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AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PRODUCTION PROCESS, MATERIAL SOURCING AND MARKETING PRACTICES OF HANDCRAFTED CROCHET MAKERS IN SOUTH-WESTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the production process of handcrafted crochet makers in South-Western Nigeria, with particular attention to the stages, opportunities and constraints that shape crochet as a craft-based micro-enterprise activity. Adopting a descriptive survey research design, data were collected from 59 professional crocheters selected through accidental sampling from online platforms (Instagram, TikTok and Twitter/X), using a validated e-questionnaire, the Production Process of Crochet Makers Questionnaire (PPCMQ), which recorded a reliability coefficient of 0.97. Data were analysed using frequency counts and simple percentages, complemented by thematic analysis of open-ended responses describing the production workflow. Findings revealed that crochet production in the region is dominated by young, fairly well-educated practitioners, with nearly two-thirds of respondents aged 18-25 years and more than half holding a Bachelor's degree. Skills are acquired predominantly through informal, self-directed means, chiefly self-teaching and YouTube tutorials, rather than formal training. The production process follows a broadly consistent sequence, beginning with customer consultation and proceeding through material selection, crocheting, finishing, multi-point quality inspection, and packaging, with production time increasing with product size and design complexity. The most significant constraint identified was the high cost and inconsistent availability of quality materials, followed by limited market access and inadequate access to

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modern production tools. Social media emerged as the dominant marketing and sales channel, while pricing remained largely cost-based, with typical profit margins falling in a moderate range. The study concludes that crochet production in South-Western Nigeria is a structured and increasingly professionalised enterprise at the level of individual practice, but remains constrained by an under-supported surrounding ecosystem, particularly in materials supply, technical training, tooling and market infrastructure. It recommends the establishment of material-supply cooperatives, incorporation of structured craft-training into vocational and entrepreneurship programmes, diversification of marketing beyond social media, and targeted financial and institutional support for craft-based micro-enterprises.

Introduction

Crochet, a needlework technique in which yarn is interlocked into fabric using a hooked needle, has evolved from a domestic craft into a visible strand of contemporary fashion production across Nigeria. Once associated mainly with home-based, largely informal handiwork, crochet-based clothing, accessories and home items have in recent years become a recognisable segment of the country's fast-growing informal fashion economy. This shift has been driven substantially by young, self-taught makers who use social media and video-sharing platforms to learn techniques, showcase finished products and reach paying customers, effectively converting a traditional craft into a small-business enterprise.

This growth mirrors broader trends in Nigeria's creative and fashion sectors. The country's fashion and lifestyle market is valued in the tens of billions of dollars and continues to expand alongside a youthful population, rising social media penetration and growing e-commerce adoption, even as the sector remains dominated by informal workshops, tailors and small producers rather than large-scale manufacturers (Rawshot, 2026). More broadly, Nigeria's creative economy is estimated to employ several million people and is frequently identified as one of the most important sources of youth employment outside the formal labour market (Umeh, 2024). Against a backdrop of persistently high youth unemployment and underemployment (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024; Enterprise NGR, 2025), craft-based enterprises such as crochet production offer a low-barrier entry point into self-employment, requiring modest start-up capital, flexible working hours and skills that can be acquired informally rather than through costly formal training.

Within university communities in South-Western Nigeria in particular, crochet has taken root as both a creative outlet and an income-generating activity among students and young graduates. Its appeal lies in the relatively low cost of entry, the flexibility it offers

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alongside academic schedules, and the ease with which finished products can be marketed directly to consumers through Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and word-of-mouth referral. Yet, despite this visible growth, the actual production process by which raw yarn is transformed into finished, saleable crochet items, spanning customer consultation, material sourcing, pattern and colour selection, the crocheting process itself, finishing operations, quality inspection, and packaging, has received comparatively little systematic academic attention. Much of what is known about the sub-sector remains anecdotal, derived from social media content or informal observation rather than structured empirical inquiry. It is this gap that the present study addresses, by examining the production process, and the opportunities and constraints that shape it, among crochet makers operating within and around university communities in South-Western Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria's cultural and creative industries have been increasingly recognised as important contributors to national development, particularly through sectors such as film, music and fashion, yet policy and scholarly attention remains uneven across different segments of the creative economy. Recent analyses emphasise the growth potential of Nigeria's fashion and design subsectors but give only broad overviews of "creative industries" without disaggregating specific crafts such as crochet within the wider cultural-production landscape. (Unleashing the Potential of the Creative Industries in Africa, 2025) This is paradoxical because empirical work on indigenous textiles in South-West Nigeria demonstrates that textile-based creativity is deeply embedded in local economies and continues to evolve in response to contemporary market demands (Olatunji & Adiji, 2023).

Studies of indigenous and contemporary textiles in South-Western Nigeria show that hand-produced fabrics and garments retain cultural value and entrepreneurial potential, especially in urban centres such as Abeokuta and Ibadan (Akinmoye, Ojo, & Ogunduyile, 2016; Olatunji & Adiji, 2023). However, this literature focuses predominantly on adire, woven cloth and other dye-based textiles, with little or no systematic attention to newer handcraft forms such as crochet fashion, accessories and décor. Research on the design and marketing of textile and clothing in Nigeria similarly highlights issues of product design, consumer preferences and market positioning for locally produced garments, but again tends to treat "textiles and clothing" as a broad category without isolating handcrafted crochet makers as a distinct group of producers (Ibeto,2016). As a result, existing evidence does not adequately explain how crochet producers in South-Western Nigeria organise their work, what kinds of products they prioritise, or how they differentiate their items in increasingly competitive fashion markets.

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Available studies on indigenous textile production and traditional fabrics in South-Western Nigeria do identify important structural challenges such as technological constraints, competition from imported fabrics, counterfeit products, and weak institutional support—that undermine the visibility and utilisation of local textiles (Adebayo, 2022; Lawal, 2019; Ogunyemi, 2022). (Olubukola et al., 2026). Parallel work on handcrafted Nigerian products in the northern part of the country documents the role of locally sourced materials and small-scale craft enterprises in supporting low-cost production and income generation, while also pointing to sustainability issues in entrepreneurship and market access. (Shall-Holma, 2025).Yet, these strands of research either concentrate on specific traditional textiles (e.g. adire) or on a wide variety of handcrafted products, without disaggregating the particular experiences, constraints and opportunities of crochet makers in the South-West.

In addition, emerging scholarship on indigenous textiles and sustainable fashion in Nigeria underscores the possibilities of integrating traditional fabrics into modern fashion systems and digital marketing platforms, but still centres largely on iconic textiles such as adire and woven cloth. Broader discussions of indigenous African textiles and modern sustainable fashion emphasise the potential of hand-crafted textiles to contribute to ethical, "slow fashion" markets and to youth-driven creative entrepreneurship, but they do not provide empirical data on crochet as a specific niche within this ecosystem. Chivuzo, C. P. (2026). Consequently, there is a clear empirical gap in the literature regarding the production processes, material-sourcing strategies and marketing practices of handcrafted crochet makers in South-Western Nigeria.

Without a focused assessment of how crochet makers conceptualise designs, access and manage yarns and other inputs, and deploy both offline and online channels to reach customers, policymakers, development agencies and business-support organisations lack the evidence required to design targeted interventions for this emergent craft sub-sector. The absence of such knowledge risks leaving crochet producers invisible in creative-industry statistics and policy frameworks, and may constrain their capacity to scale up, innovate and contribute optimally to local livelihoods. This study is therefore designed to address these gaps by systematically examining the production process, material sourcing and marketing practices of handcrafted crochet makers in South-Western Nigeria.

Handcrafted crochet production has grown into a visible micro-enterprise activity among young Nigerians, particularly within university communities, yet it continues to operate largely outside the structures, support systems and bodies of knowledge that typically accompany a maturing craft-based industry. Skill acquisition remains overwhelmingly informal: the overwhelming majority of practitioners are self-taught or rely on freely available online tutorials, with only a small proportion having received any structured or

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formal training. While this informal pathway has lowered the barrier to entry and enabled rapid growth, it also means that production practices, quality standards and technical competencies vary widely from one maker to another, with no shared curriculum, certification pathway or documented standard guiding the sector.

At the level of production itself, makers report that the process is time- and labour-intensive, with output volume and turnaround constrained by manual technique, and that production timelines expand considerably as product size and design complexity increase. Compounding this, the cost and availability of quality materials constitute the most frequently cited constraint on production, with the large majority of practitioners identifying high material cost as their principal challenge, alongside limited yarn variety, inconsistent material quality and restricted colour options. Because the domestic supply chain for crochet yarn depends heavily on local markets rather than direct access to specialised or imported inputs, producers are frequently unable to guarantee consistency in the materials available to them from one production cycle to the next, a problem that has direct implications for costing, product uniformity and customer satisfaction.

Beyond materials, makers also confront constraints in market access, limited access to modern tools and equipment, and the absence of institutional or policy support such as grants, low-interest credit or entrepreneurship programmes tailored to craft-based micro-enterprises. Pricing and profitability likewise remain uneven: while most producers price based on the combined cost of materials, labour and desired margin, profit margins are frequently moderate rather than substantial, reflecting the extent to which high input costs and labour-intensive production erode returns. Taken together, these conditions indicate a sub-sector that is entrepreneurially vibrant but structurally under-supported: the specific stages, sequencing and bottlenecks of the crochet production process, and the way material, financial, technical and market-related constraints act upon that process, have not been systematically documented for university-based crochet makers in South-Western Nigeria. It is this absence of a clear, evidence-based account of how crochet products are actually produced, and of the constraints that limit efficiency and quality at each stage, that constitutes the problem this study sets out to investigate.

Justification for the Study

This study is justified on empirical, practical and policy grounds. Empirically, existing literature on Nigerian textile and fashion craft has tended to focus on more established sub-sectors such as weaving, tie-and-dye and tailoring, leaving handcrafted crochet, despite its rapid, digitally-driven growth, comparatively under-researched. By documenting the actual step-by-step production process used by crochet makers, from customer consultation and material selection through crocheting, finishing, quality inspection and packaging, this study contributes original, context-specific knowledge to

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the growing body of research on Nigeria's informal creative and fashion economy, and provides a reference point for future comparative or longitudinal research on craft-based micro-enterprise.

Practically, the findings are of direct relevance to crochet makers themselves, many of whom are self-taught and operate without access to structured technical training or business support. A clear account of prevailing production practices, common bottlenecks and the strategies successful practitioners already use to manage material costs, maintain quality and update designs can inform the design of targeted skills-training programmes, mentorship schemes and continuing education content for current and prospective makers, particularly within university communities where crochet frequently doubles as a source of student income.

The study is equally relevant to policy makers, funding bodies and institutions supporting youth entrepreneurship and the creative economy. Given persistently high youth unemployment and the recognised potential of craft-based micro-enterprise to absorb young people into productive, self-directed work, evidence on the specific constraints, such as material cost and availability, limited access to modern tools, and restricted market access, that limit the growth of crochet enterprises can help government agencies, non-governmental organisations and university entrepreneurship centres design more effective interventions, ranging from input-supply schemes to grants, credit facilities and market-linkage programmes. Finally, the study is relevant to consumers and the wider fashion industry, as an understanding of how crochet products are made, and of the quality-assurance practices makers already employ, can support efforts to build public confidence in, and demand for, handcrafted crochet fashion as a legitimate and competitive segment of the Nigerian textile and fashion landscape.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The descriptive survey research design involves the study of the large population by selecting a representative sample to establish the interrelations of variables. It involves the collection, organization, analysis and description of the variables as they exist in natural setting without interference. The survey research design is suitable for this study because it is primarily meant to describe the production process of crochet makers in South West, Nigeria.

Research Population

The population of the study included individuals who are actively engaged in crocheting either as full-time or part-time professionals. The population of professional crocheters in

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South-Western Nigeria could not be determined at this time. No record of the definite population was available in online databases and the National Bureau of Statistics.

Sample Size

Fifty-nine (59) professional crocheters were selected for this study. This was determined using Cochran's formula as shown below. This formula computes the least statistically significant sample size for unspecified population size, taking into consideration the assumed percentage of the population, tabulated confidence interval, and level of significance (Kothari, 2014).

$$n = \frac{p(1-p)\,z^2}{e^2} = \frac{0.1*(1-0.1)\,(1.28)^2}{(0.05)^2} = \frac{(0.09)\,(1.6384)}{0.0025} = 58.9 = 59$$

Where n = sample size
P = assumed v percentage of population (10%, 0.1)
1 = constant
Z = tabulated z-value confidence interval (1.28)
e = level of significance (or permissive margin of error) (0.05)

Sampling Technique

Accidental sampling technique was used to select 59 professional crocheters who have consistently been selling crocheted items for over a year from online platforms (Instagram, twitter and tiktok) to determine the production process of crochet from all over Nigeria.

Instrument for Data Collection

The data collection instrument is the "Production process of Crochet makers Questionnaire" (PPCMQ) which consisted of sections, A, B, C and D. Section A elicited information about the demographic information of the respondents such as their state of residence, highest qualification and type of crochet product they produce. Section B contained a checklist that assessed their production process; barriers to production; technical skills and knowledge. Sections C and D contained question items about material availability and sourcing; design and innovation; how production can be improved and how acceptability of contemporary crochet items can be increased.

Reliability of Research Instrument

To test the reliability of the research instruments, the PPCMQ was administered to six randomly selected crochet makers in Eastern and Western parts of Nigeria. PPCMQ has a reliability coefficient of 0.97. These values imply very high internal consistency of the instruments for data collection.

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Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire for Crochet makers which is an e-questionnaire and was administered to accidentally selected professional crocheters through online platforms (Instagram, tiktok and twitter).

Method of Data Analysis

Data obtained from the Production Process of Crochet Makers Questionnaire (PPCMQ) were analysed using descriptive statistics. Responses to the closed-ended items in Sections A, B, C and D were coded, entered and analysed using frequency counts and simple percentages, which were considered appropriate given the study's descriptive survey design and its objective of describing, rather than testing causal relationships within, the production process of crochet makers in South-Western Nigeria. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarise respondents' demographic characteristics, business profiles, sources of skill acquisition, production timelines, material sourcing patterns, production costs, design and innovation practices, marketing channels, pricing and profitability, production constraints, and quality assurance practices. For items that permitted multiple responses, percentages were computed relative to the total number of respondents (N = 59) rather than the total number of responses, so that the relative importance of each option to the sample as a whole could be readily interpreted.

Results were presented in frequency and percentage tables, with each table accompanied by a narrative interpretation highlighting the most and least prominent responses and their implications for the production process. The open-ended item requiring respondents to describe, in their own words, the step-by-step process by which they produce crochet items was analysed using thematic analysis. Responses were read repeatedly to achieve familiarisation, after which recurring ideas were inductively coded and grouped into broader themes representing distinct stages of the production process. These themes were then organised sequentially to reconstruct the overall production workflow reported by respondents, from initial customer consultation through to post-sale interaction, and were presented alongside the quantitative findings to provide a richer, process-level account of crochet production than frequency counts alone could offer.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 Distribution of Respondents by Demographic Characteristics (N = 59)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
State of Residence	Lagos	22	37.3
	Ogun	11	18.6
	Osun	10	16.9

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Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Ondo	7	11.9
	Oyo	7	11.9
	No response	2	3.4
Educational Qualification	B.Sc	31	52.5
	SSCE	11	18.6
	HND	8	13.6
	OND	5	8.5
	M.Sc	3	5.1
	NCE	1	1.7
Age Range	18–25 years	38	64.4
	26–35 years	18	30.5
	46–55 years	2	3.4
	36–45 years	1	1.7

Table 1 reveals that the largest proportion of respondents (37.3%) resided in Lagos State, followed by Ogun State (18.6%) and Osun State (16.9%). Ondo and Oyo States each contributed 11.9% of the respondents, indicating a fairly broad geographical spread across South-Western Nigeria.

Regarding educational attainment, more than half of the respondents (52.5%) possessed a Bachelor's degree, while 18.6% had SSCE qualifications. Only a small proportion possessed postgraduate qualifications (5.1%), suggesting that crochet production is increasingly undertaken by educated young individuals rather than being restricted to persons with little formal education.

The age distribution indicates that the industry is largely youth-driven. Nearly two-thirds (64.4%) of the respondents were between 18 and 25 years, while another 30.5% were between 26 and 35 years. Less than 5% were above 45 years. This finding suggests that crocheting has become an attractive entrepreneurial and creative occupation among young adults, particularly within university communities.

Business Profile of Crocheters

Table 2 Business Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Years of Experience	Less than 1 year	6	10.2
	1–3 years	19	32.2
	4–6 years	19	32.2
	7–10 years	9	15.3
	More than 10 years	6	10.2
Nature of Business	Full-time business	24	40.7
	Hobby with occasional sales	17	28.8

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Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Part-time business	16	27.1
	Mixed arrangement	1	1.7
	No response	1	1.7

Table 3 Types of Crochet Products Produced

Product Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Clothing	57	96.6
Accessories	43	72.9
Jewellery	28	47.5
Home décor	10	16.9
Toys	6	10.2
Footwear	6	10.2
Others	2	3.4

The findings indicate that respondents possess varying levels of experience in crochet production. Approximately two-thirds (64.4%) had between one and six years of experience, demonstrating that the industry is dominated by relatively experienced practitioners while still accommodating newcomers.

Concerning business engagement, 40.7% operated crocheting as a full-time business, whereas 28.8% considered it a hobby with occasional sales and 27.1% managed it on a part-time basis. This suggests that crochet production serves both as a primary livelihood and as an important supplementary income source.

With respect to products produced, clothing emerged as the dominant category (96.6%), followed by accessories (72.9%) and jewellry (47.5%). Home décor, toys, and footwear were comparatively less common. These findings suggest that fashion-related products constitute the primary focus of crocheters in South-Western Nigeria, reflecting strong market demand for wearable crochet items.

Crochet Skill Acquisition

Table 4 Sources of Crochet Skill Acquisition

Source	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Self-taught	42	71.2
YouTube	32	54.2
Online tutorials	20	33.9
Family/Friends	13	22.0
Pinterest	9	15.3
Formal training	5	8.5
WhatsApp	2	3.4

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Facebook	1	1.7
Etsy	1	1.7

The results demonstrate that crochet skills are acquired predominantly through informal and digital learning pathways. More than seven out of every ten respondents (71.2%) reported being self-taught, while over half (54.2%) learned through YouTube. One-third (33.9%) also relied on online tutorials.

Conversely, only 8.5% obtained formal training, indicating that structured crochet education remains limited. The relatively high dependence on digital learning resources suggests that online platforms have become essential tools for skill acquisition, enabling crocheters to develop competencies independently regardless of geographical location. This finding further highlights the importance of digital technologies in promoting entrepreneurship and creative industries.

Production Processes

Table 5 Production Time for Crochet Items

Item	Dominant Production Period
Small accessories	Less than 1–3 days
Medium items	1–7 days
Large fashion items	1–2 weeks or longer

The production process varies considerably according to product complexity. Small accessories generally require relatively short production periods and can often be completed within one to three days. Medium-sized items such as bags and hats require additional production time because of increased stitch density and finishing requirements. Large fashion items, including dresses and blankets, generally require one to two weeks or more, reflecting their complexity and labour-intensive nature.

These findings demonstrate that production time is directly related to product size and intricacy, implying that labour input should be considered when determining product prices.

Material Availability and Challenges

Table 6 Sources of Crochet Materials

Source	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Local Nigerian markets	36	61.0
Online Nigerian vendors	12	20.3
Other crocheters/suppliers	5	8.5
International online stores	2	3.4
Others	4	6.8

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Table 7 Perceived Availability of Quality Crochet Materials

Rating	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Excellent	9	15.3
Good	23	39.0
Fair	24	40.7
Poor	3	5.1

Table 8 Material Challenges Encountered

Challenge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High cost of materials	47	79.7
Limited yarn varieties	29	49.2
Inconsistent quality	23	39.0
Limited colour options	22	37.3
Difficulty sourcing specialty yarns	20	33.9
Long delivery time	11	18.6
Customs/importation issues	2	3.4

The majority of respondents (61.0%) obtained crochet materials from local Nigerian markets, while only a small proportion depended on international suppliers. This indicates a strong reliance on domestic supply chains for production materials.

Although nearly four out of every ten respondents rated the availability of quality materials as good (39.0%), the largest proportion (40.7%) considered availability only fair, suggesting that access to premium crochet materials remains inadequate.

The most prominent production challenge was the high cost of materials, reported by almost four-fifths (79.7%) of respondents. Other notable constraints included limited yarn varieties (49.2%), inconsistent material quality (39.0%), limited colour options (37.3%), and difficulty sourcing specialty yarns (33.9%). Comparatively fewer respondents experienced customs-related issues (3.4%), indicating that affordability and local availability pose greater constraints than import regulations.

Overall, these findings suggest that while crocheters have access to local material markets, improvements in affordability, diversity, and consistency of materials would substantially enhance production efficiency and product quality. Such improvements are likely to strengthen the competitiveness of handcrafted crochet products within university communities and the broader Nigerian fashion industry.

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Cost of Production

Table 9 Monthly Expenditure on Crochet Materials (N = 59)

Monthly Expenditure	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than ₦5,000	6	10.2
₦5,000 – ₦10,000	11	18.6
₦10,001 – ₦20,000	17	28.8
₦20,001 – ₦50,000	15	25.4
₦50,001 – ₦100,000	7	11.9
More than ₦100,000	3	5.1
Total	**59**	**100.0**

Table 9 presents respondents' monthly expenditure on crochet materials. The largest proportion of respondents (28.8%) spent between ₦10,001 and ₦20,000 monthly on production materials, while 25.4% spent between ₦20,001 and ₦50,000. Approximately one-fifth (18.6%) invested between ₦5,000 and ₦10,000 monthly, whereas only 5.1% reported spending above ₦100,000.

Overall, more than seventy percent of respondents invested between ₦10,001 and ₦50,000 monthly, suggesting that crochet production requires moderate capital investment. However, considering that high material cost was previously identified as the leading production challenge, these expenditure levels indicate that raw material procurement constitutes a substantial proportion of production costs and may influence pricing decisions and business sustainability.

Product Design and Innovation Practices

Table 10 Sources of Design Inspiration

Source of Design Inspiration	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Personal creativity	45	76.3
Customer requests	34	57.6
Online inspiration	31	52.5
Fashion trends	27	45.8
Others	3	5.1

Table 11 Frequency of Updating Product Designs

Frequency	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Every month	28	47.5
Every 3 months	16	27.1
Once a year	6	10.2
Rarely	9	15.3
Total	**59**	**100.0**

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Table 12 Suggested Improvements for Production

Suggested Improvement	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Better access to quality materials	46	78.0
Increased market access	38	64.4
Training on modern techniques	31	52.5
Better tools/equipment	29	49.2
Others	4	6.8

The findings reveal that innovation among crocheters is primarily driven by personal creativity, with over three-quarters (76.3%) of respondents relying on their own ideas when developing new products. Customer requests (57.6%) and online inspiration (52.5%) also played important roles, indicating that product innovation is influenced by both market demand and exposure to digital content.

Regarding design updates, nearly half of the respondents (47.5%) introduced new designs every month, while another 27.1% updated their products quarterly. This suggests that most crocheters actively respond to changing consumer preferences and fashion trends. Respondents identified improved access to quality materials (78.0%) as the most important strategy for enhancing production. Increased market access (64.4%), training on modern crochet techniques (52.5%), and improved production tools (49.2%) were also frequently recommended. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that continuous innovation is central to the competitiveness of handcrafted crochet products and that investments in skills, technology, and material availability would significantly strengthen the sector.

Marketing and Sales Channels

Table 13 Average Monthly Orders

Number of Orders	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 5	13	22.0
5–10	19	32.2
10–20	16	27.1
20–30	7	11.9
Above 30	4	6.8
Total	**59**	**100.0**

Table 14 Customer Location

Customer Base	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Within Nigeria	33	55.9
Outside Nigeria	6	10.2
Both Nigeria and Abroad	20	33.9

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Total	**59**	**100.0**

Table 15 Sales Channels Used (Multiple Responses)

Sales Channel	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Social media platforms	52	88.1
Word-of-mouth/direct orders	44	74.6
Personal website/shop	13	22.0
Local exhibitions/craft fairs	12	20.3
E-commerce websites	7	11.9

Table 13 shows that the largest proportion of respondents (32.2%) received between five and ten orders monthly, while 27.1% processed between ten and twenty orders. Only 6.8% received more than thirty monthly orders, suggesting that most crochet businesses operate on a small to medium scale.

The findings further indicate that most respondents (55.9%) served customers within Nigeria, although approximately one-third (33.9%) also catered to both domestic and international markets. This demonstrates the growing international visibility of Nigerian handcrafted crochet products.

Social media emerged as the dominant marketing platform, with 88.1% of respondents utilizing platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and X to promote and sell their products. Word-of-mouth referrals were also widely used (74.6%), reflecting the importance of customer satisfaction and personal networks in sustaining businesses. Comparatively fewer respondents used dedicated e-commerce platforms or personal websites, indicating opportunities for expanding digital commerce and improving global market access.

Pricing and Profitability

Table 16 Pricing Methods Used

Pricing Method	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Cost of materials + labour + profit	49	83.1
Market-based pricing	31	52.5
Pricing based on time spent	25	42.4
Negotiation with customers	18	30.5
Fixed pricing system	11	18.6

Table 17 Typical Profit Margin

Profit Margin	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 20%	8	13.6
20–40%	23	39.0

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Profit Margin	Frequency	Percentage (%)
41–60%	18	30.5
61–80%	6	10.2
Above 80%	2	3.4
Do not calculate profit	2	3.4
Total	**59**	**100.0**

The results indicate that pricing decisions are primarily based on production costs, as 83.1% of respondents considered the combined costs of materials, labour, and expected profit when determining product prices. Over half (52.5%) also considered prevailing market prices, while fewer respondents relied solely on negotiation or fixed pricing.

Regarding profitability, the largest proportion of respondents (39.0%) reported earning profit margins between 20% and 40%, while 30.5% achieved margins between 41% and 60%. Only a small percentage earned profit margins exceeding 80%. These findings suggest that although crochet production can be financially rewarding, profitability remains moderate due to high production costs, labour-intensive processes, and competitive market conditions.

Production Constraints

Table 18 Major Production Constraints (Multiple Responses)

Constraint	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High cost of materials	47	79.7
Sourcing quality materials	39	66.1
Limited market access	33	55.9
Lack of modern tools/equipment	28	47.5
Poor consumer perception	19	32.2
Lack of innovative designs	15	25.4
Limited demand	14	23.7

The findings reveal that the most critical challenge affecting crochet production is the high cost of production materials, identified by nearly four-fifths (79.7%) of respondents. Closely related to this is the difficulty of sourcing quality materials (66.1%), indicating that affordability and accessibility remain major concerns for producers.

More than half of the respondents (55.9%) also reported limited market access, suggesting that many crocheters face challenges in reaching wider customer bases despite the increasing use of social media. Nearly half (47.5%) identified inadequate access to modern tools and equipment as another important production constraint, highlighting the need for technological support to improve efficiency and product quality.

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Other constraints, including poor consumer perception (32.2%), lack of innovative designs (25.4%), and limited market demand (23.7%), were reported less frequently but nonetheless influence business growth. Overall, the results suggest that addressing input costs, strengthening supply chains, expanding marketing opportunities, and improving technical capacity are essential for enhancing the sustainability and competitiveness of handcrafted crochet enterprises in South-Western Nigeria.

Quality Assurance Practices

Table 19 Quality Assurance Measures Adopted by Crocheters (Multiple Responses)

Quality Assurance Practice	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Use of high-quality materials	48	81.4
Attention to stitch consistency	44	74.6
Multiple quality checks during production	36	61.0
Incorporation of customer feedback	31	52.5
Others	3	5.1

Table 19 presents the quality assurance practices adopted by crocheters to ensure the durability, functionality, and aesthetic appeal of their products. The findings indicate that the use of high-quality materials was the most common quality assurance strategy, adopted by 81.4% of the respondents. This suggests that crocheters recognize material quality as a fundamental determinant of product performance and customer satisfaction. Similarly, approximately three-quarters of the respondents (74.6%) reported paying close attention to stitch consistency throughout the production process. Maintaining uniform stitch size and tension contributes significantly to product durability and professional finishing.

Furthermore, 61.0% of respondents conducted multiple quality checks during production, while 52.5% incorporated customer feedback into subsequent product development. These findings indicate that many crocheters have adopted customer-oriented quality management practices aimed at continuous improvement. Overall, the results demonstrate that quality assurance among crocheters extends beyond the production stage to include customer experience, reflecting increasing professionalism within the industry.

Suggested Improvements to Crochet Production

Table 20 Respondents' Suggested Improvements to Crochet Production

Suggested Improvement	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Better access to quality materials	46	78.0
Increased market access	38	64.4

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Suggested Improvement	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Training on modern crochet techniques	31	52.5
Access to better production tools/equipment	29	49.2
Government support and funding	18	30.5
Others	4	6.8

Table 20 presents respondents' recommendations for improving crochet production in South-Western Nigeria. The majority (78.0%) emphasized the need for better access to quality materials, reaffirming earlier findings that inadequate material availability and high costs remain major production challenges.

Nearly two-thirds (64.4%) recommended expanding market access through improved marketing opportunities and stronger customer networks. This reflects respondents' desire to move beyond localized markets and increase business profitability.

Over half (52.5%) advocated for regular training on modern crochet techniques, while 49.2% emphasized the importance of improved production equipment. These findings suggest that continuous skill development and technological advancement are essential for enhancing productivity, creativity, and product quality.

Additionally, approximately one-third of respondents recommended government support through grants, loans, or entrepreneurship programmes. Overall, the findings demonstrate that improvements in material supply, capacity building, technology, and institutional support are perceived as critical factors for strengthening the crochet industry.

Strategies for Increasing Consumer Acceptability

Table 21 Suggested Strategies for Enhancing Consumer Acceptability (Multiple Responses)

Strategy	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Awareness campaigns	43	72.9
Improved product quality	40	67.8
More variety in designs	35	59.3
Lower prices	26	44.1
Better product packaging and branding	19	32.2
Others	2	3.4

Table 21 presents respondents' opinions regarding strategies that could increase consumer acceptance of handcrafted crochet products. The most frequently identified strategy was public awareness campaigns (72.9%), suggesting that many respondents believe consumer knowledge regarding crochet products remains limited.

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Improving product quality (67.8%) and increasing design diversity (59.3%) were also identified as important strategies for expanding market demand. These findings imply that consumers are more likely to purchase crochet products when they perceive them as fashionable, durable, and suitable for contemporary lifestyles.

Approximately 44.1% of respondents suggested reducing product prices to improve affordability, while 32.2% highlighted the importance of attractive packaging and branding. Overall, the findings indicate that increasing consumer acceptability requires a combination of product improvement, strategic marketing, consumer education, and competitive pricing.

Thematic Analysis of the Crochet Production Process

The open-ended responses describing the step-by-step production process were subjected to thematic analysis. The responses revealed a fairly consistent workflow adopted by crocheters despite differences in product type and business size.

Table 22 Emergent Themes from the Crochet Production Process

Theme	Description
Customer consultation	Receiving customer requests, discussing specifications, colours, sizes, timelines, and confirming orders.
Design conceptualisation	Selecting or creating patterns based on customer preferences, fashion trends, or personal creativity.
Material selection	Procuring appropriate yarns, hooks, accessories, and other production materials.
Colour planning	Selecting suitable colour combinations and confirming customer preferences before production begins.
Crocheting process	Executing crochet stitches according to the selected pattern while maintaining stitch consistency.
Assembly and finishing	Joining components, weaving loose ends, attaching linings, zippers, buttons, beads, or embellishments where necessary.
Quality inspection	Inspecting stitch uniformity, measurements, finishing quality, and correcting identified defects.
Washing and blocking	Cleaning, blocking, steam pressing, or stiffening products to improve appearance and shape retention.
Packaging	Packaging completed products using branded bags, boxes, labels, or protective wrapping.
Delivery	Delivering products physically or through courier services and obtaining customer feedback after delivery.

Analysis of respondents' descriptions revealed that crochet production follows a structured and systematic workflow beginning with customer consultation and ending

with product delivery and post-sale interaction. Most respondents indicated that customer specifications guide material selection, colour planning, and pattern choice, demonstrating a customer-centred production approach.

The production stage itself consists primarily of crocheting according to selected patterns while ensuring stitch consistency and dimensional accuracy. Respondents also emphasized the importance of finishing operations such as lining, embellishment, blocking, steam pressing, and trimming loose yarns. These activities significantly improve product appearance and durability.

Quality inspection emerged as a recurring theme throughout the production process rather than being restricted to the final stage. Many respondents reported checking stitch consistency, measurements, and overall finishing at multiple points before delivery. Finally, packaging and customer feedback were identified as essential post-production activities that contribute to customer satisfaction, repeat patronage, and business growth.

The thematic analysis demonstrates that crochet production extends beyond the act of crocheting itself to encompass planning, design, quality management, branding, packaging, and customer relationship management. This reflects the increasing professionalization of handcrafted crochet enterprises in South-Western Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that crochet production has become a structured, systematic and increasingly professionalised micro-enterprise activity among young, educated Nigerians, particularly within and around university communities in the South-West. Far from being an unstructured hobby, the production process follows a discernible and fairly consistent workflow, from customer consultation through crocheting, finishing, quality inspection, and packaging, which reflects a customer-centred, quality-conscious approach to craft-based fashion production.

At the same time, the study makes clear that this vibrancy exists within a largely informal and structurally under-supported environment. Skills are acquired almost entirely outside formal educational or vocational structures, and the sector's principal constraints, the cost and availability of quality materials, limited access to modern tools, and restricted market access, remain unresolved by any coordinated institutional response. The consequence is a sub-sector that is entrepreneurially resilient and digitally savvy, yet constrained in its capacity to scale, standardise quality, and translate creative output into consistently higher profitability. It can therefore be concluded that the production process of crochet makers in South-Western Nigeria is well-defined at the level of individual practice but under-supported at the level of the surrounding ecosystem, materials supply, technical training, tools, financing and market infrastructure, and that

closing this gap represents the central challenge, and opportunity, for the continued growth of the sub-sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Government agencies and relevant stakeholders should support the establishment of bulk-purchase cooperatives or dedicated yarn-supply schemes for crochet makers, to reduce material costs and improve consistency in the quality and variety of yarn available to producers.
- Universities and vocational institutions, particularly within South-Western Nigeria, should consider incorporating structured, certificate-bearing crochet and craft-production training into entrepreneurship and skills-acquisition programmes, to complement the informal, self-taught pathways through which most current practitioners have learned the craft.
- Crochet makers should be encouraged and supported, through targeted workshops or mentorship schemes, to diversify beyond social media into dedicated e-commerce platforms and personal websites, so as to expand market reach beyond existing informal, referral-driven channels.
- Government bodies, non-governmental organisations and university entrepreneurship centres should extend grants, low-interest credit facilities and business-development support specifically tailored to craft-based micro-enterprises such as crochet production, in recognition of the sector's demonstrated capacity to absorb young, educated Nigerians into productive self-employment.
- Crochet makers should be supported in adopting improved production tools and equipment, where feasible, to reduce the labour-intensiveness of production and shorten turnaround times for medium- and large-sized items without compromising the stitch consistency and finishing quality respondents already prioritise.
- Industry associations, and crocheters themselves, should invest in public awareness and consumer-education campaigns that communicate the durability, craftsmanship and contemporary styling of handcrafted crochet products, in order to strengthen consumer acceptability and demand alongside efforts to improve product quality and pricing.

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