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An Analysis of the Paradox of Dumping and Economic Development in Nigeria.

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Abstract: Protectionist policies have failed to stem the tide of second-hand clothes imports in Nigeria despite its declaration as contraband. Nigeria's attachment and preference for foreign goods, among other factors, continue to further dumping from different nations. This study assesses why dumping is still thriving despite government protectionist policies. It explores the policy-practice gap and uncovers critical factors undermining Nigeria's textile industry, where dumping poses a significant threat. Using thematic analysis and expert interviews, we identified essential obstacles to policy success: bureaucratic inadequacies, corruption, the intricacies of global value chains, and smuggling. The study was situated within the ambits of the theory of Dependency and national comparative advantage. The study reveals that protectionist policies thrive with strong institutions, infrastructures, and supporting industries in a nation. It highlights the need for pragmatic policy reforms. By implication, policymakers in Nigeria must consider a multifaceted approach to the menace of second-hand textile dumping. The study recommends that a

holistic strategy combining capacity building, stakeholder engagement, and regional cooperation is vital to combat dumping rather than merely focusing on protectionism.

Keywords: Dumping, Economic development, Protectionist policies, Second-hand clothing, Textile industry

Introduction

Dumping is a poisoned chalice capable of depleting a nation's economic potential. The activities of state and non-state actors and the global financial system's dynamism have brought the issue of dumping to the fore. Dumping captures, the attitude, preference, and obsession for foreign goods capable of alienating a nation's domestic industry. Dumping refers to instances of international price discrimination in which a product's selling price in the country of import is less than its selling price in the country of export, targeted at procuring a competitive edge in the importing market (Twin, 2023)

Dumping, which involves exporting products at a lower price in the foreign market than in the domestic market, poses a significant threat to the economic development of the importing country by weakening domestic industries and making it difficult for them to compete with unfairly priced imported commodities, leading to job losses, factory closures, and diminishes national

competitiveness. (Onuoha, 2020). This impedes the emergence of new industries and causes long-term changes to the importing nation's industrial base, negatively affecting the government's fiscal capacity as it limits the ability to generate revenue due to tax losses, which catalyses into lower investment in infrastructures, obstructing productivity and economic development in the long run.

While the concept of dumping extends to various sectors of an economy, this study focuses on the dumping of second-hand textile or thrift clothes popularly referred to as 'Okrika,' 'gwanjo,' 'bend down select,' 'akube,' and 'boskoro' ('Bò sí korò') in Nigeria (Omole, 2023). Second-hand clothes describe fabrics previously possessed by someone else or stashed in factories in more developed nations for a long time and shipped to developing countries for reselling (The Style Cycle, 2022).

In international economic relations, dumping is advanced from the twin perspectives of liberalism and realism. At the same time, the former

focuses on capitalism, globalisation, and a free market economic system driven by the wheel of free trade; the latter approach issues of international economic relations from the position of national interest, placing the State's economic and political interests side by side. The complexity of international trade is encapsulated in the politics of development and underdevelopment. Each nation plays a zero-sum game focused on ensuring optimal relations in the global market.

According to Statista the global market for thrift wear was valued at 197 billion dollars in 2023, it is expected that this value would rise in the upcoming years, by about 100 billion dollars (Statista, 2024). The lure for second-hand clothing stems from affordability, the meagre income of the consumers, the craving and high taste for foreign designer outfits, the high cost of locally produced fabrics, a Gen Z popular youth culture for vintage, and a lack of patriotism among others (Benard, Isaac & Manasseh, 2023).

The Industrial Revolution in the 19th century introduced the use of 'ready-to-wear clothes' in various sizes globally. The advent of European colonisation and globalisation birthed a cultural adaptation and preference for Western fashion patterns, thereby increasing the demand for foreign clothing and engendering a market for second-hand clothes, which came majorly from the UK, USA, Belgium, China, and Korea (Omole, 2023).

The sale of second-hand clothing has grown into a big business in Nigeria, with millions of Nigerians in the lower to middle class choosing this industry over regional textiles either as consumers or retailers; this is fostered by the high demand for these goods (Olubajo, 2021;

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Hyde, 2023). Thus, slogans like 'Na Mumu dey go Boutique' (only a fool shops at a boutique) have become pull factors or magnets that portray buying second-hand clothes as a means to save more. Forbes Africa succinctly captures this as 'Less Is More,' so the general perception of bend-down shopping is, why shop at expensive stores when you can get the same clothes for less money? (Zagumi, 2021; Hyde, 2023). The largest second-hand clothing market in Africa is the Katangowa market in Lagos, described as the 'Wall Street of Second-hand Clothes' (Adow & Arsenault, 2012)

Ogbonnaya, Udevi, and Uwakwe (2017), in an analysis of Post-Civil War trade in second-hand clothing in Igbo land, opine that the Yakubu Gowon government ban on second-hand clothing was targeted at crippling the finances and economy of Igbo land in Nigeria due to the truce of the Civil war. The study links the root of the international trade in second-hand clothing to the Igbos and aver that it creates available clothing and a source of revenue for Nigeria. However, Ogbonnaya et al. (2017) take an ethnic perspective on cloth dumping, ignoring its impact on the creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit peculiar to the Igbo people and its overall effect on Nigeria's textile industries.

According to Abubakar, Oluyemi, Adulateef, and Emmanuel (2018) in their work titled 'Imperialism and Loss of Identity in Second-Hand Clothes: The Nigerian Okrika Experience,' the influx and sale of second-hand textiles have been around for decades in Nigeria, the benefits of this practice are paradoxical in the sense that it provides affordable clothes for those who can't afford new locally made ones, it also serves as a source of employment for the population. Nonetheless, it has

destroyed the cultural heritage of our local clothing culture, crippled our local industries due to unfair price competition, as well as made Nigerians dependent on Western countries impeding Nigeria's economic development efforts. However, Abubakar, Oluyemi, Adulateef, and Emmanuel (2018) overlooked the factors that further second-hand cloth dumping in Nigeria.

Olubajo (2021), in his empirical work 'Na Mumu dey go Boutique,' using key informant interviews, asserts that "Okrika" and "Akube" have become a popular choice for people of all financial levels who prefer them due to their affordability, unique quality and brand names such as Polo, Gucci, Adidas, T.M. Lewis and Ralph Lauren. Conversely, locally made clothes in Nigeria are expensive and of low quality. However, Olubajo (2021) overlooks the relationship between the dumping of second-hand textiles and the declining number of textile industries.

The Nigerian government has repeatedly taken steps to stop the importation and use of second-hand textiles. This started in 1971 with the Yakubu Gowon-led government in 2019, 2020 and 2023, respectively (Omole, 2023). In 2019, the Central Bank of Nigeria restricted foreign exchange access to second-hand textiles. Also, the Nigerian Customs Service in June 2023 reiterated the illegality of second-hand clothing, emphasizing its health hazard and the high volume of waste that comes with some of the damaged clothes, which increase environmental pollution and stifle the government's effort at self-sufficiency (Lamino, 2023).

The sale of second-hand textiles presents a complex situation with both positive and negative impacts on the Nigerian economy; on one hand, it

creates cheaper alternative fashion and employment opportunities for some Nigerians. On the other hand, it undermines domestic industries by flooding the market with dumped textiles, which results in job losses, the collapse of domestic industries, and a decline in overall national economic competitiveness. Hence, while dumping may seem beneficial in the short term, the long-term consequences pose significant threats to the nation's financial stability and growth. Therefore, it underscores the need for a State to have robust regulations and proactive measures to safeguard its domestic industries and ensure fair competition in the global market.

Seymour (2010) argues that the textile industry is indispensable to the economic development of developing countries as it meets the basic needs of clothing, provides for exports, cushions unemployment, and promotes creativity and innovation. For instance, economic development in emerging economies like India and Pakistan has been traced to expanding their textile production and manufacturing (UNIDO, 2015).

Factors that Advance Dumping of Second-Hand Textile Fabric in Nigeria

Several factors advance the incidences of dumping in Nigeria: affordability, poverty, taste for foreign goods, and source of income, among others. Purchasing used clothing is often less expensive than buying new ones; this makes it a desirable choice for many customers, particularly those on a tight budget. Froelich (2013) posits that since used clothing is often 50% less expensive, people with limited resources will have more money to preserve and use for other essentials rather than excessively purchasing new clothing. Secondly, the high poverty in Nigeria

accounts for the increased patronage of second-hand clothing. According to the National Bureau of Statistics over 133 million Nigerians live below the poverty line, making them the second-largest impoverished population globally, the country's poverty rate is predicted to have reached approximately 39% in 2023 (World Bank, 2023; Izuaka, 2022).

Nigerians are enthusiastic about foreign goods and are obsessed with anything imported (Owolabi, 2016). This is furthered by Nigeria's enormous population of Gen Z (68 million) and their unquenchable taste for foreign products like Gucci, Tommy Hilfiger, Polo, Ralf Lauren and Zara (Abubakar, 2018; Thompson, 2022). Likewise, the dumping and sale of second-hand textiles in Nigeria thrives because they serve as a source of income for people. Due to the high unemployment rate, individuals resort to second-hand clothes resale business. (Abe, 2014).

The Decline of Textile Industry in Nigeria

In the late 20th century, countries in Africa like South Africa, Nigeria, and Egypt had flourishing textile industries, with Nigeria having over 250 working factories, with estimated employment of approximately 500,000 full-time staff and 1,750,000 contract staff (Bello, Inyinbor, Dada & Oluyori, 2013; Aguyi et al., 2011). Nigeria was not only a major exporter of cotton to the global market during the colonial and post-colonial eras but had the most significant number of textile industries on the continent until the late 1970s when oil exports buffeted the non-oil sector which had supplied employment, food, revenue, and raw materials to the nation's large population, creating a shift from industrial activities to a mono-economy largely dependent on imported second-hand textiles and fabrics

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(Akenbor & Nwandu, 2021; Bello et al, 2013; UNCTAD, 2015).

Moreover, Nigerian textile and apparel manufacturers found it impossible to compete with the low prices of imported old garments, even if their goods had better quality; due to the unfair competition, the affordability of imported goods drove consumers (Aminu, 2016). Nigeria's economy is negatively impacted by the loss of jobs in the textile and apparel sectors since these workers and their families find it challenging to make ends meet. The country's economic problems are exacerbated by the fall in economic activity in these areas, resulting in less tax revenue for the government (Adenubi, 2022).

Furthermore, the decline in domestic textile and apparel manufacturing capacity has wider ramifications for Nigeria's economic growth. These sectors are frequently regarded as important forces behind industrialization and economic expansion since they create jobs and aid in the training of skilled labour (United Nations SDG, 2023). The demise of these industries may improve Nigeria's attempts to diversify its economy and decrease its reliance on crude oil exports.

The Concept of Protectionist Policy

According to Alan Scott (2019), protectionism is connected with the policy of economic nationalism, a response to economic globalization; it is an effort by a country's government to safeguard home industries and markets by placing restrictions on imported goods (Ikejiaku & Dayao, 2021). Brian Duignan (2024) asserts that protectionist policy assists developing countries in achieving self-sufficiency and can take three

primary forms: import quota, tariff, and non-tariff barrier. Douglas Irwin (2017), view protectionist policies as a strategy, employed to protect domestic producers and manufacturers from lower-priced importers. Protectionist measures are the combined effort of government trade policies designed to support domestic producers against foreign producers in a particular industry by driving up the cost of imported goods, reducing domestic producer costs, and restricting foreign manufacturers' access to the domestic market (Abboushi, 2010).

During the 17th and 18th Centuries, protectionist policies, known as mercantilism, favoured high tariffs and restrictive trade practices by European monarchies intended to increase trade and build domestic economies at other nations' expense (Magnusson, 2015). In the first half of the 19th century, by the time Great Britain had already acquired apparent industrial pre-eminence, it started to abandon protective tariffs, resulting in repealing the Corn Laws in 1846, by which duties on imported grain were removed (Bown, 2019).

Damage and dislocation caused by World War 1 resulted in continuously raising European customs barriers during the 1920s. In the 1930s, unemployment reached unprecedented levels. Protectionism reached epidemic proportions, and world trade was dramatically reduced. The Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act raised American tariffs by about 20% (Mitchener, Wandschneider, & O'Rourke, 2021). By the middle of the 20th century, most protectionist policies were retreated by the United States and other nations. In 1947, twenty-three countries signed the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade to establish free trade (Markoff, 2017). The GATT was updated in 1994

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and replaced by the World Trade Organization in 1995. Major trading nations have generally reduced customs tariffs considerably due to WTO negotiations (Unger, 2017). However, the Global Financial Crisis of 2008 brought protectionism back to the fore as reciprocal trade agreements tend to reduce rather than eliminate protectionist measures.

While proponents of protectionism argue that protectionist measures protect the producers, businesses, and workers of a country's import-competing sector from foreign competitors, opponents argue that protectionist policies reduce trade and affect consumers by raising the cost of imported goods (Piketty, 2022).

Nigeria's Protectionist Policies

Nigeria has long practiced trade protectionism, mainly through import prohibitions to safeguard domestic businesses. Several commodities were subject to import taxes and, in some instances, outright prohibitions; the embargo on importing all types of textile materials was introduced in 2008 (Global Trade Alert, 2010). The Customs and Excise Management Act (CEMA) and the Customs Duties Act (CDA) are the rules that govern importation and dumping in Nigeria. The SON (Standard Organization of Nigeria) was established to uphold and enforce the quality and standards of domestically produced and imported goods (Adeyemi, 2020).

The National Assembly considered an anti-dumping and countervailing bill in 2010. Unfortunately, the bill was not enacted for several reasons, including that it was found to contain definitional gaps, be inconsistent, and lack coherence, making it non-WTO compliant. In January 2018,

the Nigerian government signed a contract with the international US law firm King & Spalding (Spalding) to assist in the formulation of legislation intended to prevent dumping on the Nigerian market and, additionally, safeguard regional producers within the parameters of the WTO's and other trade agreements' remedies (Onuoha, 2020).

Alglobokhaevbo (2022), in his study, 'Anti-dumping regulations and practices in Nigeria,' using descriptive analysis research method explained how the inefficiency of industries to cater for the needs of their people had rendered developing countries like Nigeria a dumping ground for fake, secondhand and substandard goods; she concluded that World Trade Organisation (WTO) and General Agreement on Tariff and Trade(GATT) provision of anti-dumping measures in developing countries is related to giving shoe to a man without foot. However, Alglobokhaevbo (2022) overlooks why these anti-dumping measures have not been effective and how trade organizations (GATT & WTO) influence the efficiency of Nigeria's anti-dumping measures.

Adeyemi (2020), in her work 'Panaceas: Dumping and Trade Remedies in Nigeria,' adopts the secondary data research methodology and asserts that the laws regulating importation and dumping have been ineffective. Highlighting that the various trade policies by the government to protect the domestic industry from material injury, ranging from tariffs to a complete ban, have failed to curtail dumping. However, Adeyemi (2020) pays little attention to how these issues affect Nigeria's quest for economic development.

Theoretical Perspective

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Development Theory: Dependency Theory

Dependency theory provides a framework for understanding how some countries' inadequate development might be attributed to their reliance on more developed nations. Advocates of dependency theory include Walter Rodney, Andre Gunder, Paul Baran, and Fernando Henrique Cardoso, among others (Kavangraven, 2023). Dependency theory argues that wealthy nations exploit developing nations through political dominance, foreign aid, and foreign investment.

Dependency theory is predicated on the premise that developing countries give more developed countries access to markets, cheap labour, and natural resources, all of which are necessary for the latter to maintain their current quality of living (Gang, 2024). According to dependency theory, underdevelopment and development are the inescapable results and outward expressions of the world capitalist system, which is rife with contradictions and exploitation (Munro, 2024). However, dependency theorists overlook internal factors that contribute to inadequate development.

Dumping displays, the dependency theory, as demonstrated in the colonial link of cultural erosion and the desire to dress and behave like the "Whiteman." Despite being an independent country, neo-colonialism has made Nigeria remain an exporter of cheap cotton and an importer of finished textile wear- the increased demand for these as against the made-in-Nigeria clothes has crippled the domestic industries. Olaitan (2021) contends colonialism strategically designed a condition where European apparel is largely more cherished than African attire.

National Competitive Advantage Theory

Michael Porter's National Competitive Advantage theory explains why some countries fare better in international competition than others and how businesses in a given country can establish and maintain a competitive advantage globally. It posits that the ability of an industry to innovate and upgrade determines a country's competitiveness in a given industry (Harvard Business School Review, 2024; Virjan, et al., 2023). The National Competitive Advantage Theory rests on four assumptions: The Factor Determinants, Demand Determinants, Related and Supporting Industries and the Corporate Strategy and Structure.

The Demand Determinants characterise the domestic market, focusing on the type and size of a product's consumer base, which influences innovation and advances the product. Larger, more vibrant consumer markets will encourage and necessitate the need for firms to innovate and stand out from the competition, in addition to expanding their market reach.

The Factor Determinants are what a nation's economy can produce independently, such as a sizable pool of highly skilled labour, technical innovation, infrastructure, and capital.

The National Competitive Advantage theory highlights the significance of increasing a country's competitiveness through productivity. For protectionist policies to check dumping, the requisite industries must be in place to meet the demand for quality textiles and enhance efficiency. While Nigeria's large youth population can become an advantage if equipped with relevant skills, the domestic demand for made-in-Nigeria products must increase.

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concurrently and be able to match or compete with imported second-hand products.

Methods and Material

The study adopted a descriptive research design with a qualitative approach. Key informants and in-depth interviews were conducted with international relations, political science, and international economics experts. The respondents were required to assess why dumping is still thriving in the textile sector despite the government's protectionist policies. Their responses were transcribed into text and analysed using the NVivo software.

Data Analysis

Assess why dumping is still thriving in the textile sector despite the protectionist policies by the government?

<p>Major Theme 1: The Strategic Utilization of Dumping as an Instrument of Economic Power</p>	<p>Dumpi ng is strategically employed by nations to assert economic dominance and influence global trade dynamics.</p>
<p>Power dynamics and economic power in market dominance</p>	<p>The practice of dumping is deeply intertwined with power dynamics, allowing economically powerful countries to control and manipulate markets in weaker nations.</p>
<p>Institutional Weakness and</p>	<p>Weak institutions and</p>

<p>Its Role in Facilitating Dumping Practices</p>	<p>inadequate policies in recipient countries create an environment that enables and perpetuates dumping practices.</p>
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Major theme 1: The Strategic Utilization of Dumping as an Instrument of Economic Power

Dumping is more than just an economic activity; it is a deliberate exercise of economic power aimed at market creation, surplus management, and global influence. Countries employing this strategy aim to expand their economic reach and reinforce their dominance in the global market. In contrast, recipient countries must navigate the complex impacts on their local economies and industries. Dumping, the practice of exporting goods at prices lower than their domestic market value or cost of production, serves as a strategic tool for nations to exert and extend their economic influence. This theme explores how countries leverage dumping to create and dominate foreign markets, manage surplus production, and reinforce their economic power globally. This resonates with the position of Agbarakwe and Bredino (2024) that trade liberalisation policy benefits nations with strong comparative advantages and high productivity as it affords them gains from global free trade. Likewise, Obalade (2014) established that dumping is one of the weapons of the global economic war fostered by the instruments of free trade and globalisation.

Power dynamics and economic power in market dominance

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Here, the informant describes the situation where powerful countries use dumping to create opportunities for surplus in their own countries. A respondent had this to say:

...dumping is connected with economic power. So, when a country engages in dumping, it may be, for instance, for that particular country to provide markets for the products produced within that country in another country. It may also be necessary to find space for these surplus products produced in one country and another (KII, 2024).

Adejube and Ndaeyo (2021) succinctly capture this, asserting that international trade agreements and obligations are more realistic for more developed nations, which have found the system an effective instrument to expand opportunities for their economic fortunes and pursuit of global economic hegemony.

Institutional Weakness and Its Role in Facilitating Dumping Practices

A country's susceptibility to becoming a dumping ground for foreign goods is rooted in its institutional weaknesses. This theme examines how structural deficiencies, policy inadequacies, and corrupt practices within recipient countries create an environment conducive to dumping. The focus is on understanding the interplay between weak institutions, the prevalence of dumping, and the broader socio-economic impacts on the affected countries. Countries with weak or poorly enforced trade policies often fail to protect their domestic industries from the influx of dumped goods. This lack of stringent regulations creates opportunities for foreign entities to exploit these markets. A respondent had this to say:

Institutional weakness can reduce a country to a dumping ground. Weakness in the policy, weakness in the structure, and weakness in the institutions that are meant to prevent such. It can also be linked with the culture or the political and economic behaviour of the countries, recipient countries, as political behaviour, especially when there are indications of corruption. So, the government may have a policy and lay down policy. Still, implementing this policy may be integrated into the political culture of corruption, inefficiency, lack of patriotism, and determination to protect the country (KII, 2024).

Another informant had this to say

But when you don't have the capital that will enable you to go into extensive mass production, then when you don't have the power to run the industry, and when the income of the citizens cannot meet what would be required for them to buy fabrics at that rate that can make demands and supply high. So, eventually, there will be insufficiency, and this insufficiency will gradually lead to alternatives, and the alternative will lead to encouraging dumping (KII, 2024).

Another also hinted

For instance, let's say Nigeria is protecting the textile industry and all the textile fabrics produced in Nigeria. The industries that produce these textiles need to be fixed. And for those working, there is no power even to make them grow. The raw materials, such as cotton, are unavailable to produce this product.

Corruption is a significant barrier to effective policy implementation. Bribery and other corrupt practices enable the continued importation of dumped goods despite existing protectionist measures. This erodes the effectiveness of policies designed to

protect the local textile industry. One participant pointed out,

"Corruption allows the continued importation of dumped goods, despite protectionist measures" (KII, 2024).

Another informant had this to say

Every country has flaws.

However, Nigeria needs to improve in the area of bribery and corruption. With globalisation and technology, the world is moving, and people are doing better. But when somebody is not meeting the standard in Nigeria, they know how to wriggle their way out with bribes and derail justice and accountability. That is why we've yet to move ahead despite of globalisation.

This NVIVO analysis reveals that dumping is more than just an economic activity. It is a deliberate exercise of financial power aimed at market creation, surplus management and local influence. Nations strategically employ dumping to assert economic dominance and influence global trade dynamics. Obalade (2014) observed that many nations participate in dumping to maintain a robust economic hegemony.

Major Theme 2: Neoliberalism as the Structural Basis for Protectionist Policies and Challenges

<p>Major Theme 2: Neoliberalism As the Structural Basis for Protectionist Policies And Challenges</p>	<p>Neo-liberalism, characterised by free-market principles and minimal government intervention, creates a framework that encourages dumping and complicates the</p>
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	implementation of protectionist policies in Nigeria.
Protectionism Hampered by Deficient Manufacturing Infrastructure	Efforts to protect the local textile industry are undermined by inadequate manufacturing infrastructure, power supply issues, and scarcity of raw materials, highlighting the need to solve internal challenges before implementing anti-dumping policies
Consumer Preferences and the “Aba” Phenomenon	Consumer preference for imported goods, often perceived as superior in quality, undermines protectionist policies, as locally produced goods are viewed as inferior, leading to continued demand for imported products despite bans or tariffs.

This theme reflects the perception that there is a framework of international trade relations which encourages dumping. Neo-liberalism, characterized by free-market principles and minimal government intervention, forms the underlying framework that complicates the implementation of protectionist policies in Nigeria. This theme explores the inherent tensions and contradictions between Nigeria's commitment to international trade agreements and the need to protect its local industries from the adverse effects of dumping. This resonates with the position of Abubakar (2020) that the Nigerian economic and political system does not favour the standards and ideas of neoliberalism, which the nation is yet to attain, as neo-liberal policies in Nigeria are a hurdle and its reforms tend towards market productivity which is deficient in Nigeria's structure since they have not gained economic autonomy.

Trade Agreements and Globalization

Nigeria's adherence to international trade agreements and globalisation principles limits its ability to enforce protectionist policies. These agreements necessitate market liberalisation, making it challenging to curb dumping practices effectively. As one interviewee noted,

"Our commitment to international and regional trade agreements makes it difficult to implement protectionist policies effectively." (KII, 2024).

Karkare et al. (2022) buttress this by asserting that while Nigeria has strong determinations for industrialisation, these are repeatedly not converted into active industrial policies as regional and global trepidations, particularly smuggling,

continue to jeopardise national efforts by weakening domestic industries.

Protectionism Hampered by Deficient Manufacturing Infrastructure:

Efforts to protect the local textile industry are undermined by inadequate manufacturing infrastructure. For example, even if Nigeria enacts protectionist measures for its textile industry, the lack of operational factories, power supply issues, and scarcity of raw materials impede production capabilities. Internal problems must be addressed before anti-dumping policies can be effectively implemented. This sub-theme emphasizes the need to solve internal challenges before enforcing protectionist measures. An informant had this to say

Some internal problems in Nigeria should be monitored before anti-dumping policies are discussed. You are telling somebody importing clothes to feed his family to stop importing clothes because it's dumped and will affect the economy. At the same time, you are in a country where you need to have up to what is required to meet the needs of the people. You can't even say, oh, there is any textile company that can produce what you want to sell. So, if the person stops dumping and importation, what is the next move the government has? So, they should first solve the internal problem before they can move on to saying, oh, this and that (KII, 2024).

Salami (2024) affirms this position, asserting that inappropriate government policies, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient support for farmers, poor technological skills, and competition from low-priced imports have frustrated textile manufacturing efforts.

Consumer Preferences and the "Aba" phenomenon

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Consumer preference for imported goods, often perceived as higher quality, poses a significant challenge to protectionist policies. Despite bans or tariffs, the demand for these imported products remains high, driven by consumer dissatisfaction with locally produced goods. One respondent observed, "Consumers prefer imported goods, believing they are of higher quality, which undermines our protectionist policies." This sub-theme highlights the impact of consumer behaviour on the effectiveness of protectionist measures. Another informant had this to say:

A bale of new clothes costs between 450,000 and 800,000 Naira. Meanwhile, someone going to Aba to buy some clothes may not spend up to 450,000; it may just be 200,000 to buy those clothes. However, the quality in Aba is not top-notch. So people would prefer to go with second-hand clothes because they feel, why would I buy clothes for maybe 2,000, and it's losing by the hedges and all? Nigerian-made clothes are not sewn well.

The "Aba" phenomenon refers to the perception that goods made locally are inferior to those imported. Hence, second-hand clothes are perceived to be of higher quality than the local alternatives. Despite the high quality of goods made in Nigeria, Nigerians are not satisfied with them owing to a dependency mentality. Thus, the appellation of "Aba made" is a phenomenon that has stifled efforts at self-reliance.

Therefore, neoliberalism is the structural basis for protectionist policies and challenges, and it addresses how institutional weaknesses in Nigeria facilitate the practice of dumping. Institutional weaknesses in Nigeria, such

as inadequate policy implementation, corruption, and poor infrastructure, create an environment conducive to dumping. These weaknesses prevent effective enforcement of protectionist policies, allowing the continued influx of dumped goods and undermining local industries. Ayoade, Orisadare, Adediwura, & Ofino, (2023) posit that Nigeria needs to reinforce its poor institutional quality to strengthen national economic development. Similarly, Ogbuagu, Ubi and Effiom (2014) aver that it is not a dearth of funds that is responsible for infrastructural decay in the power sector (electricity) cum manufacturing in Nigeria but complete misappropriation of funds manifested as corruption.

Likewise, it assesses consumer preference's role in the effectiveness of protectionist policies in Nigeria. Consumer preference for imported goods, often perceived as superior in quality, undermines the effectiveness of protectionist policies in Nigeria. Despite bans or tariffs, the high demand for imported products persists, driven by dissatisfaction with the quality of locally produced goods, making it challenging to reduce reliance on imported textiles. This aligns with Ogunnaike's (2010) findings that factors such as price, product package, experience and quality account for Nigerian consumers' preference for imported goods.

Furthermore, it examined how Nigeria's commitment to international trade agreements impacts its ability to implement protectionist measures. Nigeria's commitment to global trade agreements and globalisation principles limits its ability to implement protectionist measures effectively. These agreements require market liberalisation, complicating efforts to curb dumping practices and protect local industries.

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Findings

The findings show that trade liberalisation has been a significant catalyst for furthering dumping in Nigeria. This aligns with the position of Agbarakwe and Bredino (2024) that liberalisation policies have stifled domestic productivity, making Nigeria a consumer of foreign products. Similarly, Obalade (2014) aver that this urbane economic war would continue unless developing nations prioritise their national economic interest. Buttressing this position, Bankole, Babatunde and Kilishi (2014) opine that trade liberalisation exerts downward pressure on the prices of local textiles and reduces profit margins for local producers.

Also, Nigeria's epileptic power supply has been a significant hurdle for textile manufacturers as it translates to increased cost of production, lower productivity and decreased national competitiveness compared to textiles from other nations. This inadvertently increases the cost of made-in-Nigeria clothes irrespective of the quality, making second-hand clothes a better alternative. The National Bureau of Statistics Report (2020) and Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (2020) reinforce that between 2015 and 2020, power supply decreased by 6.36%, hampering economic growth in the textile sector. Similarly, the Power Sector Mid-Year Report aver that despite an improvement in power generation to 4723 MW in July 2024, the industry still faces significant obstacles (Adebayo, 2024).

Furthermore, the study reveals that consumer preference for imported goods, often perceived as higher in quality, poses a significant challenge to protectionist policies. Thus, despite bans or tariffs, the demand for these imported

products remains high, driven by consumer dissatisfaction with locally produced goods. Ugwuja and Chukwukere (2021) posit that the majority of young Nigerians have a preference for foreign products, and this has made protectionist policies redundant and ineffective. This resonates with Shuaib's (2022) position that Nigerians are enthusiastic about foreign goods and are obsessed with anything imported. Bankole (2014) also confirm that a significant portion of the population prefers imported textiles, driven by factors such as perceived quality, variety, and status associated with foreign brands.

Additionally, the study affirms that second-hand textile fabric has brought about a decline in the textile sector, and dumping is booming in Nigeria because of its affordability, soft power damage to Nigeria's rich cultural heritage, lack of self-reliance, reduced government revenue, and job losses which have severe effects on Nigeria's economic development. For instance, in 2022, Nigeria was the 42nd most prominent exporter of raw cotton globally (OECD,2022). This shows a strong potential for textile production cum economic growth of the nation. However, according to the National Union of Textile Garment and Tailoring Workers of Nigeria (NUTGTWN), paradoxically, around 90% of textile products in Nigeria are imported into the country annually (Vanguard,2024)

Conclusion

The complexities of textile dumping present significant challenges and opportunities for economic development. The influx of second-hand clothing has become a source of income and a cheap clothing option for many

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Nigerians. This implies that other measures must be explored beyond protectionist policies to decipher the intricacies surrounding dumping in Nigeria and workable solutions embraced. Also, Nigeria has not been able to benefit maximally from global trade due to her mono-economy, thus, has been a mere participant in international agreements of the WTO. Ekong (2019) and Adebisi (2019) argue that internal factors within Nigeria, like inadequate infrastructure, bureaucratic gaps, institutional weakness, and substandard products, have placed the nation in a disadvantageous position in international trade.

Therefore, protectionist policies without requisite investment in infrastructure, power supply, human capital, and cultural re-orientation backed up with strong consumer demand for made-in-Nigeria goods, the pull and push factors that further dumping would continue to strangle our home industries. Nonetheless, allowing dumping to ensue devoid of any law can jeopardize the political unity which furthers the contemporary World Trade Organisation system.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this paper the following recommendations are made:

- Nigeria should focus on economic diversification and invest in infrastructures, particularly power supply, to boost the textile manufacturing sector. This can help her attain self-reliance and garner from international trade agreements and global trade.
- The Ministry of Trade and Industry, in conjunction with the Bank of Industry (BOI), should

support domestic textile industries through loans and subsidies, and domestic manufacturers should ensure better quality and standards.

- The Nigeria Customs Service should improve enforcement mechanisms for the existing ban on second-hand textile fabric and leverage new technologies to improve border surveillance and port inspection, check the smuggling of this contraband, and properly impose penalties on violators.
- The National Orientation Agency should embark on consumer education on how dumping affects the country's quest for economic development and the benefit of supporting local manufacturers.

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