

## **TOWARDS AN IMPROVED METHOD OF MERCHANDISING INDIGO DYED FABRICS IN ABEOKUTA METROPOLIS**

**\*<sup>1</sup>Emidun Olugbenga Benjamin <sup>2</sup>Olurunnegan, Toluwalope Daniel  
and <sup>3</sup>Akinrujomu, Olujoke Stella**

<sup>1,2</sup> Department of Industrial Design, School of Environmental Technology, The Federal University of Technology P. M. B. 704, Akure, Ondo State Nigeria

<sup>3</sup> Department of Entrepreneurial Arts. School of Vocational and Entrepreneurial Studies, Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

\*Correspondence email: [obemidun@futa.edu.ng](mailto:obemidun@futa.edu.ng)

---

**ABSTRACT:** *The study is a novel research into the merchandising of indigo fabric in Abeokuta, Ogun state Nigeria. The study population was in two major categories; the consumers of the products and the traditional indigo merchants. The sample frame for the indigo merchant was 69 while the calculated number of end users, using cochran equation was 385. The data collected for the study were analyzed using descriptive statistic. The results obtained were presented, analyzed and discussed in tables and the statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11 was employed in the data analyses and interpretation. The result shows that there was adequate awareness of indigo dyed fabrics in Abeokuta despite the patronage is low. This is as a result of inadequate merchandising techniques, inadequate market spread, high price, poor packaging and design that are not market oriented but stereotyped.*

**KEYWORDS:** merchandising, indigo, patronage, fabric, awareness, techniques

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

The prominence and internationalization of traditional indigo fabric production and marketing can not be discussed without a mention of Abeokuta in Ogun State. Indigo dyed cloth markets can be found in four strategic locations of the ancient city; Itoku which is the core production centre in Abeokuta South Local Government, Lafenwa and Kuto markets in Abeokuta North Local Government and Asero in Odeda Local Government area.

In Nigerian traditional indigo dyeing industry, two related phenomena always arise. The first concerns its gradual decline over time while the other is about impact of resist fabrics on the economic profile of the people of Abeokuta. When reviewed by Oguntona (1986), the traditional indigo dye industry formed part of the early travelers' merchandize in Abeokuta and other parts of the country. At that time the predominant dye developed in the Western region of Nigeria was made from the leaves of "Elu" (indigofera) plant and it was called indigo dye. A similar study conducted by Ayotade (2002) supports that more than many other parts of the world the traditional

indigo dye industry in Nigeria played a significant role in the socio-economic structure of the nation by giving room to buying and selling and usage in social as well as cultural functions. For instance, adire (tie-dye) and batik (kampala) which are products of traditional indigo dyeing helped in defining Yoruba culture, providing employment and contributing significantly to the export earnings of the country. The industry, according to Fontana (2005) was characterized by certain resistance to automation due to the creative and skilled labour dependent nature of its design and marketing process. The production process satisfied both the cultural and survival needs of Nigerians– being so vital for income and employment.

On the other hand, concerns about the development and impacts of the Nigerian traditional indigo dye industry left much to be desired (Walter, 2007). While the development and impact of the traditional dyeing industry on textile merchandizing cannot be underestimated, today's textile merchants must understand that in a competitive market, the vogue style, trend, quality and customers needs are some important factors to gain mileage in textile buying and selling. Given that the textile and clothing production are dynamic social and economic activities (Ajayi, 2002), merchandizing is not fully thriving as expected because of bureaucratic foreign exchange and import procedures.

These governmental procedures for quality control and environmental impact assessment, tax payment and registration of business are making the prospects of textile production and merchandising rapidly diminishing without realistic possibilities of being replenished Musa, (1994) and Ming, (1993) present a graphic picture of a crippled market situation in Nigerian due to uncertainties about the political and economic direction of the country in which textile merchandizing among other industries no more feel secured in doing business in Nigeria and are shifting base to presumably safer territories like Ghana. In Ogunduyile and Adiji (2005) appraisal were given to the production of traditional handcrafted fabrics, however the survival of the industry is being threatened daily by the illegal dumping of imported textiles in the Nigerian shores Ojo, (2003).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Observed market trend in Abeokuta, Ogun State reveal the need for an improved method of selling traditional indigo dyed fabrics. It is of opinion in Lakemfa (1998) that traditional indigo fabrics are popularly known in ancient cities of Abeokuta, Kano, Oshogbo and Sokoto but the product is not selling appreciably. In the words of Makinde (2006), its value is diminishing at an unchecked rate despite governments' crusades in favour of made-in-Nigerian goods. Mbedi (2010) notes concerning the business in Abeokuta that the selling points are not evenly spread and the products are not adequately patronized. Indeed, challenges had existed in the area of new traders entering into the business ([www.adire.com](http://www.adire.com)). The textile merchants, who are also the producers of the traditional indigo dyed fabrics have formed themselves into an impenetrable cottage guild which operates in concentrated areas in Abeokuta. In the town, though, traditional indigo dyers used to be the sellers of their dyed fabrics, they were recognized as highly skilled professionals and their designs were encouragingly fascinating, patronized and sold to users (Banjoko, 2009). Despite these appraisals by Banjoko (op cit), enthusiasm of the average Nigerian for the use of traditional

indigo fabrics and continuous patronage left much to be desired. There is the monopoly of the trade which led to shift of interest of the potential entrants to other trades. Little wonder, traditional indigo textile merchants complain of acutely low patronage.

Another issue that necessitates a reappraisal of the selling strategy of traditional indigo fabrics is the observed unprecedented shift in consumer's interest. This was a factor raised in Mbedi (2010) in which it is reported that the African prints as well as satin and brocade materials which are milled with synthetic dyes are commonly found, cheaper and varied in attractive motif patterns. And as such, are better preferred for both common outings and social events than the traditional indigo dyed fabrics.

Only recently, the Federal Government of Nigerian is taking steps to encourage the production and patronage of traditional indigo dyed fabrics and also reflect the social consciousness of people away from imported fabrics but the efforts have recorded substantial success (Imhonlele, 2010). Looking into the reasons for low merchandising of traditional dye industry and what to do to make it thrive well again is expediently the challenge of this study, especially going by Ajayi T. (2002) that the patronage and use of Nigerian dyed indigo fabrics should be rejuvenated to showcase the Nigerian cultural heritage to the international world.

### **Research Questions**

1. Is there adequate patronage for traditional indigo dyed fabrics in Abeokuta?
2. What are the factors militating against the merchandise of traditional indigo dyed fabrics in Abeokuta?
3. Are there special methods of merchandizing indigo dyed fabrics to customers in Abeokuta?
4. Is the spread for traditional indigo market locations in Abeokuta enough?

### **Aim and Objectives**

#### **Aim of the Study**

The study aims at assessing the merchandising of indigo dyed fabrics in Abeokuta metropolis with a view to fashioning out improved strategies for marketing traditionally dyed indigo fabrics.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives are to:

1. assess the influence of price on patronage of indigo dyed fabrics in Abeokuta;
2. investigate the factors militating against the merchandise of traditional indigo dyed fabrics in Abeokuta; and
3. examine the methods of merchandizing traditional indigo dyed fabrics in Abeokuta.

#### **Research Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant relationship between price and patronage of traditional indigo fabrics in Abeokuta.

2. There is no significant difference between the methods of merchandizing indigo fabrics and interest of consumers in Abeokuta.
3. There is no significant relationship between the factors militating against the merchandize of traditional indigo fabrics and sales.

### **Justification for the Study**

The missing gap that needs to be filled in the body of knowledge in the area of traditional textiles and clothing merchandising is an essence that need adequate investigation (John, 2005). Specifically, the on-going study is on the assessment of merchandising of indigo dyed fabrics in Abeokuta metropolis. Much of the textiles-related studies dwelt so much away from this by focusing largely on international boundaries different from Nigeria. For instance, Bev and Cook (2009) is a theoretical study carried out in Asia on how to become a textile merchant. Walter (2007) is an international empirical study on the European textiles and clothing sector (TC). The discussion on findings indicated that much of the sector has been eroded by high labour costs and the general economic meltdown. Mlawa (1995) is an empirical study that examined the relation of technological change to productivity in the textile manufacturing industry in Tanzania. The indigenous research carried out by Ojo and Akinrujomu (2006) evaluated textile merchandising and advertising of textile general goods as retailed from factories to consumers.

All of the studies mentioned above were carried out outside the shores of Nigeria and none of them mentioned the merchandizing of locally produced fabrics which is the focus of this research. This study also looked inwardly to fill the gap discovered in the area of traditional indigo fabric merchandizing in some of the researches carried out in the Nigerian context such as Akinrujomu (2002) who dwelt on the developmental processes of the Yoruba traditional clothes from hand making to machinery. Other studies such as Diogu (2002), Saliu (2002) and Engel (2007) worked on cultural designs on fabrics and its influence on fashion trends in Nigeria. What about the aspect of merchandizing and sufficient advertisement as well as showcasing of these traditional skills for profitable commercial enterprise in the economy? A study of this nature is therefore geared towards infusing into the psyche of Nigerians. Pride in things that are made in Nigeria and developing a commercial agency for adapting the traditional resources and the productive enterprise at our disposal into avenues of gainful merchandizing. This study may create awareness than before, for the Nigerian traditional indigo dyed fabric than those other studies such as Akinrujomu (2002), Diogu (2002), Saliu (2002) and Engel (2007).

### **Scope of the Study**

The study covers the assessment of the merchandising techniques used in the indigo dyeing market in Abeokuta. It specifically examines the present situation of production, marketing and usage of the traditional indigo dyed fabrics in Abeokuta. In this study, marketing and merchandising are sometimes used interchangeably. The target audiences are precisely natural indigo fabric producers and traders of traditional indigo dyed fabrics at the monopolistic Itoku market in Abeokuta as well as the consumers of the product.

### **Textile Merchandising**

The art institutes of Chicago in its brochure describes textile merchandising as revolving around the business side of textile and how the textile products get to the end users. Kriger (1993) noted that textile merchandising is the various processes of planning and executing the concept of price, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services associated with textiles to create exchange that satisfy both customer and saler. Simply put it is the process of buying and selling textile goods. The term is also used to mean assisting the retailers with publicity at the points of display to help them maximize their sale. This involves instructing them in the best use of shelf space, the provision of displaying materials and advice on their uses. It also involves the attempt to persuade consumer at the point of sale.

### **The Merchandiser**

In the words of Hodge (1982) and Bohannan and Bohannan (1968) a merchandiser is involved in every stage of the process from design to sales. They advise the textile producer on market trends, collect specifications from the buyers, get the samples approved and also negotiate the price. They are even responsible for ensuring that consignments are delivered to the customers in time. Textile merchandisers usually have bottom-line responsibility for projects at all levels of their careers.

Most of the work in textile merchandising involves juggling the past, the present and the future. Merchandisers spend a great deal evaluating sales from previous time periods in order plan and make decisions for the future. Merchandizing is not shopping so textile merchandisers should possess the ability to forecast trends and then translate the trends into business plan for the textile producer.

Anytime a decision is made to create a new design and offer it to the consumer, textile merchandiser should be involved, for they are responsible for the product development, buying, marketing and management of the product. They have the final say in matters concerning textile production.

### **Marketing**

Marketing is defined by the American marketing association as the activities, set of institutions and processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and society at large. Marketing is also defined as consisting the strategies and tactics used to identify, create and maintain satisfying relationship with customers that result in value for both customer's and marketer. Marketing practice tends to be seen as a creative industry, which includes advertising, distribution and selling. It is also concerned with anticipating the customer future needs and wants which are often discovered through market research.

Marketing is often used to mean the same as merchandising and the two words are often interchanged for each other in use. [worldnet.princeton.edu/perl/web.wn](http://worldnet.princeton.edu/perl/web.wn) on online dictionary defines both merchandising and marketing the same way as selling: The exchange of goods for an agreed sum of money.

### **Textile Marketing**

Easey (1995) says marketing is a business philosophy or a way of thinking about the firm from the perspective of the customer or the potential customer. Textile firms depend on customers to make continuous purchases and the key to such loyalty is the satisfaction of customers needs by producing textile and textile products which are stylish, durable, and easy to care for, comfortable, perceived value for money and all the other criteria deemed relevant by the buyer.

Williams (2003) defines marketing as a management process concerned with anticipating, identifying and satisfying customer needs in order to meet the long-term goals of the organization. Here we can see that meeting the long term goal of the firm depends on satisfying the customers need. Hence textile marketing as deduced by Boone and Kutz (1976) is the link between a textile firm and the consumer. It is the development and efficient distribution of textile related goods and services for chosen consumer segment. It is bringing of the right goods and services to the consumer in the most efficient and profitable manner.

### **Factors Militating Against Traditional Indigo Merchandising**

In similar way that patronage is the fuel which propels the machine of art practice so also patronage is a catalyst for textile flourishing merchandize. But the inability to meet up with life expectancies among other things as a result of low patronage would force an art and design merchant to drop out of business (Ogunduyile and Kayode, 2006). Other factors that may affect cottage and guild textile business are mentioned in Ojo and Akinrujomu (2006) to include urban growth, new job opportunities and technology. It is no longer arguable according to Makinde (2006) to state that crafts traditions and indigenous technologies for which Yoruba people of South Western Nigeria are known for are fast dying out. In Adepegba (1991) and Oyeleke (2009) it is deduced that the cultural base and interest for art traditions have been seriously weakened. This is exactly the case with traditional indigo textile craft which is currently being affected by cultural changes and lack of adequate merchandising practices.

### **Influence of Price Index on Product Patronage**

Sale of goods and services is a growing phenomenon in advertising and marketing. Commercial companies have at least one product or service which may be new or improved to sell to the public. The need to package and present the phenomenon through a medium outdoor, radio, television, newspaper and transit becomes imperative in order to run continuing business. Marketing starts with the product since it is what an organization has to offer its target market (know.this.com, 2009) and ends with sales actualization induced by effectively targeted advertisement. Advertisement in this contact combines awareness campaign (publicity) with either incentives or received benefits and guided by price index to be effective. Price according to Terpestra (1983) is a complex and generally unscientific activity. It is a fundamental basis of distinguishing one type of retailer from another. Consumers of product will make decision to buy from a particular retailer on a variety to criteria including, but not limited to, the price of the product (Semenik and Bamossy, 1993). Of all the aspects of the marketing mix, price is the one which creates revenue, it is the sum or consideration or sacrifice for which a product may be bought or attained. The importance of price within the marketing mix varies from one market to another and between different segments

in the same market. Needham and Dransfield (1992) averred that product consumers with meagre income or limited budget, price is a key purchasing criterion while for others for whom money is no factor, price is less important.

### **Traditional Indigo Fabric Merchandizing and the Issue of Patronage in Nigeria**

At cottage level of indigo textile production, trade can be increased by solving the major problems facing the merchandising of these products. The most prominent among these problems are product quality, design, smuggling lack of copyright protection, old and labour intensive production methods and lack of fund as well as bad government policy. According to economists price is the point at which exchange between buyer and seller takes place, where demand and supply are equal. However, price as the element of the marketing mix involves more than the perspective of the economist especially as it concerns the local indigo textile production in Nigeria.

Ndubuisi E. (2010) noted that weak demands for locally made textiles are caused by exorbitant prices put on locally produced textiles. Thus high price has shrunk the market share of local textiles in the textile market in Nigeria. Hence something should be done about the price to make local textiles enjoy good pricing that will attract more sales. Locally produced textiles in Nigeria are not sufficiently patronized because of their low quality and high price. Ogunduyile (2001) noted that some of the other causes of low patronage of cottage produced textiles are inferior quality in terms of colour affinity.

The need for quality in local textiles and indeed all textiles is highlighted in the report of 19<sup>th</sup> IAF world apparel convention held in turkey, which surprisingly removed the quota-system at the end of 2004. The census was that companies must use the right tools and models to meet the new open market challenges. It was clearly stated that those who are ready to meet these challenges will survive, while those who are not willing may not survive.

Smuggling has been a major industry destroyer in Nigeria. Oguntona (1998) noted that the economic implication of smuggling portend disastrous economic and social consequences. The door of the country has been opened to unguided import under the World Trade Organization WTO treaty which in effect is expected to provide for exchange of goods and services. Practically, what we are having presently is an unprecedented rate of dumping of especially cheap, low quality and fairly used textiles from almost everywhere in the world in Nigeria. This has affected the contemporary textile firms as well as the cottage establishments. This is not limited to the textile sector as dumping of less quality tyres from abroad has lead to the collapse of both middlemen and Dunlop. To help our economy, effective effort should be made to curb smuggling, as well as increase local production of good quality textiles that can complete favourably with foreign ones. Also Nigerians should be reoriented to appreciate homemade indigo textiles and other local textiles which is peculiar to use and promoting our cultural identity. Any design is the creative work of the designer – it is an original and priced as such. Imitation can be said to be the highest form of flattery, but it is unlikely that designers who have their creations copied would agree. Copies are usually cheaper and of inferior quality to the original and do give the original designer many problems. Firstly they lose sales to cheaper types and secondly they get bad reputation due to faults

in the imitation when customers thought they had bought the original. In the recent past the Adire market witnessed this type of problem when machine-produced fabrics came into the country from China.

Generally, in the cottage production of indigo textiles in Nigeria, there is no market research therefore market needs are not known. Design is not market centered, instead the producer creates a design and hopes it will be accepted by the market. This eventually leads to low patronage and preference for imported fabric whose design was market centered. To attract good patronage, design should be market centered and not the other way round.

**Poor Marketing Strategy:** The economy of the world is now market-driven and market success of product is perceived to mean quality and innovation. In this situation efforts should be directed towards good marketing. Unfortunately, there are no good marketers as well as good marketing techniques to promote our local indigo textiles. This has affected the success of the sector negatively leading to accumulation of unsold stock. For example, the banking sector which is probably the most successful in the Nigerian economy is driven by strong marketing techniques and well educated marketers. If the local indigo textile could use the same technique as the banks, it will succeed.

### **History of Indigo Dye in South Western Nigeria**

The indigo in Yoruba land according to Muhonjia (Op cit) was obtained from *indigofera cyanescens* and *indigofera tinctoria*. Transforming the raw material into a successful dye was a complete process requiring great expertise and liable to unexplained failure. Inevitably it was usually surrounded with ritual prescriptions and prohibitions. The primary ingredients were dried balls of crushed leaves of indigo plant, ash and the dried residue from old vats cloth had to be dipped repeatedly in the fermented dye, exposed briefly to the air, then re-immersed. The number of dipping and the strength and freshness of the dye determined the intensity of the resulting colour. Indigo dye in Yoruba land was a women's job and they are well known for their expertise. Yoruba dyers normally use clay pots as dye pots and paid tribute to a patron deity 'Iya mapo' to ensure the success of the complex dye process. After the dyed cloth had dried it was customary to beat the fabric repeatedly with wooden beaters, which both pressed the fabric and imparted a shiny glaze.

### **Yoruba Indigo Dyeing Technology**

The preparation of the dye vat starts with the collection of Elu leaves and care must be taken to collect the fresh clean leaves with no impurity. The leaves are then pounded in a mortar and rolled up in small balls, which are then dried in the sun. These balls can be sold to dyers. The balls were later mixed with ashes of the same plant to form the dyeing vat to dye the fabric. The dyed cloths are then spread to dry after the desired intensity has been achieved by repeated dipping and airing of the cloth. This is followed by beating the cloth to brighten and folding which are often done to conceal the bad areas and the cloth was ready for the market.



## RESEARCH METHOD

The methodology for this research is specifically geared at assessing the mechanizing of traditional indigo dyed fabric in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. Having written the research questions, hypothesis and the objectives of the study, the appropriate methodology to use in designing an instrument, determining the population, sample frame and the sample size would become easy to achieve. Altogether, the section presents a study that will be empirically guided by a tool for the collection, security, validation, analysis and interpretation of data as supported by Fasakin (2002) and Okoko (2002).

The research design for the study was survey. The population for this study is the aggregate of all traditional indigo dyers and indigo merchants in Abeokuta, Ogun State. Coincidentally, the traditional indigo dyers themselves are direct sellers of their products who form themselves into an impenetrable guild in the town. The consumers of indigo fabrics that come to the markets in Itoku, Lafenwa and Asero to buy and use traditional indigo textile will also constitute part of the elements in the population.

The sample frame consist the sixty-nine (69) traditional indigo dye merchants that are registered with the traditional indigo textile dealers in Abeokuta. This information is clearly stated in the guilds directory and posted on the website, [www.adire.com](http://www.adire.com) and infinite users of the traditional indigo textile products in Abeokuta.

The study sampled all of the 69 traditional indigo textile merchants. Israel (2003) establish a position that census should be applied to determine a sample size of a population that is less than 200 elements in it. Therefore, since the population frame for this study was sixty-nine (69), the whole elements in that population were sampled rather than pick sample size. 384 of innumerable consumers of natural indigo dyed fabrics were sampled. This sample size was determined by using Chochran equation (Chochran, 1963) as reviewed in Israel (2003).

Since the researcher applied the census method, the sampling technique that was used for the indigo textile merchants was simply headcount (*sample-all*) method. As for the end-users, purposive sampling technique was applied in the sense that, the markets where the relevant end-users were contacted are concentrated just in three strategic local governmentt (Abeokuta South, Abeokuta North and Asero local governments) in Abeokuta. These are the only three local governments in the town.

A well-structured questionnaire was administered on the sample as data collection instrument. Personal visits were made to Itoku, Lafenwa and Asero areas in Abeokuta, where questionnaire was administered. The questionnaire was designed in two sections. Section A called for general information about the respondent while section B elicited useful responses on issue raised in the objectives of the study, research questions, hypothesis and the literature review.

As a survey research, all data collected after the administration of questionnaire were quantitatively analyzed. Specifically, the entire research questions set to guide this study was handled using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation or percentage. Furthermore, the research hypotheses were analyzed with the aid of t-test.

**Objective 1:** Assess the influence of price on patronage of indigo dyed fabrics in Abeokuta

**Table 1: Influence of price on patronage of traditional dyed fabrics in Abeokuta**

Variations	N	Df	r-cal	r-tab
Price of TIF	350	348	0.135	<b>0.195</b>
Patronage of TIF	<b>350</b>			

*Source: Author's field work December, 2015*

Table 1 shows that the calculated 'r' value was 0.135 at df of 348 with the alpha level of 0.05, the r-table value is 0.195. Since r-table value of 0.195 is greater than the r-calculated value (0.135) then, this implies that price determine the level of patronage of traditional indigo fabrics in Abeokuta. Hence, price greatly influences patronage.

## Discussion

The result of this study concerning objective 1 shows that price determines the level of patronage of traditional indigo fabrics. Ordinarily, one would, from the economic point of view expect that this happens considering the economic theory that states that human beings are rational, we tend to derive maximum enjoyment from our last kobo. Little wonder that Ogunduyile (2001) noted that weak demands for locally made textiles are caused by exorbitant prices put on locally produced textiles. Thus, high price has shrunk the market share of local textiles in the textile market in Nigeria. The result here is in agreement with the result in Semerik and Bamossy (1993) which stated that of all the aspects of the marketing mix, price is the one which creates revenue, it is the sum or consideration or sacrifice for which a product may be bought or attained.

**Objective 2:** Investigate the factors militating against the merchandise of traditional indigo fabrics in Abeokuta.

**Table 2:** Factors militating against the merchandise of traditional indigo fabrics in Abeokuta.

Factors	Response				
	ICT	SD	D	A	SA
<b>E 1</b>	20 (5.7%)	44 (12.6%)	44 (12.6%)	115 (32.9)	127 (36.3%)
<b>E 2</b>	18 (5.1%)	42 (12.0%)	51 (14.6%)	129 (36.9%)	122 (34.9%)
<b>E 3</b>	26 (7.6%)	44 (12.5%)	44 (12.5%)	118 (33.7%)	118 (33.7%)
<b>E 4</b>	27 (7.7%)	44 (12.6%)	43 (12.3%)	118 (33.7%)	118 (33.7%)
<b>E 5</b>	27 (7.7%)	37 (10.6%)	49 (14.0%)	120 (34.3%)	117 (33.4%)
Indigo fabrics are high priced	<b>20 (5.7%)</b>	<b>42 (12.0%)</b>	<b>54 (15.4%)</b>	<b>116 (33.1%)</b>	<b>118 (33.7%)</b>

*Source: Author's field work December, 2015*

**KEY:**

E 1 = Indigo fabrics are poor in quality, E 2 = Consumer unchecked taste for imported fabrics

E 3 = Patterns are not attractive and well varied, E 4 = Low publicity and

E 5 = Inadequate market spread

**Discussion**

The result in table 6 is as a result of the enquiry into the factors that are militating against merchandising of traditional indigo fabrics in Abeokuta. Five parameters were considered which range from quality of fabric, incessant craves for imported fabrics, aesthetics, advertisement and to inadequate market spread. The result got clearly indicated that all the five parameters greatly influence the merchandising of traditional indigo fabrics in the town. The result is in agreement with the result of Easey (1995) and William (2003) which customers to buy a product and pattern as factors that attract customers to buy a product. Easey and William worked on milled textile production in India and Pakistan respectively. In the study of Easey (1995) price and quality of fabrics are described as Siamese twins. This means that price affects quality and quality affects price. The similarity in result clearly stems from the fact that, like this study, Easey (1995) and William (2003) looked at the commercial activities of the textile merchants vis-à-vis the government regulations on textile marketing. Although, the samples taken by those studies (1,200) are significantly higher than the samples of this study which is 350, the uniformity in results shows that the same factors affecting indigo fabrics merchandising are the ones affecting milled textiles in both Indian and Pakistan.

**Objective 3:** Examine the methods of merchandising traditional indigo fabrics in Abeokuta

**Table 3:**

FACTORS	Response				
	ICT	SD	D	A	SA
<b>C 1</b>	<b>ICT</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
<b>C 2</b>	28 (8.0%)	57 (16.3%)	46 (13.1%)	97 (27.7%)	122 (34.9%)
<b>C 3</b>	33 (9.4%)	19 (5.4%)	20 (5.7%)	69 (19.7%)	209 (59.7%)
<b>C 4</b>	27 (7.7%)	48 (13.7%)	56 (16.0%)	144 (41.4%)	75 (21.4%)
<b>C 5</b>	27(7.7%)	38 (10.9%)	59 (16.9%)	111 (31.7%)	115 (32.9%)
Average	<b>32</b>	<b>47.6</b>	<b>61.2</b>	<b>93.2</b>	<b>116.2</b>

*Source: Author's field work December, 2015*

**Key:**

C1 = Indigo fabrics merchants leaves room for buying indigo fabrics on credit

C 2 = Customers are not allowed to assess the full length of fabrics at the point of sale as a result of folding and packaging in nylon.

C 3 = Indigo fabric merchants do not sell at discounted prices

C 4 = Indigo fabrics sold in good order are not returnable

C 5 = All indigo fabrics bought in Abeokuta must be used in Abeokuta

**Discussion**

Table 3 indicates generally that there are five methods of merchandising traditional indigo fabrics in Abeokuta. The study shows that, the traditional indigo fabrics sellers leave room for their customers to buy on credit when the need is unavoidable and come back to pay at a later date. This credit facility is an incentive strategy of not only retaining the customers, but also encouraging them to spread the goodwill to others. Neat folding and packaging technique and the availability of discount rates have helped to sustain the merchandising of the product in Abeokuta. The impression given by this result is such that the indigo fabric merchants have adapted the necessary technological know-how and contemporary marketing management to produce and package their products to reflect the characteristics of modern day business. This is slightly at variance, with the findings of Oyadipe (2008) and Oyakhilome (2008) which noted that the production of local fabrics is accompanied with flaws, which include crudity, low production and inability to meet the demands of the fast growing consumers in terms of variety of designs.

**Research hypothesis 1:** There is no significant influence of price on patronage of traditional indigo fabrics in Abeokuta.

This hypothesis states there is no significant influence of price on patronage of traditional indigo fabrics. In testing this hypothesis, the aspects of the instrument which dealt with price and patronage which the end-users responded to were scored and summed up.

Table 4: Influence of price in patronage of traditional indigo fabrics in Abeokuta

Variables	N	df	t – cal	t – tab
Price of traditional indigo fabrics	350	348	0.135	0.195
Patronage of traditional indigo fabrics	350			

*Source: Author's field work December, 2010*

Table 4 shows that the calculated 'r' value was 0.135 while at df of 348 with the alpha level at 0.05, the r-table value is 0.195 is greater than the r-calculated value (0.135), then the hypothesis that states there is no significant influence of price on patronage of traditional indigo fabrics in Abeokuta is therefore rejected. This implies that price influence patronage of traditional indigo fabrics in Abeokuta.

### Discussion

The hypothesis that says there is no significant influence of price in patronage of traditional indigo fabrics is rejected based on the data collected and the findings that follow. Rejection of this hypothesis goes with Needham and Dransfield (1992) who posit that price index is critical to product purchase as a major determinant of what to buy and what to pay. According to know-this com, (2001) price influences product purchase because it is a fundamental basis of distinguishing one type of retailer from another. The study of Needham and Dransfield (op cit) is a survey type like the present study but the instruments used were not the same. For instance, the study of Needham and Dransfield made use of telephone and interviews to elicit information from the samples of four hundred and fifty.

**Hypothesis 2:** This hypothesis states there is no significant influence of method of selling traditional indigo fabrics on the interest of consumers in Abeokuta.

Table 5: Significance influence of method of selling traditional indigo fabric (TIF) on the interest of consumers in Abeokuta

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	N	df	t – cal	t – tab
Method of selling	350	18.285	4.49	348	2.618	1.960
Level of attraction	350	18.945	3.74		2.618	

*Source: Author's field work December, 2010*

Table 5 above shows that the mean and standard deviations for method of selling traditional indigo fabrics and interests of consumers were 18.285, 4.49, and 18.945, 3.74 respectively for methods of selling and interest of consumers. The t-cal (2.618) is greater than the t-table value hence the hypothesis is rejected. In other words, methods of selling traditional indigo fabrics significantly influence the interest of consumers in Abeokuta.

### Discussion

The hypothesis that states that there is no significant influence of method of selling traditional indigo fabrics on the interest of consumer in the fabric is rejected. The data collected and analyzed revealed that there is significant influence of the method of selling traditional indigo fabrics in Abeokuta. The hypothesis is tested. The result agrees with the findings in Williams (2003) which states that textile merchants put up strategies for their customers to make repeated calls and purchases. Although the study mentioned above sampled 152 respondents in one of major textile forms, there is similarity in Indian findings with the present study. The similarity of the studies of Williams (op cit) and the preserve study is borne out of the fact that all the aforementioned studies and the present study looks at both operational instructions and methods of merchandising traditional indigo fabrics.

**Hypothesis 3:** This hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between factors militating against the merchandize of traditional indigo fabrics and sales.

Table 6: Test of significance of relationship of factors militating against merchandizing of TIF and Sales

Variables	N	df	R – cal	t – tab
Factors affecting merchandising	350	348	0.776	0.195
Level of patronage	350			

*Source: Author's field work December, 2010.*

Table 6 above reveals that the calculated pears on Product Moment Correlation coefficient 'r' at alpha level is 0.195. Since the value of calculated coefficient 'r' is greater than the r-table values, then the hypothesis not accepted.

### Discussion

The hypothesis which says that there is no significant relationship between the factors militating against the merchandising of traditional indigo fabrics and sales is rejected as indicated by the study. The result indicates that there is clear relationship between the factors militating against the merchandise of traditional indigo fabrics and sales of fabrics. This agrees with the findings of Ogunduyile (2001) which says that high price of textile products affects the aggregate sales.

Mitgwel (2009) is also a study conducted in Patiskan on dye merchandising. It reveals that a lot of factors like urban growth, new job opportunities and infavourable price index are responsible for low sales of textile products. Mitgwel's study adopted a survey method in which 915 factory workers of a textile industry in Pakistan were sampled. The result is in agreement with this result, because both are survey researches which looked into the factors that affect the buying and selling of indigo fabrics alongside with rate of sales. Altogether, all the studies show the same trend; therefore one can then deduce that almost the same numbers of factors are militating against the merchandise of traditional indigo fabrics and the effect of these factors on sales of the product is universal.

## CONCLUSION

The study provides a detailed investigation into the assessment of merchandising of indigo dyed fabrics in Abeokuta, Ogun State; Nigeria, it is mentioned that Abeokuta is an ancient city that is well known for its traditional indigo fabrics production. The producers of the product are also the sellers who form themselves into family cottage guilds. There are four major selling points in the town which seem insufficient when compared with milled textile products that flood almost all the markets in the town. It is observed that the product is not selling adequately and its traditional value is diminishing a frost rate. Consumers' interests have shifted away from the product to foreign textiles like African prints (Ankara) guinea brocade and other milled African products. Although, the government is making frantic efforts to revive the product by encouraging the production and patronage.

## Recommendations

There has been numerous and extensive research on indigo dyeing and the dye stuff and lots of this show that the act of dyeing is part of our culture. All this effect has been of production neglecting merchandising which is the act of making sale. Adequate knowledge in merchandising will improve sale and consequently boost production as there will be income from sold products. This will boost the cottage industry, and thereby reduce poverty, create employment and also serve as foreign exchange earner for the nation.

From the result of findings the following recommendations were made:

- (i) Government should organize seminars on merchandising for the merchants so as to train them in the act of sale promotion so as to encourage cottage production of indigo dyed fabrics as this improves sales of the product.
- (ii) Research should be conducted in order to know what the people want and professional designers should participate in the act of creating patterns for the fabrics so as to make the design market centered and thereby increase and create new interest in indigo dyed fabrics and increase in sales both locally and internationally.
- (iii) There should be encouragement in the form of soft loan to the merchants. This will boost their trade and ensure better product as there will be more funds to utilize.
- (iv) All tertiary institutions in Nigeria should include course in textile merchandising in their curriculums. This will encourage literate people in the trade and help to improve the indigo merchandise system.

- (v) More markets for indigo fabrics sales should be build in order to increase the market spread of indigo fabrics. This will enhance access to the fabric and make it more like (Ankara) African wax in availability.
- (vi) There should be deliberate efforts to break the secretive monopolistic guild of the merchants. This will encourage more people to participate in the act and spread knowledge of the art.

### **Contribution to Knowledge**

- 1) The study serves as a ready source of reference for boosting entrepreneurship possibilities for Nigeria traditional indigo dyed fabrics in Abeokuta in particular and Nigeria in general.
- 2) The study in view of the on-going capita intensive advocacy programme of government on made-in-Nigeria goods has laid down principles for the revival and sustenance of the traditional indigo fabric industry in Nigeria by improving the techniques used in traditional fabric merchandising.

### **References**

- Adepegba, C.O. (1991): Yoruba metal sculpture, Ibadan, Ibadan University Press.
- Ajayi, T. (2002): Textile as tools for national development in design history in Nigeria, Agberia, J.T., 269-278.
- Akinrojomu, O.S. (2002): From hand made to machine: An overview of Yoruba Textiles. In design history, Agberia J.T. (ed) 261-268.
- Ayotade, A. (2002): Nigeria's merchandised textile industry. Design Management and global trends in design history, Agberia J.T. (ed), 222-228.
- Bohannan, P. and Bohannan, L. (1968): Tiv economy, London, Longmans Green and Co. Ltd.
- Bonjoko, I. (2009): Cultural and creative art, second edition, Lagos, Mouic publishing company limited.
- Cochran, W.G. (1963): Sampling Techniques. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. New York, John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Easey, M. (1995): Fashion marketing, Oxford, Osney Mead Publishers.
- Fasakin, J.O. (2002): A land use analysis of the operational characteristics of commercial motorcycle in Akure, Nigeria. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Federal University of Technology, Akure.
- Fontana, M. Carubelli A., Rizzi C., and Cugini U. (2005): Cloth assembler: A CAD module for feature-based garment pattern assembly in computer-aided design and applications, 2, 6, 795-804.
- Hodge, A. (1982): Nigeria's traditional crafts: a survey. Ethnographic Arts and Culture, Series 3, London Ethnographica Ltd.
- Imholele, A. (2010): Textile groups wants action on made-in-Nigeria campaign. The News, Nigeria, Monday, 08 February 16, accessed 15/03/2010.
- Israel, G.D. (2003): Sampling the Evidence of Extension Programme Impact, Program Evolution and Organizational Development, IFAS, University of Florida, PEOD 5, Retrieved June 14, 2003 from <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
- Kruger, C. (1993): Textile production and gender in the Sokoto Caliphate. In Journal of African History, 34, 361-401.



- Lakemfa O. (1998): Weaving into history: The story of the textile and Gament workers in Nigeria, Lagos, Malthousse Press Limited.
- Makinde, S. A. (2006): Contemporary entrepreneurial values in Yoruba metal works of Oyo. In potentials of Visual Arts and Creative Industry in Africa, 124-230.
- Mbedi Information Centre (2010): Textile and Clothing in Nigeria, Overview in Proceedings of the GB Africa Infrastructure Investment Conferences, India. An internet document accessed 25/02/2010.
- Ming, C.C. (1993): Chairman's Statement in United Nigerian Textile Plc, Annual Report and Account for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1993.
- Mitgwel, R.W. (2009): Textile merchandising in a growing economy, London, IRWIN Publishers Inc.
- Musa, S.A. (1994): Chairman's Statement. In R.T. Briscoe (Nigeria) Plc, Annual Report and Accounts For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1994.
- Dransfield, R. (1992): Needham, D. and Business and finance for working in orignations, New York, Heinemann Educational publishers.
- Ohiorhenuan, D.O. (2001) Issues affecting design, reproduction and marketing of Nigerian textiles. In *Journal of Industrial Design and Technology*.
- Oyakhilome, P.L Ogundipe, S.O. and. (2008): Textile Economy. Ibadan, Onibon-Oje Press.
- Ogunduyile, S.R. (2001) Cottage dyeing industry and environmental hazards created by the use of commercial dye and chemicals. *Journal of arts and ideas*, O.A.U, Ile-Ife
- Ogunduyile, S.R., and Adiji, B.F. (2005): Textile design education for sustainable National development. In issues and challenges of creativity in contemporary Nigerian Art, Azeez, W. A; Onipede, A. O., Ademuleya, B. A. and Emifinnoye, A. (eds), 44-53.
- Ogunduyile, S.R. and Kayode, F. (2006): Art and design practices in Nigeria and the problem of dropping out. In Potentials of visual Arts and Creative Industry in Africa, 45-53.
- Oguntona, T. (1986): Basic Textiles Design Concepts and Methods, Zaria, Institute of Education, ABU.
- Ojo, B. (2003): Advancing Technology in Creativity: A situation report of design studies some selected textile industries in Nigeria. In perspectives on culture, and creativity in Nigerian Art. Filani K., Azeez, A. and Emifoniye, A. (ed) 293-217.
- Okoko, E.E. (2002): A productive modeling of spatial interaction pattern in Akure, Nigeria. An unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Federal University of Technology, Akure.
- Oyeleke, B. (2009): Iconographic and contextual analysis of Osun Osogbo shine objects. In Ijinle Asa, *Journal of Arts, Culture & Ideas*, 5,119-131.
- Semenik, R.J. and Bamossy, G.J. (1993): principles of marketing: a global perspective, USA, South-Western publishing Co.
- Terpstra, V. (1983): International marketing third edition, Illinois, Holt-Saunders International Editions
- Williams R. H. (2003): Sales and Marketing, solutions for growing business. Retrieved July 26, 2005 from Entrepreneur.Com Inc. *Newsletter*.[www.adire.com](http://www.adire.com) (2009): Adire merchandizing in Abeokuta, Nigeria. [www.adire.com](http://www.adire.com) an Internet document accessed on 18/8/2010.