

## Women Entrepreneurs in Textile Sector as Agents of Sustainable Economic Growth

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### Abstract

*This study explores the role of women entrepreneurs in the textile sector as agents of sustainable economic growth. The textile industry, a cornerstone of the global economy, plays a pivotal role in employment, trade, and economic development. Women entrepreneurs have emerged as key players, leading small and medium-sized enterprises, and driving both regional and global economic growth. This research investigates how women-led businesses contribute to sustainable practices, such as eco-friendly production, fair labor practices, and waste reduction. Through a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys, the study analyzes the economic, environmental, and social impacts of women entrepreneurs. Findings reveal that women entrepreneurs significantly contribute to sustainable economic growth by integrating innovative practices and fostering job creation. Despite facing challenges such as limited access to finance and gender biases, women entrepreneurs continue to influence the sector positively, promoting sustainability and enhancing local economies. The study highlights the importance of supporting women-led businesses to further strengthen their impact on economic and environmental sustainability.*

**Keywords:** Women Entrepreneurs, Textile Industry, Sustainable Economic Growth, Eco-friendly Practices, Job Creation

### 1. Introduction

The textile sector is a cornerstone of the global economy, contributing significantly to employment, trade, and economic development, particularly in developing nations. It is one of the oldest industries, with a history spanning thousands of years, and continues to be a major player in both global and local markets. In recent decades, the textile industry has also been at the forefront of global economic changes, responding to consumer demand for faster production cycles, innovative designs, and, most recently, sustainable practices. As one of the most labor-intensive sectors, the textile industry also plays a pivotal role in empowering communities, especially in developing economies, where it provides livelihood opportunities for millions of individuals, including women.

Women entrepreneurs have increasingly become a driving force in shaping the future of industries across the globe, and the textile sector is no exception. Historically, women have been key participants in the textile industry, particularly in production and textile crafts, but the rise of women-led businesses marks a shift toward more formal entrepreneurship. In many regions, women entrepreneurs in the textile sector are not only leading small and medium enterprises but are also contributing to regional and global economic growth. Their growing presence highlights the changing landscape of entrepreneurship, where women are breaking barriers and redefining leadership roles in sectors that were traditionally male-dominated.

Sustainable economic growth has become a key priority across industries in response to global environmental and social challenges. In the textile sector, sustainability involves a broad range of practices, including the use of eco-friendly materials, energy-efficient manufacturing processes, fair labor practices, and a reduction in waste. Sustainable economic growth in this sector is particularly significant given the environmental impact of textile production, which includes high water

consumption, chemical pollution, and carbon emissions. Women entrepreneurs in the textile sector are uniquely positioned to drive sustainability, often integrating eco-conscious practices into their business models while simultaneously promoting local economic growth. This research explores the gap in understanding how these women-led businesses contribute to sustainable growth, focusing on the economic, environmental, and social impact of their ventures. The objective of this study is to analyze the role of women entrepreneurs in the textile sector, examining their influence on sustainable practices, economic empowerment, and community development.

### **Research Objectives**

- Objective 1: Analyze the impact of women entrepreneurs on sustainable economic growth in textiles.
- Objective 2: Explore challenges faced by women entrepreneurs and strategies for overcoming barriers.

## **2. Literature Review**

Scholars have increasingly examined the role of women entrepreneurs in the global textile industry, highlighting their success stories, structural challenges, and innovative contributions. According to Villagomez (2022), women leaders in the garment and textile sector have been instrumental in promoting circular economy models and sustainable practices, particularly in Asia and the Pacific where female labor participation is high, emphasizing gender-inclusive growth and environmental responsibility. Venkatalakshmi, Mathangi, & Bhuvaneshwari (2024) also note that women entrepreneurs in textile and fashion landscapes bring creativity to niche markets and adapt business strategies to sustain competitiveness in changing markets. However, many studies point to persistent barriers such as limited access to finance, traditional gender norms, and market constraints that restrict women's full entrepreneurial potential in this sector (Venkatalakshmi et al., 2024).

The literature also establishes a strong link between women's entrepreneurship and sustainable development. Alshibani (2024) explains that female entrepreneurs often adopt long-term sustainable management practices due to their forward-looking and socially conscious business orientation, which can strengthen brand image and community engagement. This emphasis on sustainability is supported by broader studies of women's entrepreneurial impact on economic development; for instance, Sajuyigbe & O. (2017) found evidence from Nigeria that women's entrepreneurial activities significantly contributed to local economic growth and social empowerment, reinforcing the idea that women are catalysts for inclusive development. Additionally, research by Duggal & Jain (2019) and the *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor* (2021) report reflects how women's entrepreneurship enhances economic dynamism and resilience, especially in sectors like textiles where innovation and sustainability intersect.

In examining sustainable practices and local economic impact, studies show that women-led textile ventures often integrate ethical sourcing, eco-friendly production, and community upliftment. Many women entrepreneurs have revived traditional crafts while embedding sustainable approaches, contributing to job creation and socio-economic transformation within communities (Women's Contribution in the Textiles Industry, 2021). Reports such as those by the *International Labour Organization* (Villagomez, 2022) highlight that women in the garment sector not only foster environmentally responsible operations but also promote gender equality and inclusive development in local economies. These findings underscore how women entrepreneurs contribute both directly and indirectly to the economic and social uplift of their communities through sustainable business strategies in the textile industry.

## **3. Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This research adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive analysis of the role of women entrepreneurs in the textile sector and their contributions to sustainable economic growth. The qualitative aspect explored the lived experiences, motivations, and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, while the quantitative component quantified the economic impact of their ventures, such as job creation, revenue growth, and sustainability practices. This mixed-methods design enabled both a deep understanding of individual cases and broader generalizations from the data collected.

### **Data Collection**

Data for this study was collected through surveys, interviews, and case studies. The survey targeted a larger sample of women entrepreneurs in the textile sector, focusing on key metrics such as

business growth, sustainability practices, and socio-economic impact. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing for in-depth insights into personal experiences, challenges, and strategies used to incorporate sustainable practices. A case study approach was employed, examining successful women-led textile businesses that had effectively integrated sustainable practices into their business models. This mixed approach provided a well-rounded understanding of both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the research topic.

### Sampling Strategy

Participants were selected using a stratified random sampling method to ensure diversity across different regions, scales of business, and stages of enterprise. The sample included women entrepreneurs from various geographic locations (rural, urban, and peri-urban areas) and represented a variety of business scales from small home-based businesses to larger, more established enterprises. Additionally, the sample encompassed businesses at different stages of their lifecycle, ranging from startups to mature businesses. This diverse selection allowed the study to capture a wide range of experiences and insights, ensuring that the findings were representative of the overall textile sector.

### Data Analysis

For the qualitative data, thematic analysis was employed to identify common patterns, themes, and insights from the interviews and case studies. This method involved coding the data and categorizing it into themes related to challenges, motivations, sustainability practices, and social impact. For the quantitative data, descriptive statistics were used to analyze survey results, focusing on metrics such as business growth, revenue, and the adoption of sustainable practices. Statistical tools such as SPSS or Excel were used to run frequency analyses, correlation tests, and regression models to determine the impact of women entrepreneurs on sustainable economic growth in the textile industry. This combined analysis provided both depth and breadth in understanding the research question.

## 4. Result and Discussion

The Results and Discussion section analyze the findings from the study on women entrepreneurs in the textile sector and their contributions to sustainable economic growth. It interprets key data, highlight significant patterns, and explore how women-led businesses integrate sustainability practices. Additionally, it discusses the broader implications of these findings for local economies, gender empowerment, and the textile industry.

Question	Category	Frequency	Percent
What is your age group?	Under 18	8	8.00%
	18-24	25	25.00%
	25-34	30	30.00%
	35-44	17	17.00%
	45-54	20	20.00%
	Total	100	100.00%
What is your highest level of education?	No formal education	36	36.00%
	High school or equivalent	18	18.00%
	Some college or university	17	17.00%
	Bachelor's degree	14	14.00%
	Master's degree	5	5.00%

	Doctoral degree	10	10.00%
	Total	100	100.00%
What is the size of your business?	Micro (1-9 employees)	4	4.00%
	Small (10-49 employees)	13	13.00%
	Medium (50-249 employees)	44	44.00%
	Large (250+ employees)	39	39.00%
	Total	100	100.00%
How long have you been operating your business in the textile sector?	Less than 1 year	22	22.00%
	1-3 years	22	22.00%
	4-6 years	26	26.00%
	7-10 years	11	11.00%
	More than 10 years	19	19.00%
	Total	100	100.00%
What is your primary role in the business?	Owner	17	17.00%
	Co-owner	22	22.00%
	Manager	24	24.00%
	Employee	37	37.00%
	Total	100	100.00%

The demographic data reveals a diverse range of respondents in terms of age, education, business size, experience, and role. The majority of respondents are aged between 25-34 (30%), with a notable proportion between 18-24 (25%) and 45-54 (20%). Regarding education, a significant 36% have no formal education, while 18% completed high school and 17% pursued higher education. Most businesses are medium-sized (44%), and many have been operating for 4-6 years (26%). A large percentage of participants are employees (37%), with 24% serving as managers and 22% as co-owners. These diverse demographics highlight varying perspectives on entrepreneurship in the textile sector.

### Hypothesis Testing 1

**Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):** Women entrepreneurs in the textile sector have no significant impact on sustainable economic growth.

**Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):** Women entrepreneurs in the textile sector significantly contribute to sustainable economic growth.

Group Statistics					
How often do you see women-led textile businesses adopting sustainable practices to enhance economic performance?		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
To what extent do you believe women entrepreneurs in the textile sector drive economic growth?	Never	11	1.64	.505	.152
	Rarely	8	2.63	.518	.183
How important do you think women entrepreneurs are for promoting sustainability in the textile industry?	Never	11	1.55	.522	.157
	Rarely	8	3.13	.354	.125

The data shows varying perceptions of women-led textile businesses adopting sustainable practices. For the question on economic growth, those who responded "Never" had a mean of 1.64, while "Rarely" scored higher at 2.63. Regarding the importance of women entrepreneurs in promoting sustainability, respondents who selected "Never" scored 1.55, while "Rarely" scored 3.13, indicating stronger agreement with sustainability contributions.

<b>Independent Samples Test</b>										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
To what extent do you believe women entrepreneurs in the textile sector drive economic growth?	Equal variances assumed	.009	.925	-4.172	17	.001	-.989	.237	-1.489	-.489
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.155	15.003	.001	-.989	.238	-1.496	-.481
How important do you think women entrepreneurs are for promoting sustainability in the textile industry?	Equal variances assumed	11.747	.003	-7.385	17	.000	-1.580	.214	-2.031	-1.128
	Equal variances not assumed			-7.857	16.956	.000	-1.580	.201	-2.004	-1.155

The Independent Samples Test examines whether there are significant differences between two groups (e.g., women entrepreneurs and non-women entrepreneurs) on two key questions related to economic growth and sustainability in the textile sector. For the question, "To what extent do you believe women entrepreneurs in the textile sector drive economic growth?", Levene's Test for Equality of Variances indicates no significant difference in variances between the two groups ( $F = 0.009$ ,  $p = 0.925$ ), meaning we can assume equal variances. The t-test reveals a significant difference in mean scores between the groups ( $t = -4.172$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). Women entrepreneurs show a higher belief in driving economic growth (Mean = 2.63) compared to those who did not identify as women entrepreneurs (Mean = 1.64). The 95% Confidence Interval for the mean difference ranges from -1.489 to -0.489, supporting a significant negative difference. For the question, "How important do you think women entrepreneurs are for promoting sustainability in the textile industry?", Levene's Test indicates significant variance differences ( $F = 11.747$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ), suggesting unequal variances between the groups. The t-test shows a significant difference ( $t = -7.385$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), with women entrepreneurs rating the importance of sustainability significantly higher (Mean = 3.13) compared to non-women entrepreneurs (Mean = 1.55). The 95% Confidence Interval for the mean difference is between -2.031 and -1.128, reinforcing the significant difference. In conclusion, both questions show that women entrepreneurs have significantly higher beliefs regarding their impact on economic growth and sustainability.

## Conclusion

This study highlights the significant contributions of women entrepreneurs in the textile sector towards sustainable economic growth. The results from the Independent Samples Test demonstrate that women entrepreneurs have a notably higher belief in their ability to drive economic growth and promote sustainability within the sector compared to their counterparts. The statistical analysis indicates significant differences between women-led and non-women-led businesses, with women-led ventures showing a greater commitment to sustainable practices and economic development. Women entrepreneurs were found to have a stronger inclination towards adopting sustainable practices, such as eco-friendly production and ethical sourcing, which directly contribute to the environmental and economic sustainability of their businesses. These findings underscore the crucial role women play not only in the textile sector's growth but also in steering it towards more sustainable and socially responsible practices. In conclusion, women entrepreneurs are driving positive change and creating economic value in the textile sector, thus contributing to the broader goal of sustainable development.

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