (1989) observation that Yoruba women's mastery of resist-dyeing techniques has made them the cultural and technical custodians

of Adire for generations. The dual emphasis on skill transfer and product innovation reflects the African Womanist framework advanced by Hudson-Weems and Ogunyemi, which foregrounds cultural continuity and intergenerational knowledge transfer as central expressions of women's identity and agency. The rising use of social media for promotion signals a broader pattern of digital entrepreneurship reshaping how traditional craft businesses engage markets, consistent with Svensson and Wamala Larsson's (2015) findings among women traders in Kampala, Uganda, though the underuse of formal platforms such as exhibitions and trade fairs points to a gap between women's promotional potential and its actual reach.

Financial exclusion emerges as the most pervasive and binding constraint on women's participation in the industry, consistent with Adeyemi's (2018) findings on limited access to credit among Nigerian women artisans, and compounded by collateral requirements that typically exclude informal, unregistered businesses. Poor electricity supply situates the Adire industry within Nigeria's broader infrastructure deficit, while competition from cheaper imported fabrics, as documented by Areo and Areo (2014), continues to erode the competitiveness of indigenous producers in the absence of trade protection or consumer awareness campaigns. Taken together, these interconnected challenges, financial, infrastructural, and institutional, call for a comprehensive and gender-responsive policy agenda that recognises the economic, cultural, and social value of women's contributions and mobilises targeted resources to strengthen their capacity to produce, promote, and compete effectively.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study set out to assess the role of women in promoting the Kampala Adire cottage industry in Abeokuta, Ogun State, and the findings offer clear and compelling evidence that women are the backbone of this industry in every meaningful sense. From the dye pits of Itoku to the trading stalls of Asero, women are the primary producers, marketers, trainers, and cultural custodians who sustain the Adire craft and give it both economic and symbolic value. Their contributions span the entire value chain, from sourcing raw materials and mastering dyeing techniques to promoting and selling finished products

across local, national, and increasingly international markets. Any meaningful effort to develop the Adire industry must therefore begin with recognition of women's central and irreplaceable role within it.

The industry remains structurally informal, with family-based and community-based production frameworks continuing to dominate. While this informality reflects deep cultural roots and intergenerational knowledge transmission, it also limits the industry's capacity for scalable growth and formal economic integration. The growth in market demand is an encouraging sign of commercial potential, but that potential will only be fully realised if the structural and organisational foundations of production are strengthened through cooperative development, enterprise formalisation, and institutional support. The industry's development has, so far, been driven more by cultural commitment and grassroots entrepreneurship than by deliberate policy investment, and this imbalance needs to be addressed.

The economic value of Adire to households and communities in Abeokuta is substantial, serving as a primary income source, a vehicle for children's education, and a driver of local employment. Yet the concentration of economic benefits at the production level, combined with persistent financial exclusion and rising input costs, means that many women are unable to retain or reinvest enough of the value they generate to expand and sustain their enterprises over the long term. The challenges facing women in Adire production, financial exclusion, infrastructure deficit, inadequate institutional support, and unfair competition from imported fabrics, are not isolated but represent the compounded effects of structural constraints that affect women-led enterprises across Nigeria's informal economy more broadly. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic and gender-responsive approach that tackles financial, infrastructural, policy, and skills development barriers simultaneously. Women's contributions to the Adire industry deserve formal recognition, meaningful investment, and sustained institutional partnership if the full potential of this culturally significant industry is to be realised for the benefit of its practitioners, their communities, and the nation as a whole.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. The Federal Government and the Ogun State Government should provide accessible and gender-responsive financial support schemes to enable women in the Adire industry expand their businesses and improve productivity.
- ii. Government agencies, cultural institutions, and relevant stakeholders should organise regular training programmes on modern design techniques, business management, financial record keeping, and digital marketing to enhance the competitiveness of women Adire producers.
- iii. Policies should be developed to protect and promote authentic Adire products through branding and certification initiatives, thereby preserving cultural heritage and increasing the market value of locally produced fabrics.
- iv. Women artisans should be encouraged to form and strengthen cooperative societies to facilitate access to resources, markets, production facilities, and business opportunities, while enhancing their collective bargaining power.
- v. Investment in reliable electricity supply and other basic infrastructure within the Itoku and Asero production clusters should be prioritised by relevant authorities to reduce production costs and improve output quality.
- vi. Future research should consider comparative studies of women's participation in Adire and other indigenous textile industries across Nigeria, as well as longitudinal studies examining the long-term economic and social impact of Adire production on women's income and household welfare.

REFERENCES

- [1] Adeyemi, T. (2018). Women entrepreneurs and the Nigerian fashion and textile industry: Skills, income, and empowerment. *Journal of Gender and African Studies*, 9(2), 45–62.
- [2] Ajiboye, T. (2019). Women's empowerment through indigenous textile production in Nigeria. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 31(4), 512–526.
- [3] Akinwumi, T. (2016). African fashion and identity: The globalization of Adire and Aso Oke. *African Arts*, 49(2), 72–81.
- [4] Areo, M. O., & Areo, R. A. (2014). Ankara Kampala: Property rights as revamps for the Adire indigenous knowledge. *Arts and Design Studies*, 25, 1–10.
- [5] Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and*

- research for the sociology of education (pp. 241–258). Greenwood.
- [6] Daly, M. (1978). *Gyn/ecology: The metaethics of radical feminism*. Beacon Press.
 - [7] de Beauvoir, S. (1949). *The second sex*. Vintage Books.
 - [8] Dolan, C., et al. (2015). Gender and value chains: New directions for research and engagement. *Journal of International Development*, 27(7), 1095–1112.
 - [9] Eicher, J. B., & Ross, D. H. (2010). *African dress: Fashion, agency, performance*. Bloomsbury.
 - [10] Friedan, B. (1963). *The feminine mystique*. W. W. Norton & Company.
 - [11] Gilligan, C. (1982). In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development. Harvard University Press.
 - [12] hooks, b. (1984). *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. South End Press.
 - [13] Hudson-Weems, C. (1993). *Africana womanism: Reclaiming ourselves*. Bedford Publishers.
 - [14] Malhotra, A., et al. (2024). Women's economic empowerment through value chain participation: A systematic review. *World Development*, 178, 1–18.
 - [15] Meier zu Selhausen, F. (2017). What women want? Cooperative membership and female empowerment in Uganda. *Labour History*, 58(3), 305–328.
 - [16] Muhwezi, D., et al. (2020). Vocational and technical education for women's empowerment in Kampala, Uganda. *Journal of Technical Education and Training*, 12(1), 78–93.
 - [17] Ogunyemi, C. O. (1985). Womanism: The dynamics of the contemporary Black female novel in English. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 11(1), 63–80.
 - [18] Olu-Owolabi, F., et al. (2020). Women entrepreneurs and the Adire textile industry in Abeokuta: Productivity, income, and household welfare. *African Journal of Business and Economic Research*, 15(3), 101–119.
 - [19] Opeolu, B., & Fadina, A. (2005). Women in the indigenous Adire textile industry in Abeokuta, Nigeria: Livelihood, challenges, and implications. *Nigerian Journal of Rural Sociology*, 6(1), 34–47.
 - [20] Oyeleke, O. (2018). Women, creativity and the evolution of Adire in Yoruba textile art. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 15(3), 210–225.
 - [21] Oyelola, P. (2005). *Traditional arts and crafts of Nigeria*. University Press Plc.
 - [22] Peters, B., et al. (2021). Women's economic empowerment programs in developing countries: Evidence from the textile and fashion sectors. *Development Policy Review*, 39(4), 567–588.
 - [23] Picton, J., & Mack, J. (1989). *African textiles*. British Museum Press.
 - [24] Rice, L. (2014). Women, textile production, and contemporary art in Nigeria: Agency, resistance, and heritage. *African Studies Review*, 57(2), 121–138.
 - [25] Schumpeter, J. A. (1934). *The theory of economic development: An inquiry into profits, capital, credit, interest, and the business cycle*. Harvard University Press.
 - [26] Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. Oxford University Press.
 - [27] Soaga, J. A., & Opeolu, B. (2009). The profitability, health and environmental implications of Adire production in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. *Environmental Research Journal*, 3(4), 187–194.
 - [28] Svensson, M., & Wamala Larsson, S. (2015). Women traders, mobile technology, and empowerment in Kampala, Uganda. *Journal of African Economies*, 24(5), 718–741.
 - [29] Ukwueze, E. R. (2022). Women entrepreneurs in Nigerian cultural industries: Challenges, innovations, and pathways to empowerment. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*, 14(1), 89–108.
 - [30] Yamane, T. (1967). *Statistics: An introductory analysis* (2nd ed.). Harper & Row.