

Business Performance of Local Apparel Traders in Nairobi's Competitive Liberalised Market

¹Beatrice, E. Imo, ²Olive Mugenda and ²Keren Mburugu,

¹Chepkoilel University College, Kenya

²Kenyatta University, Kenya

Corresponding Author: Beatrice, E. Imo

Abstract

This paper addresses the business performance of local apparel traders given new challenges resulting from a new liberalised market in Nairobi. Data were collected using interview schedules and observation checklists. A random sample of 90 apparel traders was drawn from Kenyatta Market, Jericho Market and the Central Business District for interview. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software (SPSS®). Results showed that lack of customers, stiff competition and lack of government support were the major problems facing over 50% of the traders. For most traders, providing high quality merchandise was the main strategy used to solve their problems. Government support by way of providing loans and making licence prices affordable were suggested as ways of creating a level trading ground for all traders. However, the traders' business performance provided adequate returns to meet both personal and business needs. The Ministry of Trade and Industry should formulate mechanisms that will enable apparel traders to access information easily on existing trends and policies as they affect their businesses leading to local product quality and trade improvements. Lack of a level trading ground for all traders remained the main deterrent to their success

Keywords: problems experienced, measures undertaken, apparel traders, Nairobi, competitive liberalised market, business performance

INTRODUCTION

Apparel needs of people have stimulated clothing production, which has become more specialised and varied. It has given rise to sectors such as fibre and fabric production, and apparel design, marketing and sales. As nations develop and their populations become more educated, conscious of their appearance, and aware of what the market offers in terms of apparel, demands for the same have become more diverse and yet specific to each person. These demands have given rise to a more diversified industry, according to the type of apparel produced, target clientele or consumers, size of apparel producing establishment, exclusiveness of designers and location of various establishments.

As the second largest employer in manufacturing, Kenya's textile and clothing industry has been facing a number of internal and external problems such as duty exemptions, illegal imports, low quality of raw cotton, high costs of production, consumer preferences for imported products (Nyang'or, 1994; Otieno, 1990; Werbeloff, 1987), and lack of planning (ADEC, 1998). Before the 1993 import liberalisation, Kenya's textile industry was effectively protected by the Kenyan government. In addition to utilizing locally available raw materials, local apparel manufacturers concentrated on the domestic market

and paid little attention to product quality and pricing (ADEC, 1998). Though market liberalisation allowed apparel manufacturers and traders to buy and sell their products within the international market, it also increased importation of textiles and ready-made garments (both new and second-hand) from the Far East into the Kenyan market, diversifying Kenyan consumer choices. These items were cheaper than locally produced apparel, thus redirecting consumer preferences (Nyang'or, 1994), and causing local producers to experience low sales and financial difficulties that resulted in close-down of firms such as the Allied Industries Limited, Kisumu Cotton Mills (Kicomi) and Heritage Woollen Mills (ADEC, 1998; Barasa, 2001). Further, although import substitution was encouraged, penetration to export markets was not very successful because Kenyan firms that were making good profit in the heavily protected domestic market shunned away from the more competitive and risky export markets. Among the few firms that developed some export trade were the Manufacturing Under Bond (MUB) and Export Processing Zone (EPZ) garment factories mainly to the USA, the United Kingdom and, to a small extent, to the Common Market for East and Southern African (COMESA) countries. The apparel industry also experienced the quota system imposed by America on imports of shorts and shirts that led to a fall in

exports of Kenya's textile products. For example, there was a fall of 88% in shirt exports in 1993 and 1994. This fall affected other products not allocated quota, such as pillowcases and many of the export-oriented firms under MUB, and EPZ closed down or started operating at low capacities (ADEC, 1998). Performance of local apparel firms remained subdued in 1998, despite the government stepping in to implement tariff restrictions on imported garments in 1999. This was due to the inability of the textile industry to compete with lowly priced imports, depressed local market demand, and a combination of infrastructural constraints (CBS, 1999; CBS, 2000). With the recent lifting of the punitive quota imposed on Kenyan textiles by the United States, increased exports of Kenyan textiles is expected, although this remains to be seen (Bundotich, 2000).

However, as salespersons, apparel traders should have knowledge of their merchandise and be able to promote their sales intelligently to enhance career stability and profits for the business because the customers they attract will feel satisfied and come back for more products (Addison, Gillespie & Wingate, 1964). Research on imported apparel in the area of consumer preferences and selection (Nyang'or, 1994) has indicated that traders of locally produced apparel are unable to meet consumer needs due to poor quality, and thus are often out-competed by traders of imported apparel. Regardless of the type of apparel being traded, the ability of the trader to influence preferences of a consumer contributes significantly to his or her purchasing decisions. Thus with increasing numbers of imported apparel traders in Nairobi and the stigma attached to locally produced apparel may lead to eventual collapse of the local apparel industry in Kenya. Thus, there is a need to implement strategies and/or policies for a level playing ground in the apparel industry for the benefit of local traders. This study, therefore, sought to answer two pertinent questions: What challenges are the traders facing resulting from market liberalisation? Has market liberalisation affected their business' performance in Nairobi? These questions, among others, need clear affirmative answers if traders of local apparel are to capture consumer preferences and meet their clothing requirements.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was carried out in 2003 in Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya and a major business centre. The Nairobi County Council has designated several market centres (as defined by roads or enclosures comprising of up to 100 shops rented/ assigned to traders of different merchandise) where different types of apparel traders are found. The apparel traders were stratified according to the apparel they sold: new imported, second-hand, locally manufactured, and custom-tailors/designers. Purposive sampling was used to select market centres in which there were

at least 100 apparel traders selling the aforementioned categories of clothing. From the market centres that qualified (Jericho, Kenyatta markets and the Central Business District), a sample of 90 apparel traders (15%) was selected to participate in the study. The interview schedule was used to obtain clear and in-depth information addressing the respondents' business problems, possible solutions and performance. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software (SPSS®). The results were presented using frequencies and percentages obtained. Results from the checklist were used to describe sales promotion techniques used by the respondents, elaborate findings from the interview and explain unexpected phenomena.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problems Experienced by Apparel Traders

❖ Lack of Government Support

The study revealed that 89% of the apparel traders in Nairobi said the government did not support their businesses in any way. 11% of the traders identified license provision as the way in which the government supported their businesses. Interestingly, 41% of the traders did not need government support, 46% thought they were better off being on their own, 18% were self-employed, and 18% were responsible for their own businesses, while 15% thought the government could not do anything anyway. This could be attributed to the fact that a number of government supported textile and apparel firms (Heritage Woollen Mills, Kisumu Cotton Mills [KICOMI]) have closed down (CBS, 2000). In addition, with employees in these industries being retrenched (CBS, 1999); apparel traders became wary of government support to their businesses. The other 59% of the respondents, however, thought they needed some kind of government support for the businesses' to succeed. This could be attributed to the fact that most traders lacked knowledge on other lending institutions or could not afford bank loans.

Other Problems Experienced by Apparel Traders

An overwhelming majority (91%) of the respondents experienced various problems while conducting business, compared to only 9% who did not experience any problems at all. The major problems faced by most apparel traders were those associated lack of customers especially during low season (62%), and too many competitors selling the same items in the same place (60%) thus reducing the amount of clients one trader could receive (Table 1). As a result of market liberalisation, apparel traders have had access to a variety and yet similar merchandise, as their sources (Dubai, Europe and America). Additionally, harassment by the Nairobi City Council officials was cited as a major problem by about 24% of the traders.

Table 1: Problems experienced by respondents at their apparel businesses

Problems	Frequency	%
Lack of customers	56	62.2
Too many competitors of same items	54	60.0
Harassment from tax/license officers	22	24.4
Stubborn customers	3	3.3
High rent	6	6.7
Credit customers delay to pay	2	2.2
Lack of money to run business	7	7.8
Elec., water rationing	11	12.2
Con-men, shop lifters, thieves	4	4.4
Delay in delivery by agent	1	1.1

* Multiple responses were allowed

The other major problems were: irregular electricity and water supply, lack of money and high rent for their premises. For example, most respondents paid as high as Ksh 3,500 per month in Jericho market and Ksh 5,000 in Kenyatta market to stall owners who in turn paid the Nairobi City Council only Ksh 200 as service charge monthly. The story was no better in the Central Business District where most traders with stands within a business premise paid a daily charge of Ksh 350. In addition to these high rents, the goodwill required by premise owners was sometimes not affordable to most apparel traders. Other problems common to most traders included con men who gave fake currency notes, thieves and shoplifters, stubborn customers, delayed payments by credit customers, and delays in deliveries by his agent. A survey carried out by CBS *et al.* (1999) also identified the aforementioned problems facing traders.

SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED Suggestions to Possible Ways of Government Support

Of the traders who wanted government support, 28% needed loans. This could be attributed to the fact that many traders may have lacked the collateral required to get credit, thus needed alternative loans that could be acquired without collateral. The traders may also have lacked information on the availability and source of loans from commercial institutions. The traders also suggested that prices be made affordable by reducing license fees, taxes and customs charges (28%). These suggestions would enable the apparel traders meet their operating costs and at the same time reap profits since they would have more capital. Other suggestions by these apparel traders included government support in making apparel from the Export Processing Zones and Manufacturing Under Bond available locally instead of local traders having to import them at higher cost (Table 2). Although these high quality products are very appealing to the local market, making them available locally would deviate from the objectives of these industries. The apparel traders need to be educated on the role of

EPZs and MUBs. This would be an excellent opportunity for the department of Textiles, Clothing and Design and the Department of Family and Consumer studies (Kenyatta University) to seek funds for workshops, to educate existing and upcoming apparel traders on the role of EPZs and MUBs. Further, local producers can be encouraged to provide items of similar high quality or better still, come up with a similar local processing zone.

Table 2: Respondents' Suggestions on Possible Ways of Government Support

Ways of possible government support	Frequency	%
Make items from Export Processing Zones locally available	3	3.3
Reduce custom charges	9	10.0
Make prices affordable for traders	16	17.7
Give loans	25	27.8
Provide education	4	4.4
Tax "mitumba" importers	2	2.2
Discourage import of substandard goods	1	1.1
Stop illegal imports into Kenya	2	2.2
Stop all exhibitions and markets that do not pay tax	3	3.3
Stop NCC harassment	2	2.2

* Multiple responses were allowed

Additionally, the government could support provision of education, especially in the area of marketing, and stop exhibitions and markets that do not pay tax so as to create a level ground for all traders. Interestingly, only 2% of the respondents said the government should tax "mitumba" importers, discourage import of substandard goods and illegal goods, and that the Nairobi City Council should stop harassing them as ways of supporting their businesses. The government of Kenya, in Sessional Paper No 2 of 1992 on Small Scale and Jua Kali Enterprises (SSJKE), had reiterated its support of small businesses through developing them, creating easy access to credit and harmonising licensing procedures. However, the findings of this study indicated that these proposals have not been fully realised as apparel traders have made similar suggestions to the government. It is clear that apparel traders need to look for other sources of funding if their businesses are to prosper.

Strategies used by Apparel Traders to Solve Problems they Experienced in their Businesses

Some of the strategies cited by most traders solve their problems included improving the quality of garments they provided to their clients, thus attracting more customers to their shops (36% of the respondents), and maintaining regular customers who have been buying from them for a long time (23%). Some traders introduced unique items different from those of their competitors since customers often looked for new and different clothing (Table 3). Other traders went to offices or used friends to look for customers as a way of promoting their goods.

Kerosene lamps and charcoal irons were used because of the irregular electricity supply. Making tax payments on time, or negotiating for rescheduling of deadlines with tax officers, and simply avoiding the NCC officers when they came to their shops helped avoid their harassment. Lowering profits so as to make the prices of their merchandise affordable to several customers and keeping contact with their old customers assisted some traders.

When the shop was full of customers, traders sought assistance from their fellow traders to avoid being conned or stolen from. If no assistance was available, then the apparel trader would serve one customer as the others waited. Surprisingly, 4% of the respondents said they would just wait for better times as they had no way of solving any problems they experienced while conducting their businesses. Harmonising prices of similar items among fellow traders and ordering for merchandise on time so as to avoid any delays also solved some problems.

Table 3: Frequencies showing the Strategies used by Apparel Traders to Solve Problems facing their Businesses

Strategies	Frequency	%
Negotiating with City Council	6	6.7
Maintain own clients	21	23.3
Look for customers	7	7.8
Promoting own items	7	7.8
Providing high quality items	32	35.6
Extensive marketing	1	1.1
Keep contact with old clients	4	4.5
Just waiting	4	4.4
Agree with colleagues on selling prices	1	1.1
Selecting unique items	11	12.4
Pay City Council on time	6	6.7
Work hard	9	10.0
Lower profit	6	6.7
Use lamps, charcoal irons	9	10.0
Avoid tax officers	5	5.6
Seek assistance from colleagues	4	4.4
Make orders on time	1	4.0

* Multiple responses were allowed

Measures Taken by Apparel Traders to become Competitive

❖ **Budgeting and Restocking Ahead of Time**

Overall, 69% of the apparel traders budgeted on time, usually 1-6 weeks ahead of time (88% of those who budget). They budgeted on time because 53% of the respondents wanted to maintain the required stock for the business so as to meet their customers' demands (16% of the respondents). Other apparel traders wanted to monitor the performance of their stock and even plan better (9%) while for 6%, budgeting made purchasing easier. Other reasons included being able to allocate money to meet their business and personal needs (6%), to avoid inconveniencing their customers when they came in asking for specific merchandise (4%), in order to plan for high seasons and to avoid overstocking (3%). Although traders engaged in short term planning, budgeting/restocking ahead of time

prepared apparel traders to face unforeseen eventualities that could affect their businesses.

Reasons for not Budgeting on Time

For the 31% of the total respondents who never budgeted at all, the main reason they gave was that they preferred to buy items when demanded by the customers instead of tying down money in stock that did not clear quickly (62%). Others had to take what their suppliers provided (14%). The present poor economy did not allow them to know what to expect thus, the traders did not want to take any risks (14%). In addition, low sales usually made their stocks to last long (10%). This is inconsistent with normal business practice; therefore, in the event of any crisis (theft, lack of capital), it could easily lead to the business' closure. These traders clearly lacked proper training in their line of business. Additionally, the traders may have difficulty getting loans, because they may not have any proof of collateral.

Choice of Apparel to Sell

Among the factors considered by apparel traders when selecting the type of apparel to sell, 81% of the respondents said their target clientele were very important, and they often selected clothing that would appeal to their target clientele (Table 4). The location of the business was also important when selecting the type of items to sell (69%). The location had to be easily accessible to customers, secure, affordable, of good reputation and having the clientele the trader was interested in. Also, 63% of the respondents considered popular fashion when they selected apparel to sell as this appealed to most of their clientele. Also important in selecting apparel to sell was the money available (53%) since this often limited what they could buy. Interestingly, only 18% considered the quality of apparel when selecting items to sell. Less than 20% of the respondents considered desirable design features and orders made by their clients when selecting items to sell. These were mainly tailors and designers. It was evident that when choosing apparel to sell, the traders were guided by factors customers considered when selecting items to buy as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Table 4: Factors Respondents Considered when Selecting Items to Sell

Factors	Frequency	%
Money available	48	53.3
Target clientele	73	81.1
Popular fashion	59	63.3
Quality	16	17.8
Location of the business	62	68.9
Desirable design features	8	8.9
Orders made by clients	11	12.4

* Multiple responses were allowed

Factors Necessary for an Apparel Trader to Prosper

Results showed that according to most apparel traders (66%), a good business location was important to both the trader and customer. Other important factors for prosperity in apparel trade included relevant education (58%), work experience (53%), pleasant personality (52%), readiness to take the challenge (33%), and available capital (22%). In addition, having clientele for your merchandise (7%), and being a good salesperson (6%) were necessary for a trader to prosper. Only 2% of the respondents felt a prosperous apparel trader should not start a business now due to the poor performance of Kenya’s economy. This indicated that apparel traders were aware of important factors necessary for them to prosper. What remained was for them to adopt more of these factors to increase their business performance.

Visual Merchandising Techniques

The study established that visual merchandising techniques were important in turning a customer’s browsing into purchase of an item. The survey revealed that interior displays were the most used form of visual merchandising techniques (90% of the respondents). These respondents mostly used interior displays by way of hanging clothes on the walls (90%), as well as displaying some merchandise on a counter/table positioned close or next to the shop’s entrance (53.3%), while some (38.9%) had shelves rails in the shops for displaying their merchandise (Table 5). Only 10% of the respondents displayed items along the aisle. Six percent had items displayed at the centre (island) of the shop. Four percent of the traders had a showcase display of their most stunning merchandise. Though displaying merchandise in the aisle or having a showcase are very effective visual merchandising techniques, they are costly and require some skill hence very few traders could use these techniques. Four percent of the respondents used the ceiling to display their merchandise.

Table 5: Respondents’ Use of Visual Merchandising Techniques in their Businesses

Merchandising Techniques	Frequency	%
Window displays	27	30.0
□ Hanging clothes	27	30.0
□ Using mannequins	13	14.4
□ Window painting	8	8.9
Interior displays	81	10.0
□ Counter/table	48	53.3
□ Wall	81	90.0
□ Shelves/ rail	35	38.9
□ Aisle	9	10.0
□ Island (centre)	5	5.6
□ Showcase	4	4.4
□ Ceiling	4	4.4
Door display	74	82.2
□ Premise sign	35	38.9
□ Hanging clothes	35	61.1

* Multiple responses were allowed

It was also observed that a large proportion (82.2%) of the apparel traders used door displays as a form of visual merchandising in their business premises. This was probably to attract clients passing by to come into the shop. Sixty-one percent of the respondents hung clothes on the door for browsing customers to see and may be buy. On the other hand, 38.9% of the apparel traders had a premise sign on, above or close to the doorway. This assisted potential clients in locating various business premises with ease.

Window displays were also common among 30% of the respondents. All these respondents hung their merchandise on windows for display. However, 14.4% of the respondents used mannequins to display their apparel. Window painting was also done (8.9%), especially during Easter and Christmas. Notably, only the shops with adequate window space used this visual merchandising technique.

Respondents’ Attitudes towards their Occupation

Almost all apparel traders (94%) enjoyed their present occupation since they found pleasure in seeing a customer satisfied after purchasing an item (32%), their occupation was a source of income (23%), Table 5. This further emphasizes the profit motive which propels one to undertake apparel trade (Dickerson *et al.*, 1997). Some simply enjoyed communicating with people (14%), had pride of ownership (10%), or liked designing clothes (5%). A few others (less than 3%) enjoyed their occupation because they felt it had a lot of potential and was challenging, or felt that they had job security (Table 6). Those who did not enjoy their occupation said it was because of depressed market conditions or was not their career as one said,

This is not my career; I just need some money for my sustenance as I look out for a job that is related to my training.

These results showed the apparel traders being optimistic and hopeful, which further indicated that the apparel industry has a bright future.

Table 6: Frequency Distribution of Respondents’ Reasons for their Attitudes towards their Occupation

	Frequency	%
Because of depressed market conditions	4	4.5
Pleasure in customer satisfaction after buying an item	28	31.8
Enjoy designing original items	4	4.5
A lot of potential	2	2.3
Job security	1	1.1
Like clothes	5	5.7
Challenging	2	2.3
Enjoy communicating with people	12	13.6
Source of income	20	22.7
Pride of ownership	9	10.2
Not his career	1	1.1
Total	90	100.0

Assessment of Apparel Business Performance

❖ **Times of High Sales**

Apparel traders were asked when their businesses received a majority of customers so as to determine their business performance. From Figure 1, an overwhelming majority of the apparel traders interviewed received over 60% of their customers between October and December, with majority being in December (93%) and November (72%). The festive seasons of Christmas and the New Year were put forth by the respondents as reasons for businesses receiving a majority of customers during the last 3 months of the year. Also, there were more tourists in the country from July to the end of the year resulting in more business. This could be attributed to fact that clients had a little more money to spend as the year drew to an end.

Some of the respondents (49%) received several customers in August while 32% received the same in April. Twenty-six percent of the apparel traders received several customers in July. This was attributed to there being plenty of functions such as weddings, parties that required people to have new clothing. During the school vacations in Easter and July some traders received a majority of customers as parents bought their children some clothes. Twelve percent of the respondents received many customers in January and February as a result of the new school year. Eleven percent of those interviewed received many customers in June. However, 9% of the respondents received a majority of customers in March. The lowest recording was in May when only 8% of the apparel traders interviewed received some customers.

❖ **Business Turn-over**

During the months when business sales were high, 20% of the apparel traders that were interviewed reported that businesses made between Ksh 0-10,000 monthly as profits (See Figure 1). Another 20% of the respondents said their businesses received between Ksh10, 001- 20,000 profit per month when they were busy. Fifteen percent of the respondents made about Ksh 40,001-50,000 per month when they received a majority of customers. Fourteen percent of those who were interviewed reported that their businesses made between Ksh 20,001-30,000 monthly when they were busy. Of those who made between Ksh 90, 001-100,000 monthly comprised 6% of the respondents. Five percent of the respondents made between Ksh 100,001-200,000 per month when they were busy. Five percent of the apparel traders that were interviewed made between Ksh.60, 001-70,000 per month and Ksh 80,001- 90,000 monthly. Of those who made between Ksh 30, 001- 40,000 per month comprised 3% of the respondents. The highest amount recorded was Ksh 300,001- 400,000 per month that was made by 3% of the respondents.

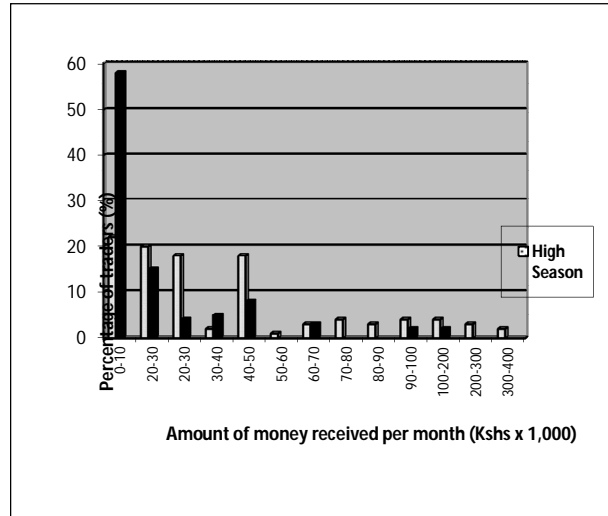


Figure 1: Average Monthly Amount of Money (profit) made per Month by Apparel Businesses during High and Low Seasons

During the months when business sales were low and apparel traders were receiving few customers, 57% of those interviewed reported that their businesses made below Ksh 10,000 profit per month (Figure 1). Ten percent of the respondents said their businesses made between Ksh 10,001-20,000 profit monthly when business was low. Those who made between Ksh 40,001-50,000 monthly comprised 6% of the respondents. Five percent of those that were interviewed said they made between Ksh 30,001-40,000 and Ksh 70,001- 80,000 each when they did not receive many customers. Four percent of the respondents made between Ksh 20, 001-30,000 and Ksh 60, 001-70,000 monthly when business was low. Seven percent of the respondents made between Ksh 90,001-100,000 monthly. Furthermore, 2% of the respondents made between Ksh 100,001-200,000 monthly when they did not receive a majority of customers. The money received per month as profit (Ksh 0-20,000) during both high and low business seasons by most (over 45%) respondents were high. According to CBS *et al.* (1999), there was a general assumption that small businesses earned very low and that the potential of earning a living, for investment and growth were weak. In 1999, a small business generated an average gross income (plus own remuneration) of Ksh 6,008 per month when the legal monthly salary for a general labourer amounted to Ksh 2,363 (CBS *et al.*, 1999). Therefore, the apparel traders' profit was 2.5 times higher than minimum wage. Even the minimum wage (Ksh 6,496) paid by small business entrepreneurs to their hired workers was 2.7 times higher than the minimum legal salary. A large proportion of the apparel traders (76%) interviewed said the money their businesses received in a year was adequate to run their businesses. This was because the money the business received met both their personal and business needs. Considering

their earnings were quite high, this can be expected. Also, the money received by the businesses was adequate because their employers were able to pay them. Twenty-four percent of the respondents said the money their businesses received in a year was inadequate to run them because it did not meet both their personal and business needs thus they had to look for additional sources of income. Also, lately business had not been good so they were not making a lot of money.

CONCLUSION

The apparel traders reported having experienced problems which included lack of customers, several competitors selling similar items and limited capital. Some traders also lacked government support for their businesses. In addition to such strategies as providing high quality apparel and using visual merchandising techniques to attract customers, the traders strongly suggested that government support would increase their business viability. The government could provide them with loans and make prices of licenses, taxes and custom charges affordable. Notably, 9% of the respondents did not experience any problems while 41% did not need government support. Most apparel traders had high sales from October-December as a result of the Christmas and New Year seasons ahead of which prompted customers to spend more.

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made:

1. Although apparel trades faced such challenges as lack of customers and stiff competition, they did not allow these challenges to compromise their business performance. Instead, the traders sought solutions to them.
2. The apparel traders felt they lacked a level trading ground where they could all flourish since they suggested that government support, by way of providing loans and making prices (license fees, taxes, custom charges) affordable, would improve their businesses.
3. With most apparel traders being in dire need of extra funds through loans, it appeared that they lacked expertise on ways of harnessing their earnings to increase their profits. This is in view of the fact that their earnings were way above those of general labourers, yet the traders could not access the much needed extra funds.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Adoption of suggestions made by the traders on ways of increasing their business viability by the Ministry of Trade and Industry and Kenya Bureau of Standards, such as providing loans to traders, making prices of license fee, taxes and custom

charges affordable, and discouraging importation of substandard and illegal apparel into Kenya.

2. The Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Kenya Bureau of Standards should formulate mechanisms that will enable apparel traders to access information easily on existing trends and policies to improve the quality of local items.

REFERENCES

Addison, B. G., Gillespie, K. R. & Wingate, I. B. (1964). *Know Your Merchandise*. (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill Inc, U.S.A.

African Development and Economic Consultants Ltd. (1998). *A Diagnostic Study On Cotton Ginning and Textiles Industry Development*, Final Draft Report. Author, Nairobi.

Barasa, L. (2001, February 17). *Textiles Firm Closes Down: Tally of Fallen Companies Grows*. Daily Nation, p. 3.Col. 1

Bundotich. J. (2000, May 23). *Trade Bill Signals New US-African Partnership*. Daily Nation, BW 7. CoJ.1.

Dickerson, K. G. & Jarnow, J. (1997). *Inside The Fashion Business* (6th ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

GOK, Central Bureau of Statistics. (1999). *Economic Survey*, Nairobi.

GOK, Central Bureau of Statistics, International Centre for Economic Growth and K-Rep Holdings Limited. (1999). *National Micro and Small Baseline Survey; Executive Summary*. Author, Nairobi.

GOK, Central Bureau of Statistics. (2000). *Economic Survey*. Nairobi.

GOK, Sessional Paper No.2 of 1992. *The Small Scale and Jua Kali Enterprises (SSJKE) in Kenya*. Nairobi.

Nyang'or, E. A. (1994). *Factors Influencing Consumer's Selection of Imported Over Local Clothing Among Working Women in Nairobi, Kenya*. Unpublished Master's Thesis. Kenyatta University, Nairobi.

Otieno, G. K. (1990). *Physiological, Psychological and Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Clothing Selection and Buying Practices Among Kenyans: A Study of Kenyatta University*. Nairobi. Unpublished Master's Thesis. Kenyatta University, Nairobi.

Werbeloff A. (1987). *Textiles in Africa: A Trade and Investment Guide*. Main Charles Publishing Ltd, United Kingdom.