

TRANSLATING THE NEEDS OF LOCAL GHANIAN TAILORS INTO A SOCIAL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Sustainable Entrepreneurship Project

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Abstract

The project's goal was to evaluate how a social entrepreneur could translate a tailor's challenges into a business opportunity that is economically viable for these professionals. The drivers of the piece of the study are the adverse experiences and encounters with Ghanaian tailors. The socio-economic conditions of these textile professionals do not reflect their levels of expertise. A critical review of the literature supports the existence of the identified problem in West Africa and other regions of this continent. Furthermore, the review provides in-depth knowledge on the approaches that can be adopted to empower sustainable business growth.

The research adopts the qualitative research method to gather the opinions, experiences, and thoughts of various stakeholders in the fashion industry. Moreover, the study will adopt an action research method that would evaluate the magnitude of impact that the project creates. According to Clark, Porath, Thiele, and Jobe (2020), action research is a research methodologies' family whose focal point is to influence change, or the pursuance of action and an understanding of a given research problem simultaneously. The rationale for the adoption of the action research methodology is its efficacy in capturing all the qualitative elements that are manifest in a given research environment. Tailors from West Africa were interviewed to understand the nature of their business and to facilitate the process of creating an exclusive model that would aid in improving their livelihoods. Semi - structured questionnaires were administered to professionals with an in-depth understanding of the fashion industry's dynamics and the marketing of bespoke and ready-made garments in local and international markets. The outcome of the project is that the study successfully develops an entrepreneurship recommendation that is characterized by intellectual and financial empowerment on tailors in Ghana.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Africa's growing influence has been influenced by a wide array of factors, including the rapid technological advancements over the past decade, the rise of the entertainment and fashion industries (Foli, 2016). The focal point of African leadership remains poverty eradication through empowerment through small and medium sized organizations to improve the livelihood of citizens. Ghana is one such country that has witnessed some sporadic changes in leadership and tremendous transformations in the approaches used to mitigate poverty's lethal effects (Foli, 2016). The West African state is famous for producing global figures who run major international agencies such as Kofi Annan. Moreover, Foli (2016) argued that Ghana's quest to position itself as an African leader had been characterized by developing strategies and policies that focus on self-employment. Therefore, based on the assertions of Foli (2016) and others who explore the issues faced by African states like Ghana, the need for social entrepreneurship is vital in the Ghanaian perspective to translate the problems faced by the country's population to an opportunity that is worth exploring. Social entrepreneurs are experts with unique skills that assist them to identify the association between the communal setting and social businesses (Rivera-Santos et al. 2015)

According to Bakker-Edoh, Mburugu, and Oigo (2018), Ghana identified the various gaps in employment within the private and public sectors and designed plans to create capacities within vocational training institutes. Vocational training institutes in various regions of Ghana have been pivotal in the attainment of self-employment visions. They offer a wide range of educational opportunities to professionals in various fields, including tailors who constitute a significant population in Ghana (Bakker-Edoh, Mburugu, and Oigo, 2018). The research focuses on how a social entrepreneur can translate the challenges of local tailors into a business opportunity that is economically viable for these professionals simultaneously while providing high-quality ready-made products to customers.

Problem Statement

Tailors in Ghana have the unique skill of transforming abstract ideas from their customers into tangible products in the form of beautiful clothes that meet their needs and desires (Karlan, et al., 2015). However, they are among the lowest income earners in the nation despite the lucrative nature of the industry that they serve. The main challenge that these professionals face is the lack of empowerment that has been evident in their low drive for self-actualization (Boateng and Narayan, 2017). The project's focus problem is two-fold. First, there is limited intellectual and economic growth. Second, the tailors live in impoverished environments due to the lack of intellectual skills.

The motivation for conducting this research was the low income and poor working conditions of Ghanaian tailors. In addition to that, to investigate why they are so highly skilled, but their income doesn't reflect said skills. Karlan, et al. (2015) asserted that the tailors in Ghana have the largest social impact in society but earn the least. They established that the probability of expansion by the tailors is minimum to zero due to the small size of resources that they possess. Therefore, the central question that guided this research was:

“How can a social entrepreneur translate the challenges of local Ghanaian tailors into a business opportunity”

The study's significance is that it provides a platform for the critical evaluation of the budding fashion industry in Ghana and its key players, who are the tailors. The project contributes to literature through the creation of recommendations for social entrepreneurs looking to enter the fashion industry in West Africa. The recommendations will apply to not only business opportunities that include tailors in Ghana but also other graduates of vocational training institutes in different sectors such as mechanical work and hairdressers whose incomes are not compatible with their skills. The second contribution is insights into the role of a social entrepreneur as a sustainability mediator, who can identify the needs of a specific population and explore the avenues of addressing such needs. Moreover, the project has a social impact due to its focus on sustainable economic growth despite the eminent issues such as the lack of financial capital and knowledge that modern society faces.

The study question will be examined using qualitative interviews and the action research design. Qualitative studies focus on gathering insights and opinions that are essential in

responding to a specific research concept (Clark et al. 2020). The study will be operationalized through the administration of semi - structured questionnaires to Ghanaian tailors and by interviewing experts who understand the dynamics of entrepreneurship in the fashion industry in and have experience in growing their brands far beyond the average tailor in Ghana.

The thesis is structured as follows. The previous section introduced the research by providing background information and presenting the questions that guided the study. Section two summarises studies that were previously conducted to address the research problem while the methodology chapter examined the methodological approaches that were used to gather, analyse, and synthesize data. The final sections are the summary of the results, the discussion of said results that examined them in light of the presented literature, the recommendations for social entrepreneurs when translating the challenges into a business opportunity and finally the conclusion chapter that presents the findings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Entrepreneurship in West Africa

According to Rivera-Santos, Holt, Littlewood, and Kolk (2015), social entrepreneurship focuses on identifying the relationship between the environment and social enterprises. Their study examined the ideology and dynamics of social entrepreneurship in Sub-Saharan Africa and found that various contextual dimensions that define Africa make social entrepreneurship a necessity. However, the pervasiveness of this type of entrepreneurship is limited. Matthews (2017) supported the assertions of Rivera-Santos et al. (2015) by arguing that the socio-economic demographics of West Africa as characterized by increased poverty, colonial histories, and informalities which dictate that African entrepreneurs should define a bridge between the social problems that face societies and the economic desires of such communities. He, Matthews (2017), argued that the sad bit with social or sustainable entrepreneurship in Africa is that its significant agents are foreign nationals. Governments only provide the infrastructural capacities to attain these entrepreneurial ambitions. Similarly, Quak and Flynn (2019) explained that Ghana is West Africa's innovation hub, with a high number of entrepreneurs in the nation targeting the textile and agricultural industries. According to Quak and Flynn (2019), sustainable entrepreneurs have identified a gap in the insufficiency of African attire in the western world and invested heavily in the textile industry. The livelihoods of the tailors who work in large firms that produce attires for export has been enhanced by the immense investment by local and foreign governments. (Quak and Flynn, 2019). However, these investments have zero impact on self-sustained tailors who target their few consumers' needs.

Working Conditions of Tailors in Ghana

While the concept of vocational training in Ghana is well-explored by various pieces of research, tailors who emerge from these institutes have received limited attention in research. According to Karlan et al. (2015), Accra, Ghana has the highest number of tailoring microenterprises in the country. The city has an extensive network of loosely distributed tailors with diverse income levels. Karlan et al.'s (2015) study focused on evaluating the

influence of massive capital injection on Ghanaian tailoring micro-enterprises' socio-economic status. They established that higher investments did not necessarily result in increased business growth. Similarly, Akoh (2020) conducted a study that focuses on examining the nature of tailoring business in West Africa by focusing on Nigeria. This study also found that despite the massive capital investment in tailoring businesses across west Africa, the lack of an entrepreneurial mindset is a crucial barrier to personal and business growth. Akoh (2020) established that while tailors have a unique skill that might earn them higher incomes than other blue-collar professionals, the textile experts lack the urge and desire to explore new market options with higher incomes. These studies also consistently showed that tailors in Africa, in general, live in some of the worst socio-economic conditions (Boateng and Narayan (2017); Karlan et al. (2015); Akoh (2020)). According to Boateng and Narayan (2017), the tailoring mini-industry in west Africa comprises baby boomers whose focus is to earn a living by sewing and designing fashion items for small populations. Boateng and Narayan (2017) concluded their study by arguing that the primary strategy of changing the unbearable working conditions of tailors in West Africa is empowering the textile professionals socially and economically. The central takeaway from the three explored studies is that there exist demographic similarities among tailors in Ghana and other nations of Africa. The main feature of tailoring businesses is the existence of limited to zero growth.

Examination of Potential Livelihood Improvement Approaches

The fact that Ghanaian tailors' livelihoods and businesses need some improvement is undeniable. According to Asare (2019), the central strategy of improving the financial sustainability of the players in the textile industry is designing entrepreneurial courses that introduce tailors to the gaps in the markets and equips them with the strategies of covering such gaps. The changing paradigms of entrepreneurships dictate that individuals must explore all available options through which they could gather information to use in solving socio-economic challenges. Furthermore, Asare (2019) established that the entrepreneurial aspect in vocational training facilities would equip learners with the employer mindset rather than waiting to be employed.

Senayah (2018) supported Asare (2019) by stating that economic training and empowerment are the main approaches that have been used in nations such as Bangladesh to boost their textile industry's performance. The Bangladeshi ready-to-wear garment industry is among the

globe's largest textile sectors. The industry generates a massive percentage of the country's GDP in the form of custom duties and foreign exchange. Furthermore, sustainability within this industry has been attained through empowerment and education. Tailors within the country receive basic information regarding the extension of their market influence and the various ways in which they can manage their finances. Senayah (2018) asserted that the success of this industry can be attributed to the solid investments by the government and other training institutes that guarantee that tailors have adequate training on the management of the resources and revenues that they earn from their daily activities. The rationale for exploring the concept of social entrepreneurship using the scholarly works of Senayah (2018) is to understand the power in empowering tailors in Ghana. The study illustrates that empowering tailors not only benefits this group of professionals but also increase the revenues earned by the government following the international trade of such products.

The study by Bakker-Edoh et al.'s (2018) is significant and highly applicable to this as it advocated for increasing the skills of the tailors to streamline them to market conditions before investing in the textile business. The current fashion markets are characterized by the massive adoption of technological tools and approaches. Small scale tailors could be empowered by training them on the basic tenets of digital marketing. Social entrepreneurship targets the connection between the skills of an individual (the tailors) and sustainable practices. The element of sustainability in social entrepreneurship entails the proper management of funds and other financial resources to benefit an individual. Bakker-Edoh et al. stated that technological training has been efficient in other settings where tailors were empowered by being given high-end textile technologies such as sewing machines that increased their productivity and the magnitude of finances derived from their practices.

Ghana is a leading fashion hub in West Africa and the whole African continent. The explored pieces of literature show that the potential held by Ghanaian tailors is massive. The strength of the examined literature pieces is that they provide a direct link between social entrepreneurship and the current conditions in which Ghanaian tailors live. The studies addressed the central research question by confirming that if Ghanaian tailors are equipped with entrepreneurship, financial knowledge and given the relevant machinery, they can use these to stimulate their profession and empower them to attain their social goals. However, the studies are lacking specificities on the intervention and weak comparative analyses. The

existing research fails to answer the question of “how” as they mainly provide recommendations that may not be grounded in empirical research. Moreover, only Senayah (2018) performed a comparative analysis that could aid in evaluating the efficacy of social entrepreneurship in guaranteeing the improvement of tailors’ livelihoods by introducing the Bangladeshi context.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the qualitative research paradigm that seeks to gather non-numerical data from an identified subject group. According to Hennink et al. (2020), qualitative research utilises the experiences, opinions, and thoughts of subjects to define how a given phenomenon affects different dimensions of their lives. The rationale for adopting the qualitative research method was its perfect fit for the identified research problem as it would help to respond to the questions of how and why the livelihoods of Ghanaian tailors need to be improved. Furthermore, qualitative research is advantageous as it allows researchers to gather large and comprehensive data pieces that respond significantly to an identified problem (Aspers and Corte, 2019; Mohajan, 2018; Phillippi and Lauderdale, 2018). However, the central challenge that was experienced during this method’s use was bias, as all used data was subjective. An additional challenge was the significant duration for data collection and analysis.

Research Design

Action research was used as a qualitative research design for the proposed study. Action research designs target the evaluation of a specific problem and the presentation of the most appropriate measures that could be adopted to manage or mitigate the identified issue (Collatto et al., 2018). According to Ollila and Yström (2020), action research’s main feature is the collaboration between the researcher and their participants when striving to create a clear and precise solution to a specific study problem. Action research examines social problems that face a specific population or groups of persons in a given geographical region. The rationale for proposing action research for the study is its fit and increased applicability in the study based on the research context. Action research allowed the researcher to make detailed observations and recommendations based on the data patterns

that were manifest. The central strength of action research designs is their practicality (Guertler et al., 2020). Such a design gives researchers a practical dimension of examining a social problem. Moreover, action research designs will facilitate the processes of gathering in-depth knowledge on the problem being investigated. However, the flaw that manifested when using this research design was the difficulty in implementing it due to its lack of rigor. The action research design was complemented by the interpretive approach that places the researcher at the centre of their study and connects them with the realities of the research environment.

Sample and Sampling

Purposive sampling was the most appropriate model of respondent recruitment and inclusion into the study; hence the technique was utilised. Based on the cases collected, it was mostly based on tailors who had existing kiosks/offices and had a few years of experience. Ames et al. (2019) defined purposive sampling as a method of intentional selection of participants based on the knowledge and judgements of the researcher. Purposive sampling provides the opportunity of identifying and including persons with in-depth knowledge on social entrepreneurship and tailors who experience different challenges that bar them from shifting from the low-income populations to middle-income groups. The rationale for proposing purposive sampling is the minimal durations and resources that was needed to recruit participants into the research. However, one principal issue with the method was the bias that manifested in the form of socially desirable answers from the smaller scale tailors and larger ones equally, and that may jeopardise the reliability and validity of the data collected in this study.

Data Collection

Information for this research was gathered through semi-structured interviews with tailors and entrepreneurs. The interviews encouraged connections between the researchers and the respondents, with the main tools used being the audio recording through the interviewer's phone. Five small scale tailors who own kiosks and have sufficient experience and two fashion entrepreneurs who have managed to succeed in the industry in Accra and have high level of knowledge on the topic were interviewed. These interviews took place in Accra, Ghana in person by the researcher. It lasted over a span of a month and the average

interview time was fifteen minutes. The tailors were found by means of the network of the researcher and by driving through areas in the city of Accra that were likely to have a tailor nearby. It was difficult to schedule meetings with tailors and often they were not willing or would change their mind about willing to partake in the study or not, (possibly due to insecurity or lack of interest as hinted by some tailors), which slowed down the process. Semi-structured interviews were instrumental in that they provided comprehensive information that showcased the feelings and thoughts of various participants regarding the specific phenomenon (Zhou et al., 2017). Therefore, all tailors provided the relevant data on the status of their livelihoods, the challenges that they currently face and the approaches that they believed would be instrumental in changing their life status.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was extensive due to the expected detailed nature of the collected data and required thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2019) stated that thematic analysis is a qualitative model of analysing information and data that aims at identifying the patterns that manifest in the obtained responses. Researchers execute thematic analyses in five broad steps that include familiarisation with the collected data through transcription, generation of initial codes, interpreting the codes, identifying thematic patterns that are manifest in the data, and defining and naming themes (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018). The rationale for the use of thematic analysis is its flexibility, as different themes will be generated using a single dataset. Thematic analysis is also advantageous as it allows researchers to elevate their knowledge using a wide array of past experiences of the participants. The interpretation of the patterns in the gathered information or themes used data for evaluation and back-up. However, nuanced data may be missed whenever a theoretical vacuum exists. This challenge was eliminated by using past studies to evaluate the opinions and experiences of the respondents.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics act as a crucial guide that guarantees the authenticity of a particular research piece (Bracken-Roche et al., 2017). In this research, ethics referred to the respondents and giving them full information on their rights. Due to the low education levels of many of the tailors, there is the possibility that they are not aware of them. The rationale for making

specific ethical considerations is to enhance the authenticity of the proposed study. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, anonymity, privacy and confidentiality, and beneficence were observed. The researcher presented a clause that communicated the role of the respondents, the rights of participants to withdraw from the study, and required them to sign the document before they fill it as a means of consenting to the research. Privacy and confidentiality were ensured by protecting the identity of the respondents. The study was structured to benefit all respondents and the targeted population and all respondents didn't require anonymity in the study but rather were proud to be a part of it.

RESULTS

The following section of this paper reports on the results of the research. The section is divided into five parts. First a summary of the participants is given, then an explanation of the direct and perceived challenges the tailors are facing. We explore the tailors' views on partnerships with external parties and view the two larger tailoring companies as a benchmark for success in the industry in Ghana.

Participant overview

Table 1 provides a brief overview to the tailors involved in the study. No participants required anonymity therefore their names have been left in the research.

Name	Brand	Background
Teddy	RoyaltybyNanasei	Has no technical fashion knowledge, only basic business tools. Has approximately ten staff members and creates bespoke clothing for only men. A popular vendor for weddings in Ghana.
Ferdinand Boakye	Snip House	Has no technical fashion knowledge himself, he is the manager meanwhile his partner is the creative director and has all the technical knowledge. Work from a very small room in their apartment but have an excellent brand image. Has eight employees in total and

		makes bespoke clothing for women only. Very popular vendor for traditional weddings in Ghana.
Esaaba	Seams Elite	During the period of the research, she lost her kiosk and now works from home by herself. Makes bespoke clothing for mostly women.
Felicia	-	Has a small kiosk with one apprentice, makes bespoke clothing.
Abigail	-	Has a small kiosk with two apprentices, makes bespoke clothing.
Millicent	-	During the period of the research, she lost her kiosk and now works from home by herself. Makes bespoke clothing for mostly women.
Regina	Gina Fashion (Elegance)	Has a small and works on her own, makes bespoke clothing.

Table 1: Overview of research participants

Direct Challenges

To take advantage of the challenges of the tailors, to translate them into business opportunities, the tailors were asked what their biggest issues in running the business and making it grow was. The most common answer was finance. A lot of the tailors come from poorer backgrounds and start the business with little to no capital. When Esaaba was asked with what issues she faced running this business, she simply replied that “Everything is capital” (E, personal interview, 27 April 2021). Without finance, the tailors are unable to hire more people which in turn would increase how many jobs they could accept. Regina explained that this is what is hindering her income. “Because I’m working alone, my input is small. If not, what I have at hand, if I should get a helping hand, my income shouldn’t be a problem” (R., personal interview, June 1, 2021). Their income is generally so low, so it is difficult to save. Millicent mentioned making as low as nothing per week; “A week? I can sit here and not make anything” (M., personal interview, June 1, 2021) and the highest amount mentioned was Regina who makes the equivalent of eighty-six euros a week; “I should be making like 600 (Ghana cedi’s) in a week” (R., personal interview, June 1, 2021). Instead of saving they must live hand to mouth. When Esaaba was asked if the income was enough for her daily living, she explained that 40 cedi’s or six euros on average she makes weekly, is where she has to draw from to live her daily life; “because that’s exactly where I do everything from, I eat from it I pay rent from it” (E, personal interview, 27 April 2021).

Another challenge that is being faced by the tailors is their location and space. There was an obvious pattern of the importance tailors put on where they work from and often time a better space for them equated higher income. When asked how they could be helped, most included the space factor. For Millicent, a bigger space was the starting point to growth. “To put more income into the business, at least the shop and then the machines that I can do something that will add more income to myself” (M., personal interview, June 1, 2021). Also, when asked what they wanted to do to improve the business, it was again to get a bigger and better space. Abigail’s answer was an echo to that of Millicent, “Maybe I would want to have a bigger place so that I can buy machinery” (A., personal interview, May 18, 2021). Millicent helps us understand why the space was so important, explaining that customers will be attracted to nice locations and that is what will cause them to stop; “This place too is not well organized, like the roadside and stuff. So, then it doesn’t bring people inside” (M., personal interview, June 1, 2021).

Perceived Challenges

Although the tailors were able to explain their own challenges, there were perceived challenges that due to the lack of exposure that the tailors have, they are probably not aware of these factors being challenges. The researcher was able to decipher these challenges within the lines. The first perceived challenge is their education. There was a consensus with all the tailors that they did some sort of vocational training lasting from six months up to three years, almost always followed by some sort of internship. The smaller scale tailors had a pattern of generally only going to secondary school and afterwards pursuing a tailoring certificate and since then didn't go for further upskilling or training on recent advancements in the sector. "Yes, I completed SS, senior secondary school before I completed the sewing" (F., personal interview, May 18th 2021). None of the smaller scale tailors ever educated themselves in entrepreneurship or business development tools. Likewise, none of the tailors had any plans to upskill professionally, rather one or two mentioned that they would use YouTube to improve their craft; "sometimes I use my phone to google or YouTube and then I get more styles and that can make me to improve more." (A., personal interview, May 18, 2021). Another challenge was the marketing and technology used by the tailors. When smaller scale tailors were asked the technologies they used in their business, they mostly went as far as sewing machines and their phones to contact customers. "So just your phone and WhatsApp and social media... Sometimes I need a laptop, not sometimes, I need a laptop" (E, personal interview, 27 April 2021). Similar situation goes for their marketing, most smaller scale tailors wait for people to pass by on the street and see their stall or market their products through WhatsApp mainly by posting it on their status for their network to see. "Normally when they're passing, they give it to me. Or maybe I'll put it in WhatsApp" (E, personal interview, 27 April, 2021). Esaaba was also the only tailor who also used Instagram but after taking a look at her Instagram page, it had very few followers and was inconsistent. Generally, these smaller scale tailors are not aware what is available to them through marketing on social media, technology they can use to assist with their work or technology to make their sewing easier and faster and this hinders how their business grows

The final perceived challenge was motivation. Another thing that played a large role in the businesses of the respective respondents was their motivation for starting the business in the first place. Smaller scale tailors, when asked about their motivation gave very general and generic answers. Esaaba simply replied with "passion" when asked why she chose tailoring as

a career and Abigail's response was that "I have to get my own business so that I can take good care of myself" (A., personal interview, May 18, 2021).

Partnerships

An important question that was asked was if the tailors would be willing to work for a social entrepreneur, possibly forsaking their own brand. This was an important question to ask as it affects what business model the social entrepreneur can choose when creating an opportunity for both the tailors and the social entrepreneur respectively. The answers to this question were quite surprising as the topic of autonomy came up. There was a reoccurring pattern that apart from Esaaba, all other tailors preferred to work for themselves despite the fact there was a possibility to make more money. Each tailor had different reasons for why they wouldn't leave their own brand to work for someone else. The reasons ranged from having a lack of trust for employers in Ghana in general, "If they take me there, they won't pay me much. Here I get my own, they won't give me how I can get from here. I can get plenty money here but when they go to someone you can't get it like that." (A., personal interview, May 18, 2021), to a drive to improve the brand that has already been created, "I wouldn't really do that because I want to grow my own business because I think I have come a long way, so the little thing I need is maybe advice and a push." (R., personal interview, June 1, 2021). and finally to just wanting to have their own rules and regulations and the other benefits that come with being an entrepreneur, "No because you see im grown up, and i dont want to work for someone because maybe i will get up and im not feeling well or something, and the person will call you that im waiting for you and I've passed that stage" (F., personal interview, May 18th 2021).

This is then something that the social entrepreneur really needs to be taking into consideration in the ideation phase of the business.

Larger tailoring businesses as benchmarks

To have a benchmark of what success could be for tailors in the West of Africa, two high level entrepreneurs who also make bespoke clothing were interviewed to find out about their backgrounds and what exactly they were doing different or caused them to reach a different destination than the smaller scale tailors. This information contributes to the creation of a recommendation for a social entrepreneur trying to enter this business. Mistakes

can be avoided, and strategies can be implemented that will also ensure success for the larger scale business. The two brands, Snip House and Royaltybynanasei give a clear understanding of their business and the differences in it through these four factors: education, motivation, marketing & technology and finally strategy.

There was quite a large difference between the smaller scale and larger scale tailoring companies in terms of education. Both the creative director and manager of Snip House had some form of tertiary education, and one had a master's degree. "Oh, yes, I did.... I have a bachelor's in geological engineering and a master's in geological engineering. I just came back from the UK, where I had my master's. She has a bachelor's in political studies and she also has a diploma in fashion from Joyce Ababio for six months. So that's where she took her studies in (F., personal interview, May 2, 2021). The same could be seen from Teddy, the creative director of royaltybynanasei, "So I've had a fashion background just after having my master's and everything" (T, personal interview, April 26, 2021). Although none of their courses were directly related to fashion, it was a starting point for basic entrepreneurship principles and a platform to make them aware of general things that were available to them to grow and expand their business. Ferdinand took it further and explained how he is aware that indeed he was able to directly apply some principles from his education to the business. "I'm able to apply basic research principles which you would even know how engineering, you get that in every program whether its political studies, maths. So it's my research is the same process, justifying data, analyzing the data and bringing us results and conclusion" (F., personal interview, May 2, 2021). Another thing to note is that their backgrounds in their education also came from outside of Africa.

Another thing that played a large role in the businesses of the respective respondents was their motivation for starting the business. When Ferdinand of Snip House was asked about their motivation, he outlined how and why he enjoys the freedom of creativity, " And we have the freedom to, one, explore, explore a skill set and just experiment that'sfor every creative I think that's what you want, the freedom to create" and the impact in their community, "And we also get to impact society directly. And you see the ripple effect because we have workers who but for this industry would have had nothing to do" When Ferdinand was asked about the hardest part of the business, it was the hiring of motivated staff members who were willing to work hard towards the goal and growth of the business. "Girls or people who are more or less people who have not done or who have not been so successful

with education. So they take the fashion as another option. So they are not motivated within and you see it sometimes so you'd have to find people who meet what we call values" (F., personal interview, May 2, 2021). Due to the fact that for the smaller scale tailors the motivation is often to have something to live by as it was an escape route after school, rather than it being their first choice for a career, it already affects the level of motivation they bring to their business. "They're not asking themselves the most important question. Why am I doing this? People just do it because it's available and they can do it. When you keep asking yourself why you are doing this, you get very direct answers" (F., personal interview, May 2, 2021).

Snip House used a lot more technology and applications in their day-to-day work. "At the moment we have four and jack A3 machines, automated sewing machines, and we have some knitting machines. So hardware technology, that's what we use. And just the basic Microsoft tools, MS tools that we use for our digital marketing. And yes we use some photo editing. We also use some photo sketch to bring out drawings for clients" (F., personal interview, May 2, 2021). Likewise, their page was found for the interview through Twitter promotions, showing they invest into their marketing. Royaltybynanasei did come with an alternative opinion that he preferred word of mouth for his business, which is almost like the smaller tailors. He expressed that although he does do the usual social media marketing, he gets a lot of customers from referrals. "So, yes, we have social media, we do all those things. We have networking where you get to meet people through people, you go to events, introduce yourself and things like that. But my core marketing and very important to me is referrals, because, you know, in business, if I make sure my customer is satisfied, I'm guaranteed, 10 customers. Once I make one customer dissatisfied, I would have lost over 100 people" (T, personal interview, April 26, 2021). So, although there are still differences in how both subgroups were able to use technology and market their work, there was still a similarity in the importance of referrals.

Finally, the larger tailors generally had some sort of plan in place for their expansion and the motivation in their mission was evident beneath it. "So what I think we can do is to just reinvest, we actually do that, we reinvest on the profits that come back into the business so we can expand because we have the capacity to think and create amazing things, so what we need now is to increase our size, our workforce and that's the only way we can be more

or less as visible as we want to be” (F., personal interview, May 2, 2021). Snip House are looking to go from just bespoke to incorporating ready made products aswell, “We have like the bespoke part of it where we make on order for specific clients. And then we also have the mass production part of it where we just make it and then when you see it online you can just purchase it wherever you are in the world.” (F., personal interview, May 2, 2021). And royaltybynanasei are looking at expansion in terms of branches “So my next target is having, like not necessarily shops, but representatives like all over the world” (T, personal interview, April 26, 2021).

DISCUSSION

After doing this research we can understand the challenges that small local tailors faced in their day-to-day work. There was no mention of the government of Ghana providing capital injection to the tailors as mentioned by Karlan (2015). The tailors still struggle with basic equipment and space needed in the beginning stages. Although the study by Karlan (2015) states that higher investments do not necessarily result in business growth the tailors still find capital an integral part of their growth and expressed that without capital they are not able to get better spaces, hire more helpers and generally grow.

Partnerships

The topic of partnerships was quite interesting. It came as a surprise how important autonomy is to the tailors, as they were willing to make less as long as they work for themselves, many reasons were given which were outlined above and this affects the business model that is chosen by the social entrepreneur, knowing that finding tailors from the street who are willing to let go of their brand to join another one would prove difficult. Looking at a brand like Snip House who were able to achieve this, they highlighted how difficult it was to source motivated and highly skilled tailors to join their business. Although difficult, it was achievable and the tailors were able to face an increase in their income whilst not having to consider overhead costs, reducing how much profit they lose.

There was quite a large difference between the smaller scale and larger scale entrepreneurs in terms of education. Generally, they all went to get some form of technical training but that was where the similarity stopped. The larger scale entrepreneurs had degrees and consistent training to upskill themselves. Although none of their courses were directly related to fashion, it was a starting point for basic entrepreneurship principles and a platform to make them aware of general things that were available to them to grow and expand their business. Ferdinand took it further and explained how he is aware that indeed he was able to directly apply some principles from his education to the business. "I'm able to apply basic research principles which you would even know how engineering, you get that in every program whether its political studies, maths. So it's my research is the same process, justifying data, analyzing the data and bringing us results and conclusion" (F., personal interview, May 2, 2021). Another thing to note is that their backgrounds in their education also came from outside

of Africa. This gives them a certain level of exposure to different methodologies, business models, cultures from all over the world which they can take the best of and incorporate into their business. They also have the added advantage of having a larger network. Akoh (2020) established how the lack of an entrepreneurial mindset is a crucial barrier to personal and business growth. The differences between the tailors shows this lack of entrepreneurial mindset which could be a huge factor into why the smaller scale tailors are stagnant while the other subgroup have managed to grow much more quickly and scale up.

Motivation

The motivation can be directly linked to how well the business is doing as they have a drive that goes beyond financial reasons. When Ferdinand was asked about the hardest part of the business, it was the hiring of motivated staff members who were willing to work hard towards the goal and growth of the business. "Girls or people who are more or less people who have not done or who have not been so successful with education. So they take the fashion as another option. So they are not motivated within and you see it sometimes so you'd have to find people who meet what we call values" (F., personal interview, May 2, 2021). When there is a personal motivation strong enough for a business, then there is a higher chance for it to grow and succeed because the entrepreneur will always seek constant improvement and seek out ways for growth, expansion and fulfillment. Due to the fact for most of the fact that for the smaller scale tailors the motivation is often to have something to live by as it was an escape route after school, rather than it being their first choice for a career, it already affects the level of motivation they bring to their business. "They're not asking themselves the most important question. Why am I doing this? People just do it because it's available and they can do it. When you keep asking yourself why you are doing this, you get very direct answers" (F., personal interview, May 2, 2021).

Technology

The difference in technology used by both subgroups is quite broad. Of course some of these items need capital to be bought which the smaller scale tailors don't have as they only make enough to feed themselves and not to reinvest " my profit personally yes like 40 cedis per week. (7 euro)" (E, personal interview, 27 April, 2021). Although other things like applications to store measurements for bespoke outfits "So you see this app, I have all my

customer data, so customers don't even need to say oh, I need to come back for my measurements. I already have it just call me" (T, personal interview, April 26, 2021) or Microsoft suite to help in digital marketing, they are just not aware of and have no exposure to such platforms. As Esaaba had mentioned, she and most others don't even own laptops to use these applications. Similar situation goes for their marketing, most smaller scale tailors wait for people to pass by on the street and see their stall or market their products through WhatsApp mainly by posting it on their status for their network to see. "Normally when they're passing, they give it to me. Or maybe I'll put it in WhatsApp" (E, personal interview, 27 April, 2021). Esaaba was also the only tailor who also used Instagram but after taking a look at her Instagram page, it had very few followers and was inconsistent. On the other hand, places like snip House, their page was found for the interview through Twitter promotions, showing they invest into their marketing. Although there are still differences in how both subgroups were able to use technology and market their work, there was still a similarity in the importance of referrals.

Strategy

Finally, strategy was the one which brought the most surprise. The lack of forward thinking from the tailors was so obvious that relying on their information for their needs would not produce an efficient and relevant result for a business model. The question of what they want to do in the next few years was not a major question for the research but brought so much to light. `smaller scale tailors are very lacking in the areas of starategy and their goals for the future years do not directly coorelate with their goals. What kept coming up again and again from tailors is that in a few years they wanted to buy a bigger space and mpre machines but theres was little to no context of how they expected to get there. "If anyone comes and wants to help me...maybe I want to have a bigger place so that I can buy machinery" (A., personal interview, May 18, 2021). Rather than looking at what are the necessary steps to take at this moment to get them to the position of buying a bigger place and expanding, they saw it the opposite way, that if they expand and buy a bigger place which would obviously increase their overhead costs, then they would receive more customers and make more money. "So now if I get a shop, I'm planning for that, a big shop, and I have two spare machines aside so when i get my apprentices I will pay them aside. That place now has been vacant, only machines. When you make yourself nice, your surrounding is very nice, people

come to you. But if you do it bad, then nobody.” (F., personal interview, May 18th 2021). When prompted how exactly they would improve themselves and the business in preparation for expansion, Abigail answered with “Sometimes I use my phone to go on YouTube then I will get more styles”. It is interesting to note that both subgroups are aiming for similar goals in the next coming years while being on two very different levels of their businesses, which goes to show that one of the target group is either being very optimistic or not being realistic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, the reader can find an overview of recommendations for a social entrepreneur that were derived from this study. The recommendations can be used as a starting point for the social entrepreneur when starting a business in not just the fashion industry in West Africa but also other industries such as hairdressing and mechanical work. The recommendation also consists of strategies that the larger scale entrepreneurs used that worked to their advantage.

Strategy

The social business needs to hire not just tailors but also local marketing managers to ensure that the business reaches more than just Ghana. This part is important because through the efforts of branding, technology, marketing, more customers can be received which in turn will give more profits to everyone working within the organisation. In terms of technology there needs to be an initial investment for high level machines to make working durations quicker and more efficient for tailors. Lastly, before the creation of the social business there needs to be a core understanding of the brand and its mission and vision, this can then be used to create short- and long-term goals for not only the social business but everyone who works in it. Workshops should be had to remind workers of what the goal is and what everyone is trying to achieve and what milestones are important to keep in mind and measure.

Increased Motivation

It is important for the growth of the social business itself that the tailors hired or partnered with are motivated. Through the conversation with Snip House, we can learn that when people with low motivation were hired, they were not able to keep up with the work and sometimes quit on their own accord. It is important that the partnerships are beneficial for both parties and therefore people who have interest in working and being part of such a motivated business should equally have that inner motivation.

Education

Looking at the education area, the social business needs to provide the tailors with the opportunity to upskill themselves in not just tailoring but something else of their choosing. Most tailors did not enter that career by choice and should be given an opportunity to flourish in the area they truly choose, and in the meantime while they get the education could work for the social business part time for example. The tailors do not have to be fully sponsored by the social business and it does not necessarily have to be for university level courses, there can also be a plan in place where once the chosen education has been decided, a percentage of their education is paid by the social business or every month a percentage is saved by the business on their behalf, and they can cash out when necessary. What is integral is that they are given a platform for exposure to new ideas, careers or just getting trained in the latest that is happening in the technical part of the fashion industry. Those that decide to pursue careers like marketing, law, IT, can also find a way they can be useful for the social business and shift to a different position within the company upon completion.

Autonomy

As we learnt in this research, there needs to be space for autonomy for the tailors as this is very important to them, this can be done in a number of ways, by partnering with their brands rather than making them part with it, or by hiring fresh graduates from vocational schools who are still considering what opportunities to pursue.

CONCLUSION

In summary this research has answered the main question of how the challenges of tailors can be translated into a business opportunity for a social entrepreneur. We suggest focusing on certain areas which include the strategy of the organisation, the internal motivation, an increase in education and lastly maintenance of autonomy for tailors. A lot of new information has been found concerning tailors and the fashion industry in Ghana and it can be beneficial to this area of study. For future research, it would be beneficial to research how to increase the motivation within the tailors, and this can also be useful to social entrepreneurs.

APPENDIX

Interview Guide

For Tailors:

1. Can you introduce yourself and the background of your business?
2. Did you get an education?
3. What are the benefits of having your own business?
4. How did you get the background and skills to run this business?
5. What do you specialise in making?
6. How do you make people aware of your business?
7. Do you use technology in your business? And if yes, how has technology, such as computers and the internet, impacted on how you conduct business?
8. Does your job provide you with enough income for your livelihood?
9. How much on average do you make a week?
10. Where do you see your business in the next year? In the next five years?
11. What are the biggest issues for running this business?
12. What sets you apart from other tailors?
13. How do you think you can improve the business?
14. Does this improvement have any limitations?
15. How can a businessman/woman with extra resources help you and would you be willing to accept the help?
16. Would you be willing to work for someone else if it meant an increase in your income?
17. How would you feel working with multiple tailors?

For successful entrepreneurs:

1. Can you introduce yourself and the background of your business?
2. Did you get an education?
3. What are the benefits of having your own business?
4. How did you get the background and skills to run this business?
5. What do you specialise in making?
6. How do you make people aware of your business?

7. Do you use technology in your business? And if yes, how has technology, such as computers and the internet, impacted on how you conduct business?
8. Does your job provide you with enough income for your livelihood?
9. Where do you see your business in the next year? In the next five years?

Thematic Analysis

Code Name	Examples
Education	<p>I went to Joyce Ababio school of creative design at Cantonments in Accra – Esaaba</p> <p>So I've had a fashion background just after having my master's and everything. But it's something that's within If you get what I'm saying, it's been within since. Starting this business, I had no fashion background. OK, just, you know, the typical you go to school, you do your courses and things like that. In terms of managing it, I offered management studies for my first degree – Teddy</p> <p>Oh, yes, I did.... I have a bachelor's in geological engineering and a master's in geological engineering. I just came back from the UK, where I had my master's. She has a bachelor's in political studies and she also has a diploma in fashion from Joyce Ababio for six months. So that's where she took her studies in fashion. And she also does a lot of online courses from companies in Russia and Nigeria. – Ferdinand</p> <p>I'm able to apply basic research principles which you would even know how engineering, you get that in every program whether its political</p>

studies, maths. So it's my research is the same process, justifying data, analyzing the data and bringing us results and conclusion. - Ferdinand

yes i completed SS, senior secondary school before i completed the sowing. – Felicia

Okay I went to SS but due to lack of financial, I stopped and went to vocational school. – Millicent

Yes, after I completed my senior high, I went to a vocational school and I did Clothing. So, it's the clothing I used in Accra polytechniek. And like I've ended. - Regina

Motivation

Passion – Esaaba

And we have the freedom to, one, explore, explore a skill set and just experiment that'sfor every creative I think that's what you want, the freedom to create – Ferdinand

And we also get to impact society directly. And you see the ripple effect because we have workers who but for this industry would have had nothing to do. – Ferdinand

Providing premium quality, consistency, being honest with my customers and being passionate about it is key as well. – Teddy

What I think is, you see, for instance, having a fashion business is not a joke. It's actually a serious business. Now, some people just go into it because I couldn't go to school so let me go and learn how to sow. – Teddy

	<p>The workforce, I think it's hard to come by people who are willing or have the passion to do their job, because in our part of the world, I think that being a seamstress, I don't know if it's because of our culture or I mean, the culture of fashion in Ghana especially because I lived in Ghana. Girls or people who are more or less people who have not done or who have not been so successful with education. So they take the fashion as another option. So they are not motivated within and you see it sometimes so you'd have to find people who meet what we call values. – Ferdinand</p> <p>They're not asking themselves the most important question. Why am I doing this? People just do it because it's available and they can do it. When you keep asking yourself why you are doing this, you get very direct answers – Ferdinand</p> <p>I have to get my own business so that I can take good care of myself - Abigail</p>
Challenges	<p>And I think the only thing personally that I need is more of this, more work, the more I get the work more money comes – Esaaba</p> <p>Buy machines, get more work. Even if I want to sew for a client then maybe I can sew and sell, like ship it outside for people to sell it online. - Esaaba</p> <p>You know, they don't have that exposure to know that I can actually expand this thing to become bigger, bigger organization. Some of them actually stick to the old way's of things they are used to rather than exploring or learning how to do things differently. – Teddy</p>

	<p>And the difficulty we are facing is that maybe if somebody comes in and they tell you please sow this dress for me I'm in a hurry please hurry up, then you sow, and they won't come again. So, if you come to me and you want me to sow this and you're coming to take it within three days, you give me deposit, so if you come fine, if you don't come I care less. Some people too what they do is that they will buy the materials and come and leave it here. - Felicia</p> <p>I don't pay, it's through someone I got this place so I wasn't paying. The person just helped me, but they told me that in the last four years till today the person is not paying the rent of the land. So they removed the glass in front of the shop. – Millicent</p> <p>Hmm I can say, the inventory. Cos, I need to buy some things like knitting machines and all this stuff. – Millicent</p> <p>Space and finance. - Regina</p>
<p>Marketing</p>	<p>Through the social media, I did flyers aswell, I do whatsapp, I post my things, I'm on IG aswell.</p> <p>If I'm being very honest with you, over the years of doing business, I've come to understand that there's no better marketing than referrals. So, yes, we have social media, we do all those things. We have networking where you get to meet people through people, you go to events, introduce yourself and things like that. But my core marketing and very important to me is referrals, because, you know, in business, if I make sure my customer is satisfied, I'm guaranteed, 10 customers. Once I make one customer dissatisfied, I would have lost over 100 people – Teddy</p> <p>Whatsapp, maybe I put some stuff – Felicia</p>

	<p>Normally when they're passing, they give it to me. Or maybe I'll put it in WhatsApp. – Abigail</p> <p>So far, I use mostly my WhatsApp status, a bit of fakebook and then I speak to friends. And most especially my clients are very good at taking my products outside and they refer people a lot to me. – Regina</p> <p>About the advertisement? Okay I advertise myself and when I sow for people, they bring more customers to me. - Millicent</p>
Technology	<p>So just your phone and whatsapp and social media... Sometimes I need a laptop, not sometimes, I need a laptop – Esaaba</p> <p>So you see this app, I have all my customer data so customers don't even need to say oh, I need to come back for my measurements. I already have it just call me. - Teddy</p> <p>At the moment we have four and jack A3 machines, automated sewing machines, and we have some knitting machines. So hardware technology, that's what we use. And just the basic Microsoft tools, MS tools that we use for our digital marketing. And yes we use some photo editing. We also use some photo sketch to bring out drawings for clients – Ferdinand</p> <p>Yeah, I use my phone, they send it on WhatsApp for me to see the pictures - Abigail</p>
Income	<p>Hmm, like my profit personally yes like 40 cedis per week. (7 euro) – Esaaba</p> <p>in terms of financial, I'm well to do. Teddy</p>

	<p>I should be making like 600 (Ghana cedi's) in a week – Regina</p> <p>A week? I can sit here and not make anything - Millicent</p>
<p>Partnerships</p>	<p>Sure. At least that one I will also gain from something – Esaaba</p> <p>well the government is doing what it can, but it's not as much support foror maybe it's available, but it's not easily accessible to small scale companies who are trying to grow and reach out to the world. – Ferdinand</p> <p>No because you see I'm grown up, and I don't want to work for someone because maybe I will get up and I'm not feeling well or something, and the person will call you that I'm waiting for you and I've passed that stage – Felicia</p> <p>if they take me there, they won't pay me well. Here I get my own, maybe they won't give me how I can get from here. When you go to somebody you can't get it like that – Abigail</p> <p>I wouldn't really do that because I want to grow my own business because I think I have come a long way, so the little thing I need is maybe advice and a push. - Regina</p>
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Listen, expansion. So my next target is having, like not necessarily shops, but representatives like all over the world – Teddy</p> <p>. So if we are having all these shops then now we are going in fact even in a year we are trying to go have more of an e-commerce you know, so it's easier for people to just get it. – Teddy</p>

So in the next five years, I'm looking at where we will have a very big working force, creating. We have like the bespoke part of it where we make on order for specific clients. And then we also have the mass production part of it where we just make it and then when you see it online you can just purchase it wherever you are in the world. – Ferdinand

So what I think we can do is to just reinvest, we actually do that, we reinvest on the profits that come back into the business so we can expand because we have the capacity to think and create amazing things, so what we need now is to increase our size, our workforce and that's the only way we can be more or less as visible as we want to be – Ferdinand

I'm seeing myself in a big time. Now sewing is like on a high level so when things are moving fast, you too you have to sit up and focus. So now if I get a shop, I'm planning for that, a big shop, and I have two spare machines aside so when I get my apprentices I will pay them aside. – Felicia

When a business partner comes, I will go and buy some materials which are not common – Felicia

Sometimes I use my phone to go on YouTube then I will get more styles – Abigail

If anyone comes and wants to help me...maybe I want to have a bigger place so that I can buy machinery - Abigail

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