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## CLOTHING AND TEXTILE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A TOOL FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND ECONOMIC RESILIENCE IN ABIA STATE, NIGERIA

BY

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### Abstract

*Youth unemployment and economic vulnerability remain persistent challenges in many developing economies, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. In Nigeria and similar contexts, the clothing and textile sector presents significant but underutilized opportunities for youth empowerment, job creation, and economic resilience. This paper adopts a conceptual and policy-oriented approach to examine clothing and textile entrepreneurship as a strategic tool for empowering young people and strengthening economic resilience. Drawing on relevant literature, development theories, and policy documents, the study explores the nexus between youth entrepreneurship, skills acquisition, value-chain participation, and sustainable economic development. The paper argues that clothing and textile entrepreneurship, when supported by appropriate policies, training frameworks, and innovation-driven practices, can serve as a viable pathway for reducing youth unemployment, enhancing self-reliance, and promoting inclusive economic growth. The study concludes with policy recommendations aimed at governments, educational institutions, and development agencies on how*

*to reposition clothing and textile entrepreneurship for sustainable youth empowerment and long-term economic resilience.*

**Keywords:** Clothing and Textile Entrepreneurship, Youth Empowerment, Economic Resilience, Skills Development, Sustainable Development

## Introduction

The growing rate of youth unemployment and underemployment has emerged as one of the most pressing socio-economic challenges confronting many developing countries in the twenty-first century. Young people constitute a significant proportion of the population, yet they often face limited access to decent employment opportunities, productive resources, and sustainable livelihoods. This situation has far-reaching implications for economic stability, social cohesion, and national development. In response, entrepreneurship has increasingly been promoted as a viable strategy for empowering youth and fostering economic resilience. For instance, Ofosu-Appiah, Boahen, and Agbenyegah (2025) emphasize that youth entrepreneurship not only provides self-employment opportunities but also contributes to economic growth and reduces social vulnerabilities in Sub-Saharan Africa. Similarly, Prasad *et al.* (2024) highlight that entrepreneurship education equips young people with critical skills, enabling them to create sustainable businesses, improve their livelihoods, and mitigate the challenges of unemployment and underemployment in developing countries.

Within the broad entrepreneurship landscape, the clothing and textile sector occupies a unique position. Historically, textiles and clothing have been central to economic development, industrialization, and trade, serving as one of the largest employment generators and contributors to export markets worldwide. Research shows that textile and apparel industries are highly labour-intensive, making them accessible entry points for young people to create jobs and generate income in contexts where formal employment is scarce (Ternsjö, 2025). Moreover, studies on textile design graduates indicate a growing trend of youth engagement in entrepreneurial ventures within the textile and fashion value chain, where creativity, craftsmanship, and business skills combine to help young entrepreneurs establish sustainable enterprises that serve diverse consumer markets (Adeloye, Emidun & Akinnibosun, 2024). These characteristics such as labour intensity, cultural embeddedness, and potential for innovation make clothing and textile entrepreneurship particularly suitable for youth engagement, empowerment, and livelihoods in developing economies.

Clothing and textile entrepreneurship encompasses a wide range of activities, including garment production, fashion design, textile production, fabric finishing, tailoring, merchandising, branding, and marketing. These activities span the entire value chain, from raw material sourcing to finished products and distribution. When effectively harnessed, the sector can generate employment, stimulate small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs), and contribute to economic diversification. Research by Adeloje, Emidun, and Akinnibosun (2024) highlights that youth involvement in textile value chains particularly in design, tailoring, and branding has the potential to create sustainable micro-enterprises that enhance income generation and market participation for young graduates. Similarly, Ternsjö (2025) demonstrates that the labour-intensive nature of garment and textile industries makes them especially conducive to creating large numbers of jobs, which is critical in developing economies where formal sector employment is limited.

Despite its potential, clothing and textile entrepreneurship remains underdeveloped in many developing economies due to structural constraints such as inadequate training, limited access to finance, weak infrastructure, and poor policy support. Adeloje *et al.* (2024) point out that insufficient entrepreneurial training and technical skill development limit young people's ability to scale their textile ventures, while Ternsjö (2025) notes that policy weaknesses and infrastructural bottlenecks often undermine the competitiveness of local textile enterprises. Consequently, the sector has not fully realized its capacity to empower youth or contribute meaningfully to economic resilience. This paper seeks to address this gap by examining clothing and textile entrepreneurship as a strategic tool for youth empowerment and economic resilience from a conceptual and policy perspective.

The objectives of this paper are threefold. First, it examines the concept of youth empowerment and economic resilience within the context of entrepreneurship development. Second, it analyzes the role of clothing and textile entrepreneurship in promoting youth employment, skills development, and self-reliance. Third, it proposes policy and institutional strategies for strengthening clothing and textile entrepreneurship as a pathway to sustainable economic resilience.

## **Conceptual Clarifications**

### **Clothing and textile entrepreneurship**

Clothing and textile entrepreneurship refers to the process through which individuals or groups identify, create, and exploit business opportunities within the clothing and textile sector for value creation and profit generation. It involves the application of creativity, innovation, and managerial skills to transform textile-related ideas into viable enterprises. According to Lang and Liu in Achala

(2021), fashion entrepreneurship a closely related concept refers to individuals who identify market opportunities in the fashion and textile industry and organize resources to produce and market products such as garments for profit, highlighting the opportunity-driven nature of entrepreneurship in this sector. Similarly, a fashion entrepreneur has been defined as “a person whose primary activities revolve around creating and managing ventures within the fashion industry,” combining creativity with business management to satisfy market needs (fashion entrepreneur definition, 2019). Furthermore, academic research on textile entrepreneurship emphasizes that textile entrepreneurship integrates workmanship, innovation, and business activities to develop products and ventures that respond to changing consumer demands and support economic participation (Mittel & Raghuvaran, 2021). Together, these definitions illustrate that clothing and textile entrepreneurship operates at micro, small, or medium scales, often relies on locally available resources and artisanal skills, and blends creative design with entrepreneurial initiative to generate value and promote self-employment

Unlike large-scale industrial textile production, clothing and textile entrepreneurship is typically characterized by flexibility, customization, and close interaction with consumers. This agility allows entrepreneurs to respond quickly to market trends, cultural preferences, and evolving consumer demands. Scholars argue that such flexibility is particularly advantageous for young entrepreneurs, as it reduces entry barriers and allows for incremental business growth without requiring massive capital investment (Adeloye, Emidun, & Akinnibosun, 2024). Ternsjö (2025) supports this view, noting that labor-intensive, small- to medium-scale textile enterprises enable rapid adaptation to local market needs, which large industrial operations often cannot achieve due to rigid production systems. Furthermore, Lang and Liu (as cited in Achala, 2021) emphasize that the ability to tailor products to cultural and fashion preferences fosters customer loyalty and niche market development, creating opportunities for sustainable youth-led enterprises. Thus, clothing and textile entrepreneurship not only facilitates self-employment but also enhances innovation, responsiveness, and resilience in developing economies.

### **Youth empowerment**

Youth empowerment is a multidimensional concept that refers to the process through which young people acquire the skills, confidence, resources, and opportunities required to make informed decisions and exercise control over their economic, social, and political lives. It emphasizes enhancing youths’ capacity to participate meaningfully in development processes and to influence outcomes that affect their personal and collective well-being. Zimmerman (2000) conceptualizes youth empowerment as a process that strengthens individuals’ sense of agency and their ability to access and utilize resources within their environment. Similarly, the World Bank (2023) defines

youth empowerment as enabling young people to develop competencies and gain access to opportunities that allow them to contribute productively to society.

Beyond this general conceptualization, youth empowerment is commonly understood as both a process and an outcome. As a process, it involves deliberate institutional and policy efforts aimed at building youths' capabilities through education, skills acquisition, mentorship, and supportive social structures. As an outcome, empowerment manifests in increased self-efficacy, economic independence, social inclusion, and active civic participation among young people (Checkoway & Gutierrez, 2006; Jennings et al., 2006). From a development perspective, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2022) emphasizes that empowered youth are those who can access productive resources, decent work opportunities, and platforms for innovation and leadership.

A critical dimension of youth empowerment, particularly in developing economies, is economic empowerment. Economic empowerment focuses on improving youths' access to income-generating opportunities, productive assets, financial services, and employable skills. In contexts characterized by high youth unemployment and underemployment, economic empowerment provides a viable pathway for reducing poverty, dependency, and social vulnerability (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2021). Adebayo and Okafor (2021) argue that economically empowered youth are better positioned to contribute to national development, promote social stability, and reduce reliance on government support systems.

Within the framework of economic empowerment, entrepreneurship has emerged as a strategic mechanism for enabling youth to achieve self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods. Youth empowerment through entrepreneurship involves the acquisition of technical and vocational skills, access to start-up capital, mentorship, business networks, and an enabling policy and institutional environment that supports enterprise development (Ofosu-Appiah, Boahen, & Agbenyegah, 2025). Empirical studies indicate that young people who receive entrepreneurial education and mentorship are more likely to establish viable businesses, generate employment, and participate meaningfully in local economies (Prasad et al., 2024). Consequently, youth empowerment through entrepreneurship extends beyond individual economic gains to broader community development and long-term economic resilience.

### **Economic Resilience**

Economic resilience refers to the capacity of an economy, sector, community, or household to withstand, adapt to, and recover from economic shocks such as unemployment, income instability, market fluctuations, or external crises. It encompasses both short-term coping strategies and long-

term adaptive mechanisms that enable economic systems to maintain functionality and pursue sustainable development in the face of uncertainty (Rose, 2022). Martin (2023) further defines economic resilience as the ability of an economic system to reorganize, innovate, and transform while preserving its core developmental objectives.

At the structural level, resilient economies are characterized by diversification of economic activities, flexibility in labor and production systems, innovation, and inclusive participation across different social groups. Such economies are better equipped to absorb shocks and adjust to changing conditions without experiencing prolonged decline (Briguglio et al., 2020). At the micro level, economic resilience involves individuals and households possessing employable skills, multiple income sources, and access to productive assets that reduce vulnerability to economic disruptions (OECD, 2021).

A central pathway through which economic resilience is strengthened, particularly in developing countries, is entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship contributes to resilience by promoting self-employment, diversifying income sources, fostering innovation, and reducing overdependence on a narrow range of economic sectors (Acs, Audretsch, & Lehmann, 2021). Small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) are especially significant in this regard, as they tend to be more adaptable, labor-absorptive, and closely integrated with local economies. Evidence suggests that SMEs often demonstrate greater flexibility in adjusting production processes and exploring alternative markets during periods of economic downturn (Ternsjö, 2025).

Among entrepreneurial pathways, clothing and textile entrepreneurship holds particular relevance for building economic resilience due to its labor-intensive nature, relatively low entry barriers, and extensive value chain encompassing design, production, marketing, and distribution. Adeloje, Emidun, and Akinnibosun (2024) observe that small-scale textile enterprises can absorb labor shocks, create multiple income streams, and enhance community-level adaptive capacity during economic crises. By enabling youth to establish and manage clothing and textile ventures, entrepreneurship not only strengthens individual livelihoods but also contributes to broader economic stability and sustainable national development (Ofosu-Appiah, Boahen, & Agbenyegah, 2025).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is anchored on three interrelated theoretical perspectives: Human Capital Theory by Gary Becker (1964), Entrepreneurship Theory advanced by Joseph Schumpeter (1934), and Sustainable Development Theory by the Brundtland Commission (1987). Together, these theories provide a

comprehensive lens for understanding how clothing and textile entrepreneurship can empower youth and enhance economic resilience.

Human Capital Theory, as proposed by Gary Becker (1964), emphasizes the role of knowledge, skills, and training in improving productivity and economic outcomes. In the context of clothing and textile entrepreneurship, this theory explains why investment in vocational training, technical skills, and entrepreneurial education is critical for youth. By acquiring relevant skills, young entrepreneurs are better equipped to innovate, manage businesses effectively, and generate sustainable income, thereby reducing unemployment and underemployment among youths. This perspective underscores that youth empowerment is not only a social goal but also an economic necessity for fostering self-reliance and productivity.

Entrepreneurship Theory, advanced by Joseph Schumpeter (1934), highlights the role of entrepreneurs as drivers of innovation, economic transformation, and job creation. Applied to this study, the theory illuminates how young clothing and textile entrepreneurs act as agents of change in local economies. Through identifying market opportunities, introducing creative products, and taking calculated risks, youth entrepreneurs stimulate economic activities, create employment, and contribute to market expansion. This aligns with the study's focus on entrepreneurship as a mechanism for empowering youth and building resilient economic systems in developing economies.

Sustainable Development Theory, as articulated by the Brundtland Commission (1987), emphasizes that economic development should meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. This theory is relevant to clothing and textile entrepreneurship because it highlights the importance of locally based production, cultural preservation, and inclusive growth. By promoting small- and medium-scale enterprises that leverage local skills and resources, youth entrepreneurs contribute to economic development while ensuring environmental and social sustainability. This approach fosters long-term economic resilience, demonstrating that youth-led entrepreneurial activities can generate both immediate livelihood benefits and enduring developmental impacts.

By integrating these three perspectives, this study frames clothing and textile entrepreneurship as a strategic pathway for youth empowerment, skill development, and economic resilience. Human Capital Theory explains the importance of skills acquisition and capacity building, Entrepreneurship Theory emphasizes innovation and market-driven growth, and Sustainable Development Theory ensures that entrepreneurial activities are aligned with long-term, inclusive, and sustainable development goals. Together, they provide a conceptual foundation for examining how youth

engagement in the clothing and textile sector can simultaneously address unemployment, promote entrepreneurship, and contribute to national economic stability.

### **Clothing and Textile Entrepreneurship and Youth Empowerment**

Clothing and textile entrepreneurship provides a practical and context-relevant platform for youth empowerment by facilitating skills acquisition, income generation, and self-employment. As a labour-intensive and creatively rich sector, it offers diverse entry points for young people with varying levels of education, capital, and experience, ranging from tailoring and fashion design to textile production, merchandising, and marketing. This inclusivity makes the sector particularly suitable for youth engagement in developing economies where formal employment opportunities are scarce (Adeloye, Emidun, & Akinnibosun, 2024).

A critical component of youth empowerment in this sector is skills acquisition. Technical training in garment construction, pattern drafting, fabric selection, and the use of digital design tools equips young entrepreneurs with market-relevant competencies that enhance both employability and entrepreneurial capability. Skills development directly boosts confidence and enables youth to produce quality goods that meet consumer demands, rather than relying solely on low-wage labour. Empirical studies show that entrepreneurship education and vocational training significantly improve young people's ability to start and sustain businesses, thereby fostering self-reliance and reducing dependency on non-formal or unstable work (Prasad et al., 2024; Ofosu-Appiah, Boahen, & Agbenyegah, 2025).

Furthermore, clothing and textile entrepreneurship promotes creativity and innovation as young entrepreneurs often draw on cultural heritage, contemporary fashion trends, and digital technologies to create unique products. This creative engagement not only enhances economic participation but also strengthens cultural identity and self-esteem among youth. Integrating traditional motifs with modern design, for example, can differentiate products in competitive markets, expanding opportunities for brand development and export potential. Innovation in processes such as the use of e-commerce platforms, online marketing, and digital pattern making also allows youth to scale their ventures beyond local geographies, connecting with broader consumer bases (Adeloye et al., 2024).

Income generation through clothing and textile enterprises enables youth to meet basic needs, support families, and reinvest in their businesses, creating a virtuous cycle of empowerment. Revenue from sales increases economic agency and reduces vulnerability to poverty. As enterprises grow, successful youth-led businesses can begin to employ other young people, thereby multiplying the sector's empowerment effects. This cascading impact not only alleviates unemployment

pressures but also contributes to community economic development and resilience (Prasad et al., 2024; Ternsjö, 2025).

In summary, clothing and textile entrepreneurship empowers youth by building skills, fostering innovation, generating income, and creating pathways for business growth and employment. When supported by appropriate training programs, access to finance, mentorship, and enabling policies, this sector can significantly enhance young people's economic participation and contribute to broader socio-economic transformation.

### **Clothing and Textile Entrepreneurship and Economic Resilience**

The contribution of clothing and textile entrepreneurship to economic resilience lies primarily in its ability to diversify economic activities, generate employment, and enhance local economic stability. As a labor-intensive sector, clothing and textile enterprises absorb significant numbers of workers across different stages of the value chain, including design, production, finishing, distribution, and marketing (Ternsjö, 2025). This broad labor absorption capacity reduces vulnerability to unemployment and underemployment, particularly among youth, and provides a practical pathway for skill development and self-employment. From a Human Capital Theory perspective (Becker, 1964), the engagement of youth in this sector strengthens human capital by equipping them with technical, managerial, and creative skills that increase both individual productivity and broader economic output.

Local production of clothing and textiles also reduces dependence on imported garments and strengthens domestic industries, promoting economic self-reliance and stability. This localization becomes especially critical during external shocks such as global supply chain disruptions, currency fluctuations, or trade restrictions (Prasad et al., 2024). By fostering domestic production and reducing vulnerability to foreign market volatility, youth-led textile entrepreneurship enhances national economic resilience. This aligns with Sustainable Development Theory, which emphasizes the importance of meeting present economic needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs, highlighting the significance of local, inclusive, and environmentally conscious enterprise development (Brundtland Commission, 1987).

Small and medium-scale textile enterprises further contribute to economic resilience by fostering innovation and adaptability. Entrepreneurs can adjust production volumes, diversify product lines, and modify marketing strategies in response to changing consumer preferences and market dynamics (Acs, Audretsch, & Lehmann, 2021). This flexibility allows the sector to withstand economic fluctuations, absorb labor and income shocks, and remain competitive in both local and global

markets. Entrepreneurship Theory (Schumpeter, 1934) provides a conceptual lens for understanding how young entrepreneurs act as agents of change, introducing innovations and driving economic transformation that strengthens the resilience of communities and local economies.

Moreover, the clothing and textile sector promotes inclusive economic growth by actively engaging women, marginalized youth, and other underrepresented groups. By broadening participation in productive economic activities, the sector fosters social cohesion and strengthens the social dimension of resilience (Ofosu-Appiah, Boahen, & Agbenyegah, 2025). Income generation through youth-led textile enterprises enables individuals to meet household needs, reinvest in business operations, and expand employment opportunities for others. Over time, this creates a multiplier effect, enhancing both economic and social resilience while contributing to national development objectives.

In summary, clothing and textile entrepreneurship contributes to economic resilience through employment creation, local production, innovation, adaptability, and inclusive growth. By linking skill development, entrepreneurial innovation, and sustainable practices, the sector offers a strategic avenue for youth empowerment and the stabilization of local economies in developing countries.

### **Challenges Facing Clothing and Textile Entrepreneurship**

Despite its potential as a driver of employment, innovation, and economic resilience, clothing and textile entrepreneurship in developing economies faces multiple structural and institutional challenges that limit its contribution to youth empowerment and broader socio-economic development. One of the most significant constraints is inadequate access to finance. Entrepreneurs in the clothing and textile sector often struggle to secure the capital needed to start or scale their ventures because financial institutions view small creative businesses as high risk, impose stringent lending requirements, and charge high interest rates (African Fashion Foundation, 2022; UNESCO, 2023). The limited availability of microfinance, seed funding, and venture capital means that young entrepreneurs lack resources to invest in modern equipment, raw materials, and working capital, undermining productivity and competitiveness.

Closely linked to financial constraints is the lack of technical and managerial skills among youth entering the sector. While many young entrepreneurs possess strong creativity and artisanal talent, they often lack formal training in advanced garment production techniques, business planning, financial management, and digital marketing (Entrepreneurial Challenges in the Garments Industry, 2025; UNESCO, 2023). This skills gap inhibits innovation, quality control, and the ability to adopt new technologies, limiting firms' capacity to compete locally or tap into export markets. Without

structured training programs, mentorship, and exposure to contemporary enterprise practices, many clothing and textile ventures remain informal, low-productivity activities rather than scalable businesses.

Poor infrastructure and institutional support further compound these challenges. Infrastructural deficits such as unreliable electricity, inadequate transportation networks, weak internet connectivity, and insufficient manufacturing facilities increase production costs and constrain operations (Entrepreneurial Challenges in the Garments Industry, 2025; UNESCO, 2023). These factors make it difficult for textile enterprises to maintain consistent production schedules, reduce lead times, and deliver goods efficiently to markets. Moreover, weak policy frameworks and regulatory bottlenecks, including bureaucratic procedures and inconsistent government support, create uncertainty and additional costs for small businesses (Rashid et al., 2025). Without a stable and supportive enabling environment, many startups struggle to formalize, access public services, or benefit from government incentives.

Limited market access is another significant barrier. Clothing and textile entrepreneurs often face challenges in reaching broader markets due to weak distribution networks, lack of branding expertise, and intense competition from imported garments, including second-hand clothing (Rashid et al., 2025). Imported products often enter developing markets at low prices, squeezing local producers and reducing demand for domestically made goods. This dynamic undermines the ability of youth-led businesses to expand beyond local or informal marketplaces, particularly when digital commerce channels are underutilized or inaccessible due to digital skill gaps (Kikulwe et al., 2024).

Addressing these challenges requires multifaceted interventions from governments, educational institutions, private sector partners, and development organizations. Systematic support in the form of tailored finance schemes, vocational and entrepreneurship training, infrastructure investment, and policy reforms is critical for enabling young entrepreneurs to overcome structural constraints (Rashid et al., 2025). Establishing incubation centers, textile hubs, and vocational training institutes can provide targeted platforms for skills development, business networking, mentorship, and technology adoption. Collaboration with established industry players can offer apprenticeships and exposure to best practices, further enhancing business viability.

Furthermore, access to modern equipment and technology is essential for productivity and competitiveness. Investments in digital design tools, computer-aided manufacturing, automated cutting machines, and sustainable production technologies can reduce waste, improve quality, and enable youth entrepreneurs to meet evolving market demands (Entrepreneurial Challenges in the Garments Industry, 2025). Technologies such as e-commerce platforms and digital marketing not

only expand market reach but also help young entrepreneurs manage inventory, engage customers, and enhance brand visibility (Kikulwe et al., 2024).

Finally, supportive government policies such as targeted grants, tax incentives, low-interest loan schemes, and robust regulatory frameworks are essential for creating an enabling ecosystem for clothing and textile entrepreneurship. When combined with infrastructure development, training programs, and market access initiatives, these measures can transform the sector into a powerful engine of youth empowerment and economic resilience, driving employment growth, income generation, and sustainable national development (Rashid *et al.*, 2025; UNESCO, 2023).

### **Implications of Clothing and Textile Entrepreneurship for Youth Empowerment and Economic Resilience**

The expansion of clothing and textile entrepreneurship among youth carries significant implications for both individual livelihoods and broader economic development. Firstly, engagement in this sector fosters self-reliance and income generation, providing an avenue for young people to escape unemployment and participate actively in the economy. Through the acquisition of practical skills in design, production, and business management, youth entrepreneurs can diversify their income sources and reduce dependency on public sector jobs.

Secondly, entrepreneurship in the clothing and textile sector promotes economic resilience by stimulating local industries, encouraging the circulation of money within communities, and supporting the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Youth-led businesses contribute to increased employment, both directly through hiring and indirectly through supply chains involving raw materials, logistics, and marketing services. Thirdly, the sector provides a platform for innovation and creativity, as young entrepreneurs experiment with new designs, technologies, and business models. Such innovation can enhance competitiveness and open pathways to regional and international markets. Moreover, skills developed in textile entrepreneurship, including financial management, marketing, and problem-solving, are transferable, equipping youth with competencies applicable across other economic sectors.

Additionally, clothing and textile entrepreneurship can strengthen social empowerment by building confidence, fostering leadership, and encouraging collaboration among young people. Through cooperative associations and trade networks, youth entrepreneurs can leverage collective bargaining, access mentorship, and participate in peer learning, which further enhances their business capabilities and resilience against economic shocks. From a policy perspective, the growth of youth entrepreneurship in the clothing and textile sector highlights the need for targeted interventions,

including access to microfinance, business incubators, modern equipment, and structured training programs aligned with market demands. Strategic support from government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private sector stakeholders can significantly enhance the sector's contribution to national development and economic diversification.

Ultimately, promoting clothing and textile entrepreneurship among youth not only empowers them economically but also drives sustainable development by creating jobs, fostering innovation, and building resilience within local economies. The sector provides a viable pathway for transforming youth potential into tangible socio-economic outcomes, particularly in developing countries where conventional employment opportunities are limited.

### **Conclusion**

Clothing and textile entrepreneurship represents a critical pathway for youth empowerment and economic resilience. The sector offers opportunities for self-employment, skill acquisition, income generation, and meaningful contribution to national development. Despite its potential, young entrepreneurs face significant challenges, including inadequate training programs, limited access to modern equipment, insufficient funding, and lack of institutional support. Addressing these barriers is essential to fully harness the sector's capacity to transform youth potential into tangible socio-economic outcomes.

### **Suggestions**

To strengthen clothing and textile entrepreneurship and maximize its impact, the following interventions are proposed:

- Government and private institutions should implement comprehensive technical and business management training initiatives to equip youth with the skills necessary for success.
- Policies and funding mechanisms should facilitate access to modern machinery, digital tools, and innovative textile technologies to enhance competitiveness and product diversification.
- Microfinance institutions, government grants, and private sector partnerships should prioritize youth entrepreneurs, offering low-interest loans, start-up capital, and investment support.
- Regulatory frameworks and institutional support should be strengthened to streamline business registration, promote private-public partnerships, and create an enabling environment for youth entrepreneurship.

- Mentorship programs and industry networks should be established to connect experienced entrepreneurs with youth, fostering knowledge transfer, innovation, and improved market access.

By implementing these recommendations, clothing and textile entrepreneurship can become a strategic tool for reducing youth unemployment, promoting sustainable livelihoods, and enhancing economic resilience. Future research should evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions and explore innovative models for integrating youth entrepreneurship into national development strategies.

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